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Ahmet Öğüt, *Ground Control*, 2007/2008. Installation view of the 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art at KW Institute for Contemporary Art. Courtesy Ahmet Öğüt; RODEO, Istanbul. Copyright Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Uwe Walter, 2008.

Spaces of Art

Sometime in the shift between the 1960s and the 1970s the notion of the institution, in both the narrow and broad senses of the term, underwent profound mutations, from the university to the museum and beyond. The imperative of the day was to create new modes of subjectivity, which in many cases also implied a renewal, sometimes even an outright rejection, of the very idea of an institution: for wasn't there a new freedom to be attained in that which is non-formalized and non-institutional, in the various forms of collective agency, in the jouissance of a text that overflows the old category of the work?

Many of these critical ideas are still with us today, although in a digested or perhaps recuperated form. Often an object of a nostalgia—May 68 undoubtedly being one of the most fetishized items of recent history—sometimes as the ground for a denunciation of the present, they have become the backbone of a new type of official institutional discourse, where self-reflexivity and self-criticism are what provides the art institution with its very source of legitimacy. A certain type of anti-institutional gesture has in many cases become the sole banner under which business can go on as usual. In other cases, there is no doubt a deeply felt need to rethink institutionality, which is why ideas of the workshop, the laboratory, the open university, etc., in one form or another have imposed themselves as viable options, although the ultimate result of such strategies is by no means clear.

Some thirty years ago artists and theorists began to understand the physical site of art as an institutional place, defined by ideologies, discourses, and symbolical exchanges that extend into a whole network of other places (the studio, the museum, the gallery, the public space of art criticism, the art market, the private collection, etc.) within which the work circulates. The logical outcome of this was what the art historian Miwon Kwon has called the discursive site, understood as a field of knowledge, an intellectual exchange or a cultural debate. Here the role of the artists begins to incorporate many other functions—administration, pedagogy, marketing, consulting, etc. This discursive site is more like a linking of physical localities, texts and forms of documentation, and its model, Kwon says, "is not a map but an itinerary, a fragmentary sequence of events and actions through spaces, that is, a nomadic narrative whose path is articulated by the passage of the artist". How this development should be judged is indeed an open question: does it open up the museum and the institution to audience participation and incite new modes of spectatorship, or does it enclose us even more firmly in an autonomous sphere of art?

Several of the texts in this issue revolve around the problem of the institution, directly or in a more oblique fashion. Dan S. Wang's discussion of Gerald Raunig's *Art and Revolution* traces the genealogy of the radical gesture, from Courbet and the Paris Commune through Situationism to the present; Kim West gives an account of the Berlin Biennial, where the idea of things that "cast no shadow" seeks to retrieve an idea of things outside of instrumentalized and institutionalized conditions; the essays by Meike Schalk, Nina Möntmann, Barbara Steiner, and Katarina Pierre, first presented at a symposium at Bildmuseet in Umeå, all address the theory and practice of museums, and ask what an open and "relational" museum could mean in the present context, also on the level of financing and politics. From a more philosophical point of view, Sven-Olov Wallenstein discusses two recently published works of Foucault, from the beginning and end of his intellectual trajectory, which both take Kant as a departure for a questioning of modernity, and of what it means to govern and be governed; Lars-Erik Hjertström takes his cues from Deleuze in order to discuss a concept that often remains presupposed in discussions of institutional theory, namely what it means for works of art to be "criticizable". Finally, Karl Lydén takes a look at some recent exhibitions in New York that probe into the "unmomental" and "archive fever"—which perhaps, somewhat playfully, could be taken as two diagnoses of the current exhibitionary complex. •

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You Want Art? I Give You Revolution

Dan S. Wang

Since upon opening Gerald Raunig's immodestly titled *Art and Revolution* (2007), recently published in an English translation by Semiotext(e), I skipped the question of whether I agree with his ideas and went straight to the problem of how best to apply them, I suppose you could call me a sympathetic reader. My expectations come from my having heard the Vienna-based philosopher deliver a lecture several summers ago, in which he awoke me to the idea of the transversal and the reality of all boundaries dividing cultural from political work forever existing as porous and in flux. Those ideas had been circulating in the political art scene for a while even then, but he connected the dots for me in a very clear way, and he did it by emphasizing the practical experience of contemporary political action. So did I set myself up for disappointment? Before I could answer that question, I first had some unpacking to do. Applying the ideas does require knowing what they are, and, as readable as Raunig's language is, this is not a casually absorbed book. There is a density to the text that goes beyond the prose and it is delivered in three interwoven layers.

The base layer of argument is a reliance on the idea of concatenation. The phrase "concatenation of art and revolution" is developed as a key concept early in the book and provides the frame within which Raunig conducts his inquiry into the relationship between art and politics. Raunig accepts that most of the time art and politics exist as separate spheres, but that under revolutionary conditions they may become linked in time and space, as if in a chain. The recurrent metaphor makes me think of that place where the links pull against one another, and, while suspended in tension, become one. Raunig mines the richness of the metaphor by examining different aspects and kinds of concatenation. He settles on the concept of "machines"—art machines, revolutionary machines—as the enlarged bodies of concatenation, offering various and infinitely divisible zones of temporary fusion, overlap, and commingling. "The way and extent to which revolutionary machines and art machines work as parts, cogs of one another is the most important subject of investigation in this book". (18)

It is in this layer of complexity that Raunig locates himself intellectually and politically. He starts with an explanation of his operational notion of revolution, against which he opposes the grand, nameable ruptures: "this study concentrates on the discursive and activist lines that have regarded revolution as an uncompleted and uncompletable, molecular process, which does not necessarily refer to the state as being essential and universal, but rather emerges before the state, outside the state". (25–26) In keeping with the anarchistic strains of the political cultures that interest him, Raunig rejects the seizure of state power as anything but a suspect aim. From there, he goes on to outline his theories of resistance, insurrection, and constituent power as the three essential elements of revolutionary machines.

And with those three terms in play, we can shorten the description of the theoretical orientation and say he takes a materialist analysis as a given—minus the Hegelian, mixes in the Foucauldian concepts of power, borrows confidently from Deleuze and Guattari, and ends up with something resembling *Empire* (2000) in language and tone. This is partisan resistance theory, anti-capitalist to the core, and informed by the practical challenge of political action. Like other texts of its kind, it is appropriately stirring. It is anchored to a particular tradition and vocabulary. Raunig hardly ever borrows from outside of a set of radical and/or neo-Marxist continental writers. This specificity is not necessarily a weakness. On the contrary, Raunig condenses key ideas from his source strains and synthesizes effectively, providing a valuable service for non-specialists. His explanation of how Deleuze's theories of resistance work off of and advance beyond those of Foucault is a good example, in which he reduces into only several pages a rather remarkable turn in the analysis of resistance, which the two philosophers molded over years of thought and exchange.

To guard against his text from reading like a series of excursions into various theoretical minutiae, Raunig turns to the second layer under which he presents his ideas: the "long twentieth century" framework. It is through this framework that he brings into conceptual proximity six specific events, episodes, and moments from over a span of one hundred thirty-one years. Each is a case study in how an instructive turn in the relationship between art and politics takes place under revolutionary conditions, a different instantiation of the concatenation of art and revolution. The focus is on the direct involvement of a particular artist, set of artists, or art group in a period of revolutionary activity. Two of Raunig's case studies, well-related as capsule histories, Gustave Courbet's contributions to the Paris Commune and the Situationists before and during the Paris uprising of May '68, are known, if less than well understood, to most art activists who have an interest in the ultra-left.

Considerably more obscure to today's socially engaged art workers is an episode from Germany in the 1910s, centered around Kurt Hiller's pseudo-leftist literary circle known in its day as "Activism". Raunig takes as his point of entry Walter Benjamin's essay "The Author as Producer", in which Benjamin attacks both *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) and "Activism" (Raunig always uses the quotation marks), and through which Benjamin establishes an argument for formal innovation as revolutionary work, as opposed to the conservative (or, at best, politically ineffectual) intellectual's role as supplier of thematic content. Raunig's account and analysis of this practically forgotten intellectual current reveals Hiller's "Activism" as a loose association of private, *geist*-philic artists dedicated to a largely de-politicized articulation of the metaphysical. Compared to the politicized experiments in dissemination, funding structure, and social organizing done by a parallel group centered around the publication *Die Aktion*, and its editor Franz Pfemfert, "Activism" is borderline reactionary. By contrast, over the same period Hiller's one-time associate Pfemfert transforms *Die Aktion* from a journal of literati arts into an organ of fully engaged council-communist and anti-militarist political action. That enterprise ends in rounds of dissociations and isolation comparable, according to Raunig, to that of the Situationists.

The fact that the circles around Hiller's "Activism" and Pfemfert's *Die Aktion* in their early stages had some overlap in actors verifies the reality of these seemingly divergent intellectual and political trajectories sharing a common inception in the want for creativity. This is where Raunig makes his point, because the two paths represent, on the one hand, the falseness of the universal intellectual and, on the other, the option of radical refusal. Hiller stands for the universal intellectual—a figure properly skewered by Benjamin as overdetermined by the production apparatuses to which it is subject—while Pfemfert ends his career in the obscurity reserved for those who, through their refusal to supply prevailing cultural forms with new content, maintain a principled distance from the recuperative processes of the culture industry. Drawing on Benjamin's critique, Raunig extends the example of Pfemfert and *Die Aktion*, seeing in it not only a betrayal of the bourgeois intellectual's function, but the beginning of a positive position, one which asks "what it means today not only to not supply the production apparatus, but also how it can be changed". (127) This is relevant to all politically-engaged artists and presented in mostly tidy fashion. My criticism here is that I had hoped for some figures throughout the book, but particularly in this chapter, knowing that *Die Aktion* had helped to bring German Expressionist graphic work to a wider audience. A reproduction of a cover would have gone a long way towards substantiating the descriptions of *Die Aktion* as an organ that struggled with the challenges of consistency in politics, design, and their aesthetic and economic base (*Die Aktion* aimed for zero advertisements)—all of which are familiar to those involved in contemporary radical publishing.

The most provocative of Raunig's "long twentieth century" episodes counts as the third layer of complexity to his dense argument. He delivers it in his last chapters describing and analyzing the participation of a Vienna-based radical activist performance troupe, the Volxtheatre (or PublixTheatreCaravan), in the

Die Aktion **Vol. VII, nos 39–40 (1917). Title Page: Woodcut by Conrad Felixmüller: *Rettet Euch Menschen***

oppositional activities targeting the G8 summit in Genoa in July 2001, and then the group's work with the activist gathering at the Strasbourg noborder camp of 2002. These are the most recent episodes addressed, but far from marking the closing of a period, they stand as keeping the long twentieth century open and present. It is not only that by any measure four years before the date of publication counts as recent history, well within the scope of personal memory and still-rough primary accounts. More significant is that Raunig tells of the PublixTheatreCaravan's activity following the events of Genoa, infamous for the brutality of the police actions, and of how the group evolved in a changed political climate. The post-Genoa climate is essentially continuous with the post-9/11 repressive media-saturated regime we in North America and Europe experience today, sometimes violently, especially depending on skin color and relative wealth. We cannot exist apart from, outside of, or beyond the long twentieth century of art and revolution, Raunig seems to be saying. We are in it, looking for ways to continue the task before us, laid out in imaginary terms by Chernyshevsky nearly a decade before Courbet served as Commune Councilor. In other words: What is to be done?

It is in Raunig's treatment of the recent, living, "uncompleted and uncompletable" history that his distinctive voice finally emerges in full, drawing equally on his training in classical philology, his leftist social theory idea-bank, and his practical experience in the activist milieu. The term "border" proves ripe for philological dissection. In a helpful rumination, Raunig explains that the three Latin terms corresponding to our single modern term "border": *(con-) finis*, *frons*, and *limes*, open up conceptions of borders not as lines, but as zones of adjacency and overlap. Speaking as the classicist, he reminds us that back in the days of Roman antiquity, whole provinces might exist as "border" (248). The element of activist experience, however, is what ultimately stamps the work with an authenticity not wholly provided by academic firepower alone. When Raunig speaks with familiarity of the tactical discussions, internal micro-political negotiations, and plain old interpersonal dramas that took place within the social space of the noboder camp, he speaks of the social dynamics that alternately energize and bedevil almost all grassroots movements (257–258). The service he provides is a necessary one, that is, to link in a coherent analysis the action on the ground, in the talking circles, and, in this case, in the plena of the noborder camps, to the theories which often too neatly accommodate in implicitly valorized terms such messy and frustrating activist realities. The point is, the concatenation of art and revolution in the long twentieth century is articulated not just in grand movements, but also and perhaps even primarily in the local actions, the rhizomatic discussions, the endless arguments, the short-lived interventions of the everyday.

"This is partisan resistance theory, anti-capitalist to the core, and informed by the practical challenge of political action"

And here I can say I was not disappointed with the book. Attempting to make sense of the contradictions and blockages as experienced—or rather, *produced*—in the concrete activist efforts of, for example, the noborder camp is, I dare say, the only way to advance the theoretical understanding of our condition as leftist cultural producers. His attention to the inner workings of the activist milieu distinguishes his analysis from other movement-engaged works of theory that have reached a left-identified readership in the last few years (such as Retort's *Afflicted Powers*, 2005), which tend to float above the activist dysfunction. On that level, Raunig finishes on a courageous note. If there is one weakness worth mentioning, it is the lack of acknowledged specificity, especially in regards to the most recent activism. Other reviewers have questioned Raunig's selection of the PublixTheatreCaravan as the one example from contemporary times. I have no quarrel with his choice: from his descriptions, the group is indeed a fair representative of a prevailing current on the leftist world stage, in strategy, method, and aesthetic. However, it is also true that it is a current with a very European-American flavor, and that should not only be acknowledged, but analyzed. I have no interest in the morality of declaring social position as an attempt to circumscribe privilege, but I am concerned about how politically engaged art workers might anticipate, manage, and circumvent the inevitable limits of transferability of any given model in our age of colliding identities. Those limits are reached most quickly (but nearly always in a distressingly surprising way) when cultural and/or locational specificities are not straightforwardly declared. While this concern may fall outside the scope of the book, as long as Raunig's ever-lengthening century remains provisionally open, the specter of difference versus commonality lurks. Moreover, the operations of capital depend on the selective effacement of differences. In his closing thoughts targeting the art world's assimilation of "revolutionary" content, Raunig says as much:

> The figure of instrumentalizing the concatenation to derive all kinds of capital from it principally belongs to the current trend of fashionable border-crossings: When media intellectuals today... avail themselves of the symbolic capital and scandal of revolution, or when actors in the art field instrumentalize social transformations as spectacular conditions just to finance their art, this is part of what has become a familiar arsenal of aggressive publicity work and self-presentation. (264)

That, to me, is the issue. I have already said that, in regards to intellectual lineage, I see no weakness in specificity. The same could be said for the historical examples. How can we preserve the symbols of the past for a common revolutionary future when we have already seen the massive mining of images associated with the Chinese Revolution by profit-driven artists and style-makers, and when Che exists only as an ennui-inducing decoration, ubiquitous as a marker of staleness and virtual de-politicization? Far less heavily reproduced representations of revolution litter the art and design worlds. Any substantively revolutionary episode, including all those named and examined by Raunig, provide low-hanging fruit for the enterprising. Raunig posits the transversal—the dual belonging of any action to spheres not limited only to art or only to politics—as antidote to static representations of consumable revolution. Upon finishing a reader may be forgiven for believing that revolution, in some new-fangled form, is always possible, and at the micro level, always happening. But I must wonder, are these "singular events" actuated by the "concatenation of revolutionary machines and art machines" not equally due to the insistent particularities of a given social world in time and place? That is to say, is the incipient creation of revolutionary singularities due in part to the built-in limits of transferability of any given concatenation? Might that creativity be better served were the limits of transferability made a focus of theoretical understanding, rather than the afterthought it usually is? •

Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century,* transl. Aileen Derieg (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007).

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When Things Cast No Shadow
The Fifth Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art

Kim West

The large, central space in Kunstwerke in Berlin—one of the exhibition venues of the fifth Berlin Biennial—is empty. What signals the presence of an artistic intervention is the smell of asphalt and the feeling that one is walking on a road rather than moving through a gallery or a museum. Ahmet Ögüt's *Ground Control* (2007/2008) consists precisely of this: he has had the floor of the 400-square-meter space covered in asphalt, thereby creating a disturbance in the relation between the space's inside and its outside. The tactile experience of the coarse asphalt has connotations that give rise to other patterns of movement in the space.

Along one of the outer edges of a vaguely defined, deserted park landscape situated among office buildings, apartment projects, and construction sites in central Berlin, three hundred circular holes are excavated in the ground. They are placed close to one another and are all about 80 cm in diameter and 40 cm deep. The simultaneously subtle and drastic gesture of Kilian Rüthemann's *Stripping* (2008)—the intervention is negative, adds nothing to the place but subtracts from it—works primarily by rendering the surrounding site visible. The holes in the ground expose this urban (non-)place to what resembles a phenomenological "collapse of horizon", which, by rendering it useless, displays it as such.

Aleana Egan's *Ended Casually in the Water* (2008) looks like a three-dimensional line that curves its way through the air in Neue Nationalgalerie's open and extended space. The 18-meter-long, turquoise ribbon lays claim to Mies van der Rohe's general space and reconfigures it with light, almost graceful strokes.

On the second floor in the other part of Kunstwerke, a series of screens are placed at angles towards one of the shorter walls of the space. On the screens, photomontages are mounted in which images from pavilions at Zagreb's fair grounds in the 1960s are intercut with images that show the decaying remnants of the same structures today. Next to the screens a film is projected onto the wall, in which photo models pose in front of polished cars inside of one of the empty, deteriorated exhibition pavilions. David Maljkovic's installation *Lost Memories From These Days* (2006–2008) does not only confront two Croatian moments with each other in a way that creates a clear image of the times' different desires and hopes (or absence thereof). These references to an exhibition's form, its history and its political context, are themselves inserted into a specific exhibition, with its own form, history, politics—the Berlin Biennial—to which they establish associations and contradictions, creating a complex play of historical and formal connections.

These four quick examples point to the same thing. In each case the exhibition is the medium. The artists in question, like the artists and the curators of the Berlin Biennial in general, find the necessity of their practice in the relation to the demands, limitations, and possibilities that the specific exhibition situation entails. They do not work in the first hand with film, photography, painting, sculpture, documents, etc. (they can do each one of these things, or all at the same time), but with creating spatial arrangements that play with, or relate to, the physical, geographical, political, and historical conditions of the exhibition situation.

The exhibition is the medium. This statement has two parts. In an art critical discourse, to refer to the "medium" as something that poses demands and entails limitations, and starting from which artists find the necessity of their practice, evidently has clear connotations. However, that artists have a concern for the medium does not necessarily have to mean that they are guilty of formalist puritanism. The relation to the medium does not have to be a search for its essence, but can just as well be a critical prerequisite: a reflexive turn towards the conditions and limits of one's technologies and genres, starting from which it can become possible to create new ways to criticize, play with, or transform the forms of experience. In order to be able to create critical forms, which do not repeat hegemonic cultural expressions but give rise to other experiences and concepts, one must be conscious of the nature and limits of one's means of expression. To have a concern for the "medium" can simply mean to revise the technological, historical, political, etc., conditions of those means in order to be able to extract other aesthetic possibilities from them. It does not have to be introvert formalism or moralizing self-criticism, but can be a starting point for experiments.

What does it mean that the "exhibition" is the medium? It would be a simplification to understand exhibition simply as installation, as the configuring of spaces with artistic means. All exhibitions arrange specific spaces with positions and vectors for objects and spectators, regardless of what technologies they employ, but to understand the exhibition as a medium, as a specific, even if open and vague form of expression with defined limitations and preconditions, demands that one takes a series of other factors into account. To begin with, an exhibition does not just take place in a physical space, but also in a discursive one. That is, each exhibition is surrounded by paratexts: titles (of the exhibition itself and of its constitutive elements), work information (captions with names of artists, year, materials, etc.), information sheets, catalogue texts, and so on. These paratexts are not of secondary importance; they can be thematized and rendered operative as an active element of the exhibition, or be used "silently", as unavoidable background information, but they cannot be deleted from the exhibition as such. In addition to the physical and discursive spaces an exhibition occupies, it also takes place on one or several sites, as well as actualizing a number of histories. The site is the geographical and thereby geopolitical location: the landscape with its specific physical qualities (urban or rural), the city or village with its specific, local political context, and the country or even the continent and its role in global geopolitics. Furthermore, each exhibition has a series of historical preconditions: the history of the exhibition itself, the histories of the institutions, the histories of the present styles, genres, and technologies, and the histories brought along by the authors (artists, curators, architects, critics). To all of this one must add the exhibition's sociological conditions, that is, what the institutional critics normally reveal: economy, politics of selection, visitor statistics, etc. In short, an almost immeasurable number of factors weigh in as preconditions for an exhibition. It is a necessarily collective medium (even if it concerns a "solo show") and it can only thematize its constitutive factors with its own means.

"Exhibition" means more than "installation". If one wanted to write the history of the "medium of the exhibition" itself, it would therefore also be simplified only to describe how the spatial and "multimedia" installations have replaced painting and sculpture as the normal forms for contemporary art. There are a number of historical accounts that relate how the installation is established as the dominant mode of display, where the most obvious one would be the grand narrative about the "expansion of the field" of postminimal visual arts.[1] But in order for a notion of the exhibition as a medium to be useful, one must situate it within a broader tradition, beyond the isolated history of the visual arts. For example, one could examine how the contemporary artistic practices and modes of display seem to result from the convergence within the same physical and historical space of the visual arts and the art of cinema; how the mutations of the viewing technologies, the film industry, and the modes of artistic production and display in the post-war period interweave cinema and art with one another. In this respect one can note that the authors of the Berlin Biennial relate to the visual arts and to cinema as one common tradition. Artists such as Manon de Boer and Susan Hiller are inheritors to filmmakers like Resnais and Duras to the same degree as to predecessors within the visual arts.

The exhibition is the medium, a medium whose specific qualities are reconfigured and must be rearticulated at each given occasion. The Berlin Biennial is an exhibition that turns towards its medium in order to interrogate its necessity and from it extract new possibilities. The different partial exhibitions at Neue Nationalgalerie, Kunstwerke, and Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum, each seem to focus primarily on one of its fundamental conditions as an exhibition. Provisionally one could say that the partial exhibition at Neue Nationalgalerie constitutes a reflection into the space, and into the ability of things to reconfigure the space and create experiences of sensible presence; that the different spaces at Kunstwerke together form an examination into the histories of the exhibition, into different utopias and narratives connected to the geopolitical context of the exhibition, and into the ability of the technologies of representation to inscribe time and archive the past; and that the partial exhibition at Skulpturenpark, with its emblematic localization in a deserted landscape that used to be occupied by the Berlin Wall, thematizes, draws attention to, and plays with the site of the exhibition.[2] "Provisionally" because this obviously cannot sufficiently describe the multiplicity of elements in the different partial exhibitions, and because their different thematics are constantly interwoven and flow into one another. Starting from this general self-reflection, the Berlin Biennial creates a complex tissue of sensible experiences, historical associations and dissociations, connections and contrasts.

The first thing that strikes the visitor upon entering the Neue Nationalgalerie is the general management of the space. The visitor meets a carefully organized whole, a three-dimensional composition where each part of the exhibition space is taken into account, incorporated into a spatial play with forms. Directly inside of the entrance one is confronted with Paula Pivi's bars of diamond-adorned stalactites (*If you like it, thank you. If you don't like it, I am sorry. Enjoy anyway*, 2007), which hang down from the ceiling in extravagant, kitschy splendor and create a kind of interface between the spectator's body and the vast, open exhibition space. With these bars in the foreground, or through their grid, the partial exhibition unfolds its constitutive parts before the gaze of the spectator and activates all the parameters of the space: its height, width, depth, its inside/outside limits, built-in architectonic elements, etc. High up in the background Aleana Egan's *Ended Casually in the Water* hovers, flanked on either side by draperies that belong to Marc Camille Chaimowicz' and Nashashibi/Skaer's installations, and which reach all the way up to the ceiling. In the extended area between background and foreground Goshka Macuga's, Thea Djordjadze's, and Susan Hiller's sculptures and installations are carefully disposed over the floor and the lower part of the space, creating a landscape of forms that is outlined against the background. And in the foreground, directly behind and on the sides of Pivi's work, a number of artworks (by Gabriel Kuri, Pamela Rosenkranz, Haris Epanimonda, Paulina Olowska, Jacob Mishori, and others) are spread out over the surface of the floor and on architectonic elements (walls, screens, staircases), giving rise to a multiplicity of separate visual points. The space is engaged in its totality according to a conscious and elaborate logic. The different works and their mise-en-scène contribute to creating correspondences, a communication, between Mies van der Rohe's general, orthogonal and large-scaled space, and the spectator's perspective and corporeal scale. The scenography that has been constructed in Neue Nationalgalerie can in one sense be seen as aiming to create a phenomenological situation, where the "reified" space is brought back to the spectating subject's horizon of experience. At the same time it is important to point out that this is no simple critique of Mies's architecture, but an interaction with it, which does not turn against or reject the "standardized" space, but rather underlines and affirms some of its built-in qualities.

The Berlin Biennial does not have a clear theme. "Many attempts have been made to explain, often with an air of perfect rational authority, an exhi-

Paola Pivi, *If you like it, thank you. If you don' t like it, I am sorry. Enjoy anyway*, 2007. Installation view of the 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art at Neue Nationalgalerie. Aluminium, fiberglass, rhinestones. Courtesy Paola Pivi, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris / Miami.

Kilian Rüthemann, *Stripping*, 2008. Installation view of the 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art at Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum. 300 pits, diameter each 80 cm.

Aleana Egan, *Grey luminous light from the sea (A Structure for Readings)*, 2008. Installation view of the 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art at Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum. Courtesy Aleana Egan; Mary Mary, Glasgow; Galerie Sandra Bürgel, Berlin.

bition before it has actually become one", the curators Elena Filipovic and Adam Szymczyk write in their text, emblematically placed in the back of the catalogue, as if to counteract any tendency to read it as a programmatic declaration. "The heterogeneous selection of texts included here suggests neither a will to explain nor a claim to tell what the exhibition before you is 'about'."[3] The exhibition catalogue is consequently not traditionally designed, resembling rather a montage of texts that extend the questions of the exhibition, in which newly commissioned texts by Beatriz Colombina and Georges Didi-Huberman are juxtaposed to articles, poems and text fragments by Georg Simmel, Francis Ponge, and Robert Walser, and in which each one of the participating artists have had two spreads at their disposal to fill with relevant texts and images. Even though the exhibition lacks a guiding theme, it is possible, in certain texts in the catalogue, to discern a problematic that corresponds to the management of the space in Neue Nationalgalerie—to the attempt to have the artworks reconfigure the general space and create new relations to the spectating subject's horizon of experience. A series of texts discuss the relation between "objects" (that is, to simplify steeply, capitalist production's alienated, dead entity) and "things" (that is, the *Zeug* of the human productive power or the phenomenological *Lebensraum*). Boris Arvatov's, Dieter Roelstrate's, and Rachel Haidu's articles all, from different theoretical perspectives, discuss the same fundamental notion of how modern relations of productions transform "things" into "objects" and thereby separate man from contact with his own power and nature. To give rise to a true experience of the "things" would therefore be the same as tearing a hole in the veil of alienation and make it possible to glance a more true, human community—in the form of the working class's collective reappropriation of the means of production (Arvatov), *Dasein's* authentic being-together in the world that is opened up by the simple, ready-at-hand tool (Roelstrate), or human existence's responsible affirmation of its constitutive intersubjectivity (Haidu). Behind the title of the exhibition, "When Things Cast No Shadow", one can therefore discern a dream, rich with traditions, of the ability of art to give rise to a pure sensible, aesthetic experience: a sensation of the radiant apparition of things beyond the reifying mechanisms of capitalism. The mise-en-scène of Neue Nationalgalerie could be read as an attempt to create a space with "no shadows", where things do not stand under the partial illumination of instrumentalization, but where the spectators unite in the redemptive experience of their glowing presence.

If one moves from the general impression of the partial exhibition at Neue Nationalgalerie towards its constitutive parts, however, it seems rather to be characterized by a tension between opposing tendencies. On the one hand there are the artworks that contribute to the highlighting and reconfiguration of the architectonic space. In addition to those already brought up one can mention Nairy Baghramian's *La Colonne cassée (1871)* (2008), whose two, in principle identical, minimalist structures, placed in front of one another on both sides of the glass wall of the museum, comment upon and accentuate the idea of the transparent exhibition space's dissolution of the limit between inside and outside; and Daniel Knorr's *Nationalgalerie* (2008), fifty-eight generic flags (the emblems are said to come from Berlin's student organizations) that hang from the edges of the building's protruding roof and in a simple yet drastic way use a formal language rich with connotations in order to disturb the anonymity of the general architecture. On the other hand there are a number of works that thematize and problematize this idea of the presencing power of art, which create a critical play between words and images, unearth hidden historical continuities and establish new, untimely connections. Goshka Macuga's work *Deutsches Volk—deutsche Arbeit, Haus der Frau 1 & 2* (2008) is a clear example. In the center of the exhibition space four structures are placed on the floor: two semi-cylinders in metal and glass, about two meters in height, construed as open books standing on edge, with a system of "glass pages" connected to a central "metal spine"; and two metal bar structures of different heights, onto which fabrics of different materials and colors are hung. The work is based on an awareness of the material parameters of the space, and can easily be read together with the general mise-en-scène, but at the same time it has an important conceptual dimension: the different constructions are replicas of exhibition structures designed by Lilly Reich, Mies van der Rohe's life and work partner, and the first female member of Deutsche Werkbund's board. The concrete, physical sculpture ensemble thus also becomes an historical commentary to the relationship between these individuals, a reminder of one of Neue Nationalgalerie's many possible, invisible origins. Susanne M. Winterling's *Eileen Gray, the Jewel and Troubled Water* (2008) in a similar, even if less direct, fashion refers to the architecture of the institution and its history. The work consists of two identical, "mirrored" installations with images, objects, and 16 mm films, which occupy the two wardrobe spaces on opposite sides of the exhibition space. The work's constitutive elements all in different ways refer to the Irish designer Eileen Gray, whose "organic" architecture is said to have exerted an important influence upon Le Corbusier. The symmetrically repeated installation, whose films show the condensation that under specific circumstances appears on the inside of Neue Nationalgalerie's windows, consequently becomes a pair of "architectonic lungs" that stand in contrast to Mies's generic space in the same way that Gray's architecture stands in contrast to Le Corbusier's. One should also mention Susan Hiller's *The Last Silent Movie* (2007), a "film without images". Hiller's film does not lack images because it wants to destroy cinematic narrative conventions, but because it is inscribed within a singular reincarnation project. The soundtrack of *The Last Silent Movie* is an archive of dead languages, a sequence of voices that sing, read, and speak words that no longer have any use. By being played back as a soundtrack within a cinematic projection arrangement they become more than a work of sound art: they become a set of relations between lifeless—"silent"—words and absent images. Hiller's work is not only about the dead languages, but also about the images, the notions of things, which are evoked by these words that no longer exist.

The tendency to reconfigure Mies' generic space and accentuate the sensible presence of the things is therefore combined or contrasted with a tendency to historicize this space and problematize the idea of the glowing apparition of the things. A number of texts in the catalogue contribute to the problematizing, historicizing perspective: Beatriz Colomina's reading of Le Corbusier's and Mies van der Rohe's museum projects as models for their housing programs; Bettina Vismann's and Jürgen Mayer H.'s careful study of the ventilation of the Neue Nationalgalerie and the condensation on its glass walls; Oksana Bulgakova's essay about the utopias of glass architecture and Eisenstein's idea about the creation of a transparent, spheric book, etc. This general tension at the Neue Nationalgalerie, between the ambition to transform the dead object into a living thing, and the aspiration to create a distancing, critical play with forms and histories, is summarized in its full complexity in what is perhaps the best work of the Berlin Biennial: Rosalind Nashashibi's and Lucy Skaer's *Pygmalion* (2008). In the farthest, right-hand corner of the exhibition space a group of objects is installed. On the floor a number of Plexiglas forms in different colors are placed as a kind of puzzle, according to an intricate pattern. On a table there are Terracotta sculptures resembling horse legs, as well as a couple of images of an ancient painting (by Exekias, 500 BCE), and a poster for a Matisse and Picasso exhibition. What resembles pages from exhibition catalogues, with texts and reproductions of the same ancient image, are attached to the glass wall behind the table. Next to the table there is a film projection structure, showing a film in which a priest tries on one of the chasubles Matisse designed for the chapel in Vence. The pattern from the same chasubles is reported on a large fabric that hangs from the ceiling and partially delimits the installation from the rest of the exhibition. A plywood model that reproduces the shape of the chasuble leans against one of the exhibition space's few pillars. The ensemble's combination of forms of representation and velocities, of abstract patterns, sculptural forms, images, texts, and film, creates a diversified, but coherent, general impression. The separate objects set a multiplicity of narratives in motion and weave a web of historical and philosophical associations. The quotes from Matisse and his Chapelle du Rosarie connect "modern" painting's presentation of a pure, material sensibility, a concept-less aesthetic experience in which the thing comes to life and wrests itself out of the rigidifying grasp of alienation, with the catholic liturgy's transformation of word and matter into flesh, blood, and incorporated, living community. These references are connected to another history through the association to the ancient, mnemotechnological image, which depicts a horse-led procession that transports a noble woman to her final resting place, and which consequently shows the road to death at the same time as it inscribes, archives, and immortalizes its motif. The complex of historical quotations and connections is then subjected to a series of plastic transformations, a veritable Pygmalion labor: Exekias's horses turn into an almost abstract form, which is repeated and varied as terracotta sculpture and floor mosaic; Matisse's patterns and forms become architectonic and sculptural elements that intervene in the gallery space. In sum, *Pygmalion* becomes a constellation of thinking forms, a machine for sensible and intellectual reflection, an open, spatial montage that establishes formal and metaphorical associations and discloses historical continuities and ruptures.

The partial exhibition at the Neue Nationalgalerie thus seems to have a double ambition: it wants to create another experience of the space, and of the presence of the "things", at the same time as it questions every idea about a natural connection between a thing and its significance, and problematizes the historical legacy of the space. In the partial exhibition at Kunstwerke, the focus is transposed in a more apparent way towards the historical dimension, at the cost of the accentuation of the sensible presence of the thing. The juxtapositions of works on the four floors of the institution combine to reflect upon the document, the ability of representation technologies to record traces of the past, and the histories of the exhibition—different narratives and utopias connected to the institution, the city, the wider geopolitical context, and also to the contributing artists and their respective pasts and contexts.

There are hints at a thematic and formal organization of the exhibition spaces on Kunstwerke's different floors. The works on the third floor all seem to deal with and examine the ability of different mnemotechnologies—film, photography, writing, etc.—to register that which is ephemeral and transient, the invisible and minor histories. Zhao Liang's film *City Scene* (2004–5) is a case in point. The film consists of a series of short scenes from Chinese everyday life, in which the reality of contemporary Beijing haphazardly seems to arrange itself into image and narrative fragment: a man falls with his bike, a building about to be demolished collapses and nearly crushes the workers who take a rest in its shadow, five men spread out with almost choreographed precision across a field to urinate, a golf enthusiast practices his swing in an overgrown, deserted landscape in front of a huge, smoking factory. The scenes are presented in sequence, with direct sound and no commentaries or other additions. In all its simplicity the film seems to constitute an attempt to document the momentary, the insignificant and minor—time itself in its very flight. Something similar could be said concern-

Left to right: Kohei Yoshiyuki, *Untitled*, 1979, *Untitled*, 1971, *Untitled*, 1971. From the series *The Park*. Courtesy Yossi Milo Gallery. Copyright Kohei Yoshiyuki.

ing the three films by Michel Auder that are projected in a black box in the exhibition space, *My Last Bag of Heroin (For Real)* (1986), *Brooding Angels: Made For RL* (1988), and *Polaroid Cocaine* (1993). Auder's collage films are complex and would demand substantial analysis, but in this context it is possible to read his interconnections of newly recorded sequences, TV-cuts, and film quotes, not so much as narratives composed from heterogeneous material, but rather as a test of the indexical powers of the video images, as different series of impressions left by reality at certain moments. A work such as the four minutes long *My Last Bag of Heroin (For Real)*, in which the filmmaker, with a kind of morbid melancholy, documents smoking the last of his heroin, creates "history" from the lowest and most intimate, at the same time as it clearly demonstrates the material qualities of the video images: their imperfect reproduction of depth, their flickering focus, their bleeding colors. Kohei Yoshiyuki's series of photographs *Untitled* (1971–79) and *AP* (2007) also deal with the indexical power of the images, at the same time as they clearly reveal the voyeurism that is one of the preconditions of photography. The images are shot at night with infrared film, and show couples who, without knowledge of the presence of the photographer, have sex in front of spectators in a public park in Tokyo. Yoshiyuki in a sense reduces photography to its essence: the reciprocal play of exhibitionism and voyeurism, of revealing and concealing, in the recording of what should have disappeared with the passing of time.

One of the best works at Kunstwerke belongs to the same group of pieces dealing with the indexical powers of the representation technologies. Manon de Boer's *Two Times 4'33"* (2007–8) is based on a strong, almost Bazinian awareness about the material qualities of the film and about its ability to record a specific space-time, at the same time as it inscribes itself into a rich history about the artistic legacy of Cage's proto-conceptual music. The film (shot on 35 mm, transferred to HD) shows a piano player who performs Cage's composition twice in front of a small, attentive audience in a room that stands open towards a garden in an urban environment. At the first performance, a fixed camera shows the pianist who follows the score and starts and stops a stop-watch at each one of the composition's three moments (30", 2'23", 1'40"), while the soundtrack clearly registers the sounds of the place: the movements and the breathing of the spectators, the wind, the traffic, and the noise of the city leaking in from the outside. At the second performance the camera slowly pans away from the piano player, past the audience, and out towards the open view, with trees and bushes, telephone wires and rooftops, where it finally rests in a prolonged moment while the soundtrack is virtually silent: the only thing one can hear is the stop-watch being turned on and off. The idea seems apparent: on the first occasion we witness a documented performance of Cage's work, whose silence turns the audience and the surroundings into elements of the composition itself; at the second occasion we are ourselves present at a performance of the same work: the silence of the soundtrack allows the projection space to be filled with the sounds of the exhibition visitors. But the question is whether such a reading is sufficient. de Boer's work is not a piece of music, but a film. The four minutes and thirty-three seconds are not just a void to be filled with the noises of the spectators—on the film or in front of it. They are also a duration that engages cinematography in its essence: to inscribe the passing of time at a certain place onto a material support with specific qualities.[4] *Two Times 4'33"* is a documented piece of conceptual music, but it is also a film, whose camera work and minute attention for the visual, physical and sonorous characteristics of the space, and for the distinctive features of the film technology itself, makes one think of Huillet/Straub if anyone. de Boer's film shows the proximity between works traditionally seen as belonging to separate genres and histories: "modern" cinematography's examination of duration, the emptiness, the big, deserted spaces (the legacy of Antonioni, Duras, Akerman, etc.), and the "minimalist" or "structural" film that, following Cage, reduces film to pure temporal duration (Warhol, Snow, etc.). In this sense the work is emblematic for the general tendency of the Berlin Biennial to relate to the histories of visual arts and of cinema as a common tradition.

"[O]ne can decide the paradox of history—decide between the impossibility of a 'complete' history and the vanity of 'universal' history—only by re-exposing everything through the *reassembly* (re-montage) *of lost time*", Georges Didi-Huberman writes in his text in the catalogue, "Expose the nameless". The article presents a conceptual framework for a possible reading of the partial exhibition at Kunstwerke. In it, Didi-Huberman discusses the ability of cinema and the visual arts to show, to expose "the nameless", that which lacks political and aesthetic representation. "Peoples", he says, are today at once "over-" and "underexposed". The development of the mass media has made people more visible than ever, but, he establishes, "[p]eoples exposed to the stereotyped rehashing of images are also peoples exposed to disappear". In other words, those who are overexposed run the same risk as those who are underexposed, who are not blessed by the attention of the camera eye. And the question is whether it can be possible to create a new form of documenting which exposes the people "to itself rather than to its disappearance, so that the people [can] appear and take shape". That is, a documenting that records the invisible, the nameless, that which lacks representation, but that also has the ability to assemble these traces into histories which do not repeat stereotypical, "overexposing" patterns. Didi-Huberman finds possible models for a corresponding form of history in Benjamin's discussion about the "legibility of images", according to which all "natural" relationships between image and text should be dissolved, and a "critical relation" should be established between them, a relation of "mutual disturbance" in which they constantly question one another; and in Warburg, who in the "aesthetic dimension" of social reality, in "figurative and ornamental forms", finds the symptoms of the "deepest political and cultural conflicts" of the times, and tries to expose them through a vast juxtaposition of images, "a *visual history* that neither names nor explains the very thing whose symptom it reveals, simultaneously an *exposition and a mystery*". Is this not what contemporary filmmakers and artists strive for, Didi-Huberman asks: the creation of a "documentary montage" which neither tries to establish an impossible "complete" history (which records everything, without exception), nor a "universal" history (which surveys the past from a position of higher certainty), but which searches for other, critical ways to assemble the traces of the nameless and the invisible, in order to reveal the deepest political and cultural conflicts of the times?[5]

Didi-Huberman's analysis is extremely general and schematic, but perhaps one could say that a similar idea is at the basis of the setup of the partial exhibition at Kunstwerke. If the works at the institution's third floor thematize and deal with the indexical powers of the representation technologies, their ability to record time and the invisible, the works on the second floor seem rather to attempt to put the documents to use, to link them together in order to create critical conjunctions and contrasts. Two apparent examples would be David Majlkovic's already mentioned photo and video installation, which confronts historical moments and references to one another, and Patricia Esquivia's muddled *Folklore #1 & #2* (2006/2008), two films of shaky home video character, which construct associative narratives, a kind of oral "popular legends" about the history of Spain, using notes, scribble, postcards, snapshots, schematic illustrations, texts, etc. Mona Vatamanu's and Florin Tudor's image series and installation *Appointment With History / Communist Manifesto* (2007/2008) should also be read in this context, even though they are somewhat banal. *Appointment With History* consists of ten figurative paintings that reproduce everyday or political scenes from contemporary Romania and Germany: a man who stands in contemplation in front of a window with a view towards an industrial landscape, a large demonstration on a square, a group of people who study an architectural model in front of a construction site, etc. These paintings are hung on a row inside of the installation *Communist Manifesto*, which consists of a speaker's chair, audience chairs, and loudspeakers over which someone recites the Communist Manifesto. Together, the works seem to aim at creating perspectivizing effects by juxtaposing images that refer to the immediate past of the geopolitical context (say, the "Eastern bloc" states post-89) with the original Marxist utopia's *promesse de bonheur*. Lili Reynaud-Dewar's *Les Garçons sauvages* (2008) is based on a more sophisticated work with forms, images, and their histories and politics. The work consists of three structures in wood, whose forms lead one's thoughts to Sottsass's antiformalist design. On the structures different elements are mounted: Plexiglas plates, compositions in fabric, photographs, mirrors, clothes. *Les Garçons sauvages* constitutes a sort of monument to two figures from Berlin's underground scene, the gay icons Peter Berlin and Klaus Nomi, whose distinctive styles are demonstrated in images and in the very design of certain of the sculptures' elements. The work places a site-specific example of how style becomes a means for the creation of a sub-cultural identity, next to a more general narrative about the attempt to create alternatives to the formal language of the "international style" in the history of architecture and sculpture.

It is also in this context that one should situate Tris Vonna-Michell's installation *Studio A* (2008), which alone occupies the whole fourth floor of Kunstwerke. The premises of the work are good. Using an associative, open method, Vonna-Michell has assembled a number of documents from a visit to Detroit: photographs, films, sounds, and texts. These documents—photographs which record the eroding buildings of the industrial city, the soundtrack from *Robocop*, which takes place in a future, dystopian Detroit, books, maps, receipts, snapshots, and other traces from the artist's stay in the city—have been assembled into an open composition, which seems to tell a fragmentary story about the city's social and architectural decay. The problem is that the spatial mise-en-scène of the documents—slides are projected across the space so that the visitor cannot avoid getting in the way of the light beam, a system of screens resembling temporary fair architecture breaks up the space in angles and crannies, the whole floor is dimly lit—has no apparent aim other than filling the space. *Studio A* does not manage the large exhibition space it has been allotted, but somewhat anxiously clutters it with an atmospheric scenography. But even though Vonna-Michell's work does not master the space, it clarifies a fundamental aim of the partial exhibition as such: to find other spatial models for the organization of documents into historical narratives, to search for ways of "exposing the nameless". For a number of the separate works at Kunstwerke, the idea of a "re-montage" of historical documents and of "lost time" is of central importance. But perhaps one could also talk of a montage on a more general level, of the partial exhibition itself as a large assemblage which links together histories and images, documents and fictions, into an open whole. If the partial exhibition at Neue Nationalgalerie starts from the physical preconditions of the exhibition space in order to create an experimental, three-dimensional composition that aims to transform "objects" into "things", at the same time as it problematizes this aim and historicizes the space, the partial exhibition at Kunstwerke would rather aim to create a large, heterogeneous juxtaposition of documents and narratives, which starts from a series of the historical preconditions of the Berlin Biennial (of the city, the spaces, the places, the artists) and arranges their traces into a collective, visual, and spatial historiographical montage in four volumes.

▲
Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum. Copyright Philip Horst/KUNSTrePUBLIK, Copyright Ludovic Balland, 2008.

One should mention that Kunstwerke also houses a couple of the Berlin Biennial's few completely unnecessary works. In a small space in the other part of the institution, adjoining the monumental room in which Ögüt has carried out his architectonic intervention, Pushwagner's pointless "pictorial novel" *Soft City* (1969–1975) is shown, a 154-page-long comic book episode about a family's empty life in a dystopian mega-city, drawn in lead, India ink and Wite-Out, and installed in an elaborate display structure that curves its way through the space. The confused, naivist images supposedly have a cult value for younger Norwegian artists, but their role in the, for the most part, carefully curated context of the Berlin Biennial is difficult to comprehend. Katerina Sedá's *Over and Over* (2008) is just as redundant. The work, shown on the first floor of Kunstwerke, is supposed to be based on a kind of sociological experiment. The inhabitants of a village in the Czech Republic have been asked by the artist to participate in a collective project: to open up a passage through the different private, gated lots which turn the village into a labyrinth of paths between closed spaces; to try and overcome the economical, social, and geographical borders that shatter the society. What relationship this project has to the collection of mutely cryptic and at times troublingly banal objects—enlarged keys, abstract sketches and sculptures—which is shown at Kunstwerke is unclear. The objects do not document the execution of the experiment, nor its results, and no interesting or even comprehensible tensions are created between the work's conceptual and practical starting points and its final realization in the exhibition space. The feeling of arbitrariness is strong. *Over and Over* is a spacious and aestheticizing installation surrounded by a vague rhetoric of community and engagement.

Sedà's work has fared remarkably well in the reception of the Berlin Biennial. The third partial exhibition, in Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum, however, has received stronger criticism. Several critics have objected to the imperfect presentation of the partial exhibition, to how it is practically difficult to locate the actual artworks in the deserted lots of the "sculpture park". There is no reason to question this depiction. After my own visit I am certain of having seen about half of the works that according to the exhibition map are exposed on the site. But perhaps one should not understand the emptiness of the site and the relative invisibility of the works exclusively as a deficiency. The Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum is a place rich with histories, which contains traces of a number of the different transformations and states that the city has lived through. The Berlin Wall and its "death strips" used to cut through it. During the war the bombs destroyed the dense fabric of buildings, and during the pre-war period it is supposed to have been a kind of urban periphery, a slum-like non-place in the center of the city. At the same time, the deserted lots are a battleground for the different forces that have transformed Berlin after the fall of the wall. The new economy's enthusiastic speculation and the swift flight of the investors during the recession have turned the land into a combination of garbage dump, no-man's-land, and construction site. In short, Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum is a junction where a number of the city's historical lines of force intersect. Perhaps it is in such a context one can understand the "invisibility" of the artworks at this site. If some of them simply are poorly presented (Luciana Lamothe's billboard either was not there, or very closely resembled a normal billboard; Thea Djordjadze's *Fold b (large)* was nowhere to be found; and Susan Hiller's sound installation *What Every Gardener Knows* was extremely subtle, did not exist, or had its volume set too low), the majority of the works seem to aim to step back behind and present the site itself, to create a presence and an otherness that directs the attention towards the physical surroundings rather than towards the works.

This would not only apply to Killian Rüthemann's already mentioned *Stripping*, the three hundred holes that perforate the ground on one of the deserted lots. Something similar could be said of Aleana Egan's *Grey Luminous Light From the Sea (A Structure For Readings)* (2008), a light structure of thin steel bars, which in its subtleness corresponds to the artist's almost immaterial installation at the Neue Nationalgalerie. The shape is supposed be taken from an outdoor pavilion, but Egan's construction lacks all solidity and instead of providing shelter, it opens up to the surroundings and the site. In a similar way, Ania Molska's *Untitled* (2008) functions by rendering the surroundings visible, but it also has a clearer historical dimension. The construction, a six-meter-tall scaffold in metal and wood, constitutes a copy of a kind of structure people could climb up on to create "human sculptures" during the communist mass demonstrations. Installed in the empty Skulpturenpark, it is difficult not to see it as a pessimistic work, a somewhat shallow memento regarding the "totalitarian utopias" which have turned this place into a wasteland. *Untitled* is also connected to a film that is projected at Kunstwerke, and that shows how a group of peasants construct Molska's scaffold on a bog marsh in Poland. The "human sculpture" that is formed by the robust gentlemen as they stand spread out on the scaffold is comical rather than overwhelmingly spectacular. Cyprien Gaillard's *The Arena and the Wasteland* (2008) also aims to direct a fresh gaze towards the site, but does so by installing a suggestive scenography. On the middle of a large, overgrown lawn in front of a housing complex, an at least eight-meters-high floodlight structure is placed, a circular light rig on poles. During the day, the structure mostly looks misplaced, as a forgotten detail of a concert construction. During the night it is switched on and lights the deserted site, as if to announce the presence of something alien, even mystic.

These works seem above all to aim to produce alienation effects, creating concrete experiences of the site on which they are installed. The most lasting impression from a visit at the Skulpturenpark Berlin Zentrum is also the sensation of this site. After following directions through dead neighborhoods close to U-Bahn Spittelmarkt, in what resembles a financial district combined with a construction site, one suddenly enters a vast, open urban space, divided by roads and trashed fences, in which there are ruins of buildings, unidentifiable garbage, a kind of wild but destitute growth. On one side of the site tower newly constructed office buildings, designed for business and political administration. On the other side there are project-like housing complexes, not renovated since before the fall of the wall. Between these neighborhoods there are buildings in different states: incomplete constructions, ruins, things in between. When one stumbles around on the deserted lots looking for site-specific sculptures one has a peculiar feeling of moving through a sort of ontological backyard, a zone outside of all orders. Perhaps this is a site that can only exist in Berlin, the city whose center seems to be a condensation of peripheries, whose suburbs seem to be placed between its quarters, whose core seems to perforated with vast empty spaces, with nameless and invisible sites in which the very logic of the city is put out of play.

The starting point of the Berlin Biennial is a reflexive attention to the exhibition's own preconditions and limits. With its triple focus on the space (Neue Nationalgalerie's acute awareness of the qualities and limitations of the exhibition space, and of the different histories of the architecture, and its simultaneous search to create an experience of the space's pure sensible presence, in which "things cast no shadows"), the histories (Kunstwerke's thematization of the ability of the representation technologies to record the traces of time, and the compilation of documents and narratives into a spatial and visual assemblage which "exposes the nameless"), and the site (Skulpturenpark's alienating, site-specific interventions, which step back behind and render visible the actual surroundings as such), it turns towards its own physical, historical, political, and geographical conditions in order to find, in their qualities and limitations, its own necessity. However the Berlin Biennial's question is not only "What is an exhibition?" but also "What can an exhibition be?" At its horizon there seems to be a radical vision about the possibilities of the medium of the exhibition. On the one hand there is the idea of the exhibition as a collective, spatial, and visual historiographic montage. Both in separate artists' projects and in the general juxtaposition of artworks (whose author is the collective of artists, curators, architects, critics, etc.) the spectator meets a notion of the exhibition as a sensible knowledge form, a way of using aesthetic elements—images, films, texts, sounds, voices, bodies, objects—for the arrangement of a critical form of spatial, historical narratives that can give rise to new types of intellectual experiences, which can create other rhetorics and ways of reading, establish other forms of associations, reveal new continuities. On the other hand there is the idea of the exhibition as a site for human, sensible coexistence beyond instrumental demands. Despite its marked critical skepticism, the Berlin Biennial settles into the legacy of the notion, as traditional as it is subversive, of exhibition production as the art of transforming a certain place with specific qualities into a public space in which people can gather to find an open community in the experience of and the free speculation regarding aesthetic "things". It is evidently possible to object to details, to certain works and texts, to specific curatorial decisions, at the Berlin Biennial, but the failures are exceptions that have the function of counterpoints within a skillfully edited montage. •

When Things Cast No Shadow
5th Berlin Biennial For Contemporary Art
Various venues, Berlin
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Notes

1. Cf. e.g. Rosalind Krauss's short book on Broodthaers, *A Voyage on the North Sea* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), which inscribes the appearance of installation art squarely within the legacy of American minimalist visual arts. The text's aim is to "reinvent" the concept of the "medium" within the present "post-medium condition"—a condition, that is, beyond the "expansion of the field" and the idea of the medium as a specific material support. Doing so it performs a double operation. It consolidates the narrative according to which the transition from "modern" medium specificity to "postmodern" dematerialization and plurality in American minimalist and post-minimalist art is the pivotal sequence of events in post-WWII art history. At the same time, Krauss's "reinvented" notion of the medium as a "supporting structure, generative of a set of conventions, some of which, in assuming the medium itself as their subject, will be wholly 'specific' to it, thus producing an experience of their own necessity" (26), subjects artistic practice to a familiar duty of self-scrutiny and self-fortification: the post medium-medium itself becomes art's sole *telos*. The text also ascribes a certain importance to experimental film in the development of "post-medium" installation art. However, the discussion focuses exclusively on structuralist film, which itself is reduced to a realization of minimalist principles using other means.
2. In addition to these partial exhibitions, the Berlin Biennial also comprises a series of artist-curated, temporary exhibitions at the Schinkel Pavilion, as well as a two month-program of nightly events, *Mes nuits sont plus belles que vos jours*. Since I have not had the oppurtunity to follow these programs I will not discuss them here.
3. Filipovic & Szymczyk, "When Things Cast No Shadow", in *When Things Cast No Shadow exh. cat.* (Berlin: KW/JRP|Ringier, 2008), 585.
4. In her extended discussion about *4'33"* in *Words To Be Looked At* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), Liz Kotz connects Cage's 1952 work to the appearance during the same period of new technologies for sound recording, and notes both how Cage's dissociation of sound from intentionality "mirrors" the "audiotape's 'acousmatic' property, its tendency to separate sound from its source" (14); and how it establishes an "interface" with "vernacular culture", the duration of the composition roughly corresponding to the length of a standard pop recording.
5. Didi-Huberman, "Expose the Nameless", in *When Things Cast No Shadow*, 554–557. All quotes in this paragraph come from this text. It is worth noting how close Didi-Huberman's argument is to Godard's conception of his film historical project. Didi-Huberman also mentions *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as a central reference point concerning the search to create new forms of "documentary montage" (cf. 557).

Out & Around

Meike Schalk

In 1996, the French theorist Nicolas Bourriaud coined the term "relational aesthetics" in his now famous book of the same name.[1] In his text, Bourriaud attempted to characterize "artistic practices since the 1990s as open-ended, interactive, often appearing as "art-in-progress" rather than a completed object".[2] There have been various other, even earlier texts that employ concepts seeking to grasp an art production in which an art piece in the sense of a physical object was not necessarily central, replaced by an activity that invited the participation of an imaginary community, but Bourriaud's provoked the strongest reactions. In response to *Relational Aesthetics*, it was pointed out that he had aestheticized "the communicative paradigm and the social creative processes", and thus not criticized but rather reinforced the representational aspects of art. A seminar program of MACBA, the museum of contemporary art in Barcelona, consequently suggested relationality as "a concept that enables us to restore political density" instead of creating "a simulation of participation".[3]

Proto-concepts of a relational institution

Concerns of collaboration, participation, democracy, and community have been mentioned frequently by Bourriaud and his critics as core issues of a relational institution. However, these questions are not that new, but have been posed since the beginning of the twentieth century at least. In the 1920s the artist El Lissitzky rejected the "eternal passivity of museum art". With his Proun Room for the 1923 Berlin Art Exhibition he sought to develop alternative viewing conditions. During the 1920s and 1930s, the art historian and museum director Alexander Dorner created a number of exhibitions in which he attempted to form integrated environments: what he called "atmosphere galleries". Here the art works would no longer appear autonomous, but as historical and contextualized. Like Lissitzky, Dorner questioned the passive role of the spectator.

In 1926, Dorner asks Lissitzky to build what would become known as the Abstract Cabinet in the Hanover Landesmuseum. The Abstract Cabinet was intended to be a collaborative effort between the artist and the curator. A space was established in which individual art works of Mondrian, Moholy-Nagy, Picasso, Léger, and Kandinsky, among others, were arranged in relation to each other as to form a sort of milieu. In it the walls, formerly a neutral background to the artwork, were effectively dematerialized by narrow perpendicular slats painted white on one side and black on the other. The slats changed color when the viewer passed by them. In this installation, the wall became not only an object in itself and in relation to all other objects in the space, it also changed identity, animated by the moving spectator. By shifting her spatial positioning the spectator participated in the creation of the artwork.[4]

Twenty years later, in 1947, Dorner theorized his experience as a curator in *Ways Beyond Art*,[5] the same year that the writer and soon-to-be French cultural minister André Malraux published his book *The Psychology of Art* (1947).[6] *The Psychology of Art* contains an institutional critique and the proposal for a new concept of the museum along more democratic lines, centered on the concept of *le musée imaginaire* ("the museum without walls"). In this work, Malraux points to a shift in art history and theory from classical 19th century distinctions in historical periods to an emphasis on internal structures. This shift, he argued, was instigated by the comparative function of the museum itself. In locating and juxtaposing objects within a neutral space, the museum created its own internal and autonomous unities and centers. According to Malraux, the overriding of the museological impulse to classify works around a number of central points would foster a state of pluralism, wherein a wealth and endless variety of temporally and culturally distinct forms were rigorously equivocated, ultimately resulting in *le musée imaginaire*. The democratic aim of this museum was to make all art works, of all artists from all cultures, accessible to everyone, at any moment, not in the ideal space of the bourgeois museum, but through mass media in the form of photographic reproductions.[7] Recent critics have pointed to similarities of *le museée imaginaire* with the organizational form of the internet.

Seen in the light of institutional critique, *le musée imaginaire* turns against the traditional art museum. It destabilizes the notion of the museum as an institution that is acting from above; but it reinvents the museum as a different power, in terms of collective and individual cultural memory. Here, a community of spectators would take over from the museum the privilege of interpreting art and writing art history in structuring, and constantly restructuring, topical centers and links between art works and themes by themselves.

Museum concepts that have changed institutional art spaces

Kulturhuset (1965–1974), by Peter Celsing in Stockholm, was a new type of institution that brought together libraries, media and reading rooms, galleries, theater spaces, cafés and restaurants, shops, an area where people play chess, ticket offices, and spaces for children. The most important feature of Kulturhuset is its glass façade in relation to a public square, Sergels Torg. These types of spatial programs and the peculiar relationship between inside and outside recur in the Centre Pompidou (1969–1978), for which Kulturhuset served as a model.

Centre Pompidou was conceived as a cultural center where fine art, music, cinema, books and audio-visual media could be found side by side. The new cultural center was supposed to break with the traditional form of the museum. The arts should be brought to as wide an audience as possible including the immediately surrounding working class neighborhood. The architects Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, who won the competition for its design, replaced the competition program's description of "a cultural center for Paris" with "a live center of information and entertainment". They expressed their intention as creating a kind of public forum, a non-monumental building of infinite flexibility, in constant process, which put the user at the center. The structure's interdisciplinary organization was seen as an expression of the democratization of the arts. In its transparent frames, it was the visitor who was supposed to become exposed. In the words of the Pompidou's first director, Pontus Hultén: "Museums are no longer places to preserve works that lost their social, religious, and public functions, but places where artists meet the public and the public becomes creative."[8] Its critics compared Pompidou to a supermarket, designed for the masses ›

Playing the Wild Child: Art Institutions in a Situation of Changed Public Interest

Nina Möntmann

First of all: What is an institution?

Institutions, and therefore of course also art institutions, are by definition instruments or platforms for a prevailing order of social values. The philosopher of language, John Searle, prefaces his ontological investigation of institutions with the following basic assumption: "An institution is any collectively accepted system of rules (procedures, practices) that enables us to create institutional facts."[1] The concepts of the collective and the system of rules provide the basic parameters for an institution. From this it can be concluded that, conversely, society, when it acts through its institutions, follows a logical structure. Ideally, society and institutions therefore give each other a kind of structural grip and thus open up for each other a mutual potential for action. This, however, is accompanied by the side-effects of bureaucracy, hierarchical paternalism, exclusion and generalization. So much for the official part of this pragmatic relationship. What happens, however, when the "institution"—in this case, its staff—make their own agenda that deviates from the governmental line?

Elsewhere I have already drawn attention to the fact that art institutions, as distinct from other institutions such as state authorities, parties, and trade unions, are not given any direct participation in political processes.[2] Instead, they are given the (indirect) commission to produce images of realities which make them easier to consume, or to design parallel universes in which people can lose themselves for a time and in which everything is more beautiful and better—a parallel universe which either appears as spiritually separated or is supposed to entertain visitors. The fulfillment of this (tacit) commission is generally accompanied by the reward of simplified fund raising. Art institutions, however, in contrast to other institutions, have an individual, changeable profile that gives their actors a relatively large room for maneuver. Thus, for instance, the director of an art institution, while staying within certain boundaries, can adopt a new programmatic direction, in this way addressing or producing new publics. Because of the difficulty of controlling them, in this process art institutions also have a certain subversive social potential not enjoyed by other institutions, which exist in order to regulate and legitimize a certain hegemonic social form. The questions are, however, which art institutions take advantage of this potential and with what results? It is a question of temptation. What is more enticing: broad social recognition including reviews in the arts editorials of large newspapers, accompanied by a secure budget, or the pioneering achievements of proposing experimental social change and producing alternative publics? Those refractory "wild children" among the institutions thus develop an institutional avant-garde whose potential resides in maintaining a closer proximity to artistic practice and operating more closely with social problematics, instead of being merely the executive organ of direct governmental instructions and regulations. One must be satisfied with this opposition; it would be naive to believe that there could be a critical institution at the center of attention with a reliable economic basis. This is inconceivable, and perhaps even a necessary antithesis in the age of global capitalism.

Now, there are of course a multitude of different art institutions. It can be noted that the more "official" an institution is, the more public it has in the sense of broad and diverse attention. Conversely, the further removed an institution is from official institutional status, the more independent it is, and the smaller the public groups which feel themselves addressed by and belonging to it.

Institutions and the public sphere

An art institution constitutes itself to a certain degree from its position in the public sphere, especially in its relationships with those public groups that visit the public art gallery or museum, talk about it, criticize it, take part in events and discussions, support the institution and its activities on various levels, associate their names with the institution's program, feel themselves part of a social group associated with the ›

André Malraux in front of images for *Le Musée imaginaire*, ca. 1950

to consume culture rather than to reflect on it. However, the Pompidou is an example of the changing of a museum's identity through architecture and creating an exhibition and museum typology that, rather than being geared towards representation and representative spaces, intends to resemble a laboratory directed towards experimentation.

"Here, a community of spectators would take over from the museum the privilege of interpreting art and writing art history in structuring, and constantly restructuring topical centers and links between art works and themes by themselves"

With Palais de Tokyo in Paris, opened in 2002, a museum has come into being that emphasizes the use of the museum as social space. It sees itself as embodying the notion of relational aesthetics on an institutional level. Through unusual opening hours from noon until midnight it wants to adjust to an urban lifestyle. It is not the first of its kind, but one that has received a lot of funding and media attention. The refurbishment of a historical building from 1937 by the architect office Lacaton & Vassall Architectes meant a radical reconceptualization of a space for an art institution. Instead of clean white walls, the interior was left bare and unfinished for displaying contemporary art as a studio, or again, experimental "laboratory".

Above all, in recent years smaller local and regional institutions have actively worked with space in order to create new encounters between staff and the public in relation to changed curatorial and art practices. Under Maria Lind, Kunstverein München rearranged its spaces in relation to the reorganization of the Kunstverein itself in 2003, done in collaboration with the artist Apolonija Šušteršic. Besides the changing of the opening hours, archives became openly displayed, the staff started working in the foyer, and the space turned into a transformable unit shifting between lobby, lecture hall, bar/café, and reading room (see Katarina Pierre's article in this issue).

Gallerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst in Leipzig is located in a specific regional context and pursues an alternative program to populism and commercialization, with its concept of "wandelbare Räume" or changeable spaces. The architecture of the new pavilion of 2004 represents a sort of toy or tool for supporting the "performative acts" of curators and artists. It does not only function as a stage, but also as an integral factor of collaborative art praxis (see Barbara Steiner's article in this issue).

The museum as a place of production of spaces and encounters

In 2005–7, Bildmuseet in Umeå, Sweden ran the project Out & Around (The Relational Museum), which explored the relation of contemporary art institutions to their public. A starting point was the proposal of the University of Umeå, of which the museum is a part, to move Bildmuseet to a new location, in order to create a so-called Artistic Campus together with the art school, the design school, and a new proposal to establish a school of architecture. Another factor was the precarious financial situation of the museum.

Bildmuseet is not a museum in the strict sense; it does not possess its own collection. It was founded in 1981 to, among other things, show works of the city and national art collections, thus providing access to cultural heritage for the sparsely populated areas in the north of Sweden. In fact the museum developed into an important producer of shows, and has, in a ranking of contemporary art spaces in Sweden, even been ranked as high as second, ahead of the largest renowned art institutions. At present, the museum is located at the edge of the city, and forms a part ›

Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers
Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1971–1977
Photo: Antonio Martinelli

of a cluster with the regional museum and an open-air museum that includes the Fishing and Maritime Museum. Bildmuseet attracts families and students on weekends arriving from a walk in the nearby forest, and/or the historical open-air museum, or from the adjacent regional museum with which Bildmuseet is connected through a corridor. The move of the institution is controversial, as it means not only a local shift but also a symbolic one—a shift of identity. For the university, the creation of an Artistic Campus is an issue of branding.

As part of the project two workshops were conducted in the museum. "A Date at Bildmuseet", in December 2006, together with staff of the museum, invited guests from the university, and artists and curators from outside. The aim of this workshop was to identify future topics, goals and strategies for a relational institution. The main issues were autonomy for developing the museum conceptually from those who are responsible for the finances, to improve the communication between the museum and its audiences, and to create new audiences, and new professional networks on all possible levels: local and global. A second workshop with visitors of the museum took place in March 2007, addressing the questions of what different groups expect from a contemporary art institution and how they see the museum's relation to the public. In both workshops, the expected change of locality was explored in terms of threats and opportunities. The shift of environment from the city's edge to the academic milieu threatens the museum's autonomy. However, a new urban situation and the academic environment could open up lines of rethinking the institution in terms of new programs, productions, and audiences.

The project consisted most of all in the visualization of information concerning the museum and its contexts for enabling a larger discussion: in the mapping of existing local and global networks to stress Bildmuseet's important position, of contemporary art institutions in Sweden showing their distributions and the mobility pattern this triggers, and for understanding how few possibilities there are in the North to get in touch with contemporary art.

In various scenarios, different sites such as edge, center, and campus were studied. At the current location at the edge, Bildmuseet, as part of a museum cluster, attracts its audience on weekends: it is a family meeting place. Located at the center, the museum could become part of other networks and take over more public functions. On the campus, the museum and the university could share spaces and people.

Museum cultures and architectures have changed under the pressures of survival. On the one hand, there is the much-noted commercialization of art spaces, on the other hand, museum and exhibition concepts and spaces are evolving that build on difference instead of homogenization, and on forms of involvement and participation. The project Out & Around (The Relational Museum) sought to find out what contemporary forms of art spaces these conditions produce. A long-term goal of such a project must be to develop new approaches that make it possible to study the complex relationships between institutional and urban politics in the making of the museum as institution, as space, as a place of production, and in the making of the audience not only as consumers, but also as actors. •

Notes

1. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique Rélationnelle*, first published in French in 1996 (English translation, 2002).
2. Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October* 110, Fall 2004, 52.
3. "Another Relationality. Rethinking Art as Experience", program description for two seminars 23–26 November 2005, and 14–18 March 2006 at MACBA Barcelona.
4. Victoria Newhouse, *Towards a New Museum* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998), 224, and Helena Mattsson, *Arkitektur och Konsumption* (Stehag: Symposion, 2004), 91–95.
5. Alexander Dorner, *The Way Beyond "Art"—The Work of Herbert Beyer* (New York: Wittenborn, Schulz, 1947).
6. André Malraux, *Psychologie de l'art. Le musée imaginaire* (Paris: Skira, 1947).
7. Maurice Blanchot, *Museumskrankheit. Das Museum, die Kunst und die Zeit* (Köln: Wilfried Dickhoff, 2007, originally published as: "Le Musée, l'Art, et le Temps" 1950, 1971), translated by Hans-Dieter Gondek, 12, 61.
8. John Coolidge, *Patrons and Architects: Designing Art Museums in the Twentieth Century* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1989), 136.

Challenging (the) Context

Barbara Steiner

The title "Challenging (the) context" can be read in two ways. First, "Challenging context" means that an art institution is always challenged by its context. Second, "Challenging the context" refers to the necessity that an art institution challenges its context. Let us further assume that an art-institution takes up an active role in educational processes, although this should not be done on the basis of a patronizing attitude. We are challenging our partners and they are challenging us. During the course of debates expectations on both sides will constantly be re-shaped. By the notion "context" I refer to the frame of an institution and its political, economic, social and cultural implications.

First, I would like to describe our context. The GfZK (Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig) as a project was an outcome of the political changes that had occurred in Germany since the fall of the wall. It was an expression of several desires: for bridging developments in the East and West, internationalism and stepping over national borders. It meant the opportunity to show works of art that had previously been known only via reproductions, and of bringing artists to the east who had not been permitted to exhibit there in the past. It also meant a rehabilitation of formerly dissident positions.

The enthusiasm was extremely high in the early years. The founders, the East German dissident Klaus Werner and the West German industrialist Arend Oetker, managed to mobilize enormous political, economic and social support, fuelled by a general atmosphere of departure after 1990. This lasted until the mid-nineties, but cracks actually already began to appear during the founding process. When I got the job in April 2001, I had to face this erosion of acceptance. It has become clear that the model of a long-lasting engagement of promoters does not work anymore, not in Leipzig and obviously not in many other cities. Versatile, individual forms of support replace a site-specific, lasting engagement for a common concern. Audiences and other ›

museum, or contribute and participate in other, informal ways.

Their participants assume an important standpoint in the critical stocktaking of institutions, and Searle emphasizes this by drawing attention to the fact that this view can only be performed from the inside.[3] It is, in a certain sense, a mapping of the institution that serves as the first step in a critical practice. Hence projects of "institutional critique" always arise from a parasitic perspective through the artist transgressing her usual, largely transparent position as a producer for the (semi-)public sphere of the exhibition space, risking a step behind the scenes and becoming a direct participant in the institution. Apart from the staff of an institution, and its guests and co-producers, the participation of certain public groups in institutional processes is extraordinarily important and accordingly, the interest in the composition of these groups is fundamental. Hence, today, it is one of the most urgent tasks of contemporary art institutions to generate a peer group that keeps the hardware running and uses the software.

The corporate turn in the institutional landscape

How does this essential relationship between art institution and its publics shape up under the changed conditions of increasing privatization of both the institutions and the public realm? Today, the plans of art institutions are determined, or at least influenced, by the dependency on external and increasingly private resources. This implies the commission of attracting a mass public and delivering visitor numbers. If we compare the influence of ratings on television programs, the fatal effects of this principle become all too apparent. Because institutions, as described above, have a close relationship with the general value-system of a society, it can be said that the "corporate turn" in the institutional landscape mirrors the general power relations in a late-capitalist, neo-liberal social constitution. Today, art institutions are becoming branded spaces, and the private financiers are, as a rule, not so much interested in visiting and taking part in the program of the museum, which they possibly support, but in deploying it as an instrument for the production of corporate image and ultimately corporate profit. Their ideal public is the anonymous mass of global consumers. This corporate model of an art institution—among which we can count as the most public the huge museums such as the Guggenheim and the Tate, which are spreading according to the principle of franchising, and even the MoMA, but also increasingly medium-sized public art galleries, and even smaller institutions—has a peer group of speculators who potentially identify more with the Guggenheim brand, rather than with its program, and a non-specific public measured in numbers. Hence it may be rightly claimed that one million visitors will turn up annually at the Guggenheim Bilbao, no matter what exhibition is on show. Apart from the privatization of the budget, the corporate turn includes also a changed profile for the curators and directors, who are increasingly appointed for their management qualities as well as their abilities for marketing, as populist politicians, their institution's program from the viewpoint of profitability. If, therefore, in neo-capitalism there is a general social tendency to superimpose private interests on the public interest, as a consequence the profiles for action of public positions change accordingly, including the duties of the institution's employees.

New qualities of the public sphere

To the present day, the public sphere is conceived in relation to the democratic in the sense of communicative and participatory. Thereby, observations of the shaping of the public sphere have shifted from Habermas' non-existent ideal of an harmonious and homogeneous whole to a space structured by diversity in which parallel, differing interests have a highly conflictual relationship with one another. This understanding provides the basis for the theories of democracy of Claude Lefort, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau.[4] With the current trend toward privatization, monitoring, security, rivalry and exclusion in public realms, an homogeneous democratic space in which the most diverse interests can be lived and acted out next to one another in an harmonious relationship is inconceivable. Instead, Mouffe's "agonistic" model, for example, describes a plurality of different public realms emerging through a process of dissension.[5] In the meantime, the recognition of the concept of an agonistic public can be found as a guiding thread in observations in art theory on the status of the public sphere.[6]

If the art institution is regarded as part of the public sphere, the acceptance of the dissonances arising within it as productive forces implies a new challenge consisting in generating a diversity of democratic public spheres that emerge in dissent against the hegemonic interests within society, and possibly also amongst each other. In this process the way an art institution is determined by a public sphere bearing the stamp of the prevailing social order, and conversely, the extent to which an art institution can define the public sphere, become manifest. The role and responsibility of the institution lies in recognizing its public competence and deploying its authority in a positive sense. Since the public sphere is constituted in a collective process, the participation of the public represents a central function in any view of the public realm. For Nancy Fraser participation is the basic factor for the production of public spheres: "Taken together, these two ideas—the validity of public opinion and the empowerment of citizens vis-à-vis the state—are indispensable for the concept of the public sphere within the framework of a theory of democracy. Without them, the concept loses its critical force and its political frame of reference."[7]

No matter whether democracy is defined as harmoniously idealistic or diverse and conflictual, the conception of the public sphere corresponding to these models is always based upon the ideals of a democratic, communicative exchange, of critical debate, of people coming together. But these values have long since become much less self-determined than they once were. Communication is the constant coercion permeating the neo-liberal working world. People sit in endless meetings and videoconferences, send and receive information, use new tools and media that are supposed to facilitate communication and make them be contactable at any time. These forms of constant exchange necessarily devalue communication and make it an end in itself. When nobody has time to do research and to adequately prepare meetings, communication is felt to be a restriction and a stress factor. Moreover, constant contactability functions as a control mechanism for hierarchical relations. Managers and directors have long since allowed themselves to be out of reach, whereas constantly being on the mobile phone is now regarded as socially inferior behavior.

These changes in communication in the neo-liberal working world with its specific value-system put its democratic value into question, which to date has always been regarded as the highest good of a public realm. The revaluation of communication is a part of what Hardt and Negri write about the regime of the empire and its effects. "It not only guides human interaction, but also tries to rule directly over human nature. Social life becomes the object of domination."[8] Paolo Virno also speaks with less pathos about communication and co-operation, which in post-Fordism have become the motor of capitalist relations of production and thereby in their execution signify the "social adaptation" of the subject.[9] The decoupling of the concepts of the democratic public sphere and communication is thus an essential basis for developing new models of the public sphere with the aim of making space for necessary communication that establishes meaning, instead of endless meetings, talks and appointments, which in many cases merely raise the stress levels of those involved.

Transferred to the program of an art institution, this would mean replacing a continually rising number of events on offer, resembling ›

kinds of supporters can no longer be imagined as homogenous and constant; they diverge significantly in their tasks and interests, and especially in their sets of values. They respond spontaneously to the offers of cultural institutions and it has become more than difficult to keep their attention. The understanding of art has exploded towards a multifaceted approach. The relationships between artists, institutions, politicians and financiers have become very complicated due to a number of reasons. One of these is definitely the pressure of economic constraints. Notions of publicity and accessibility have been perforated, and the subject and object of critique is difficult to grasp.

In Leipzig, too, we started under these premises: re-thinking the institution from the top to the bottom. In 2002 we launched the first three-year-long research project involving a series of exhibitions and discussions (Cultural Territories) on the role of art and culture in post-communist countries. Afterwards the program was made public and a debate started about the international status of the institution because of fears that the institution, which once enjoyed international standing, was being marginalized. The artistic positions we showed were simply considered irrelevant within an international context. We began discussing the notion of internationalism, its traditional relationship to western standards, and its hegemonic character, but also the utopian moment of its connective character, which is able to overstep local or national boarders. Public negotiation has started about the program of the institution and its past, and the local and global role of art. We started talking about the genesis of the gallery, its construction, function and role in public.

Since then we did multi-annual research projects on the heritage of Modernism (Heimat Moderne, Shrinking Cities), and on the role of artistic critique/criticality in capitalist and socialist countries (DagegenDabei). In 2007 we focused on collective and individual cultural memories and we examined the social conceiveness of the artistic means. In the last year we have put on exhibitions by Tilo Schulz, Dora Garcia, Muntean & Rosenblum and Joachim Brohm. All temporary exhibitions, lectures, workshops are basically an outcome of the research projects.

In 2008/09 we will focus on private engagement in art. We invited enterprises and collectors to explain the basis of their commitment to art. Each of these embodies in exemplary form a particular position in their association with art. All have a relationship to Leipzig and/or to GfZK but their activities spread beyond the local. Those invited are given carte blanche: it is left entirely up to them how they interpret the assignment. The museum's infrastructure is made available to those invited, and in return, the latter assume all the costs for their project. GfZK is providing an introduction to the fundamental issues under scrutiny (Friendly Enemies) in its opening exhibition, preparing the conceptual framework in which the project is embedded, communicating this to the outside, and holding a series of accompanying events ("CB discursive", e.g. lectures, panels, trips) to examine the role and the significance of private commitment. The aim is to stimulate a debate on the working conditions of institutions, overt and hidden costs, and the relationship between private and public involvement. We are interested in how such an interaction between the private and the public sector might work, what the consequences of such forms of cooperation would be for the development of art and its institutions, especially when considered against the background of the establishment of our museum. This relationship will have to become the subject for debate, argument and negotiation conducted in public.

Before 2001 the focus of the program was on the temporary exhibitions. Today, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Leipzig is an exhibition venue for contemporary art and a museum of post-WWII art. The GfZK initiates grant programs for young artists and awards prizes. There is one grant given to international artists, another program supports local artists, and a third grant that invites curators from post-communist countries to work at the gallery. The award "Europe's Future" supports artists from marginalized areas within Europe and "Inform" tests the limits between graphic design and art. The business parts of the institution (café, hotel, gfzk garten) are all conceived by artists.[‡] The departments (the collection, the curatorial, the educational department, the library, the café) have got their own responsibilities and conceive their own programs, which include exhibitions, lectures, discussions, workshops, concerts, readings, film-screenings, etc. They all address different audiences.

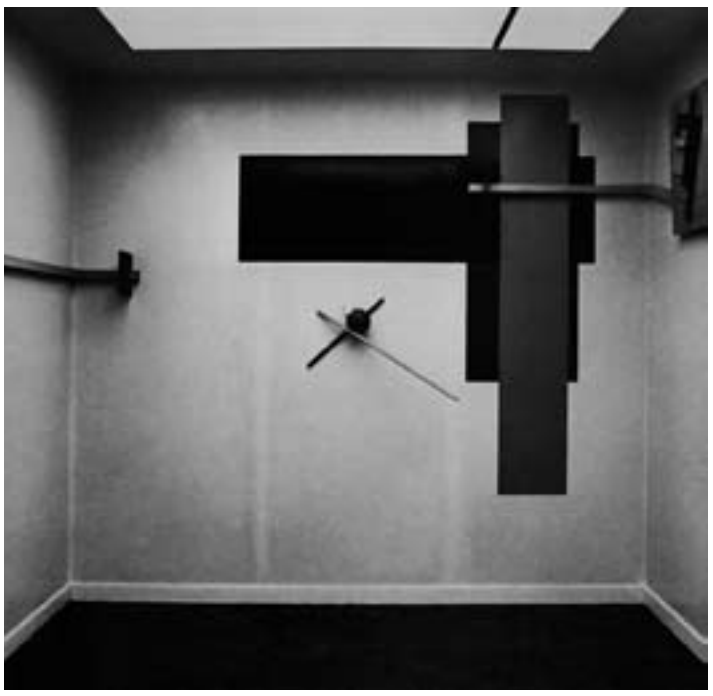
The program is planned two to three years in advance. The three curators of the gallery set up their areas of focus. They are chosen in relation to the respective interest of the curator and the particular situation of the gallery, be it the role of the gallery within a post-communist or global context or during economic troubles. To put it differently, the themes come out of the context in which we see ourselves. The departments are invited to interpret them as the curators do. If we cooperate with others these people are invited to join the process (there are co-operations on local, national and international scale with others, be it individuals, groups or institutions). Our departments are connected and in permanent exchange. Some projects are done together in different constellations. One of the curators works closely with the education department, the custodian collaborates with curators and the librarian, the program of the café and the gfzk garden is done by the café manager, who is in discussion with the curators. The education department runs its own exhibition space, whose exhibitions are curated by children and teenagers and supported by the educators. A group of graphic designers works in various constellations for the respective departments and each gets its own visual image. Many co-operations are held with institutions in Leipzig: with schools and kindergartens, the theatre, the cinemas. We support cultural initiatives, mainly of younger colleagues. All our curators plus the custodian teach at universities and academies and take this opportunity to connect their teaching with their work at the gallery.

I would like to describe the programmatic attitude of the gallery as an "exercise in complexity", which aims to give space to different interests. But our approach should not be read as a leveling out of values and attitudes, as a great gesture of reconciliation or relativization of various concepts. I would like to put it more like this: competing ideas or discourses are confronted, contrasted, marked, and put on display. The growing complexity and contingency of institutions requires simultaneous programs and functions. Basically all this leads to the notion of negotiation if one does not want to plead for isolated, polarized units.

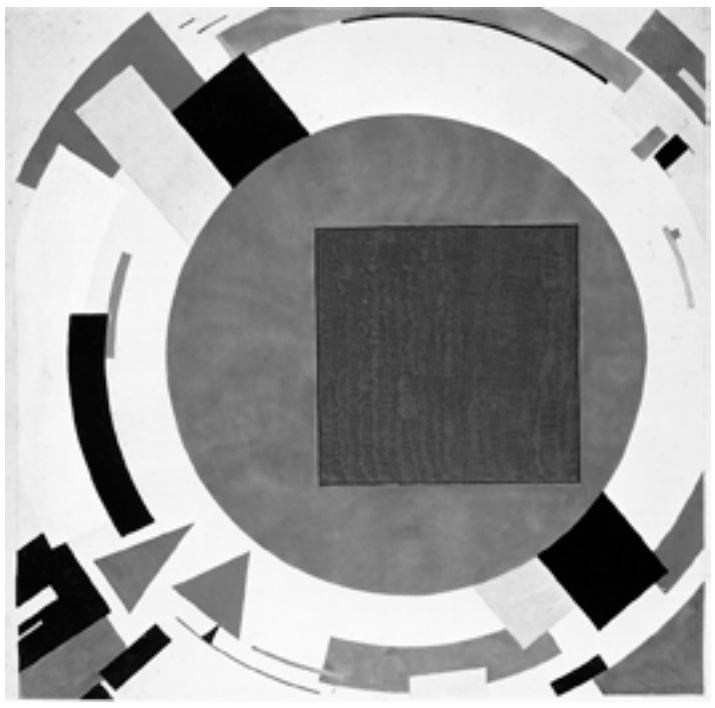
Now I would like to introduce you to the principles of our second building, conceived by as-if berlinwien. It opened at the end of 2004. This building plays an important role within our concept of negotiation.

From the beginning the new building was planned in stark contrast to the converted villa of Peter Kulka. The aim was to raise a debate about the role and function of architecture and its relation to art. Inside, Kulka's building followed the concept of the white cube. He designed spaces that allow a full concentration on art and its aesthetic qualities. The architectural concept, however, faded out. It seemed to be given, irreversible and ideal. The conception of the second building is based in contrast on the attempt to define a spatial structure as a reversible set of relational elements, which represent specific institutional functions and modes of production. These segments form a changeable infrastructure for the contemporary practice of exhibiting and curating. They allow a simultaneous and side-by-side presence of different programs, visual and thematic relationships. The spaces are no longer designed with a single definite function in view—rather they imply the possibility of their own reinterpretation. We find spaces that are provided for negotiation.

Practically we see a single-storey structure based on a polygonal ground plan, which stipulates a constant movement through the building. The building opens and connects to the outside through large glass panels. Inside it can be reconfigured by means of sliding walls and curtains for each specific exhibition. Gaps, openings and unexpected views run throughout the building. Different display-zones literally expose art and visitors. To avoid misunderstandings, the building is not the ultimate promise of flexibility. On the contrary, changeability, visibility, ›



▲
El Lissitzky, *Prounenraum* (1923) at the Grosse Berliner Kunstaustellung; reconstruction from Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, 1965.



▸
El Lissitzky, *Proun* (before 1924), gouache, 49x49 cm. Eindhoven, Stedelijk van Abbemuseum.

Next spread ▸
Martin Jacobson, *Photographs*

"My work normally begins with locating one or more images. I search for images that in one way or another speak to questions I pose to myself. My questions often concern oppositions and transitions: the living and the dead, the light and the dark, you and me, dreaming and being awake. The 'photographs' that are shown here have their origins, in large measure, in a German book from the 1930s about silent film. The film stills in the book are heavily retouched, to the point of being transformed into something in between painting and photography. They made me think of retouching in relation to make-up, make-up in relation to masking—allegory—mime—dumbshow—contact—tactile—light—shadow."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transparency and the conditions of presentation are deliberately restricted so that the playing options selected and the associated changes should come into view all the more clearly within a prescribed set of parameters. If changeability is spoken of, then it is a matter of playing options within quite definitely prescribed rules of play. Gaps, openings and unexpected views draw our attention to the themes of visibility and transparency, or one can also say: to the politics of visibility. The display-zones draw our attention to the presentation of exhibitions. To put it differently, changeability is only possible within a given frame. Visibility and transparency are controlled by regimes of gaze and the presentation shows its underlying construction.

I am interested how this process of negotiation can be transferred to the entire institution, putting the role and the status of a museum on disposal. In this regard our collection plays also an important role.

The history of the collection mirrors the social changes since the revolution in 1989 and ranges from an interest in West German art of the Cold War, dissident art from the GDR to Western and American art from the 1990s and contemporary art from post-communist countries. In 2005, we began the preparations for the pilot-project "The New Collection". As any other collection ours must be seen as an echo of specific social interests. The still conflicting relationship between east and west was taken as a (conceptual) starting point for the first presentation ("German Histories"). The intention of the project was to sketch out the changes and ruptures in the modes of perception and their impact on collecting art according to rapid social changes. We wanted to prompt a discussion about artistic quality, socio-cultural values and value systems, cultural consensus or dissent. We set up constellations of artists such as Rosemarie Trockel and Michael Morgner, Neo Rauch and Klaus Hähner-Springmühl, Hans Hartung and Hermann Glöckner, Sarah Morris and Inken Reinert, Georg Jiri Dokoupil, Franz West and Jonathan Meese, Emil Schumacher and Hartwig Ebersbach. Martin Kippenberger, Ilya Kabakov and Maren Roloff. Some artists within these constellations are well known and others played an imported role once. The second exhibition we are having now is dedicated to the founding director, Klaus Werner (KW - Hommage à Klaus Werner). Again, we remixed well and less known positions, adapting methods Klaus Werner was using when active. Following these presentations, every year further interpretations will be developed in close collaborations with artists, designers and teachers. Our interest lies in the aspect of production: producing new meanings and removing existing ones. The concept of the museum follows less the picture of a huge storage than negotiating the conditions of its own production.

Let me come to a temporary conclusion: in the process of programming we take up restrictions in the political, economic, social or artistic sphere—at least we take them as points of departure. This does not necessarily imply an acceptance of the respective frame, rather an active contest of the perimeters we are within and a search for possibilities and options for action. Knowing that the conception of publicity has always been a powerful ideological construct, designed for certain functions and groups, we ask ourselves: can there be potential common concerns in apparently different spaces, no matter how contingent these concerns might be? Ideally as many individuals or groups participate in this process of negotiation: artists, visitors, curators, critics, politicians, financiers and others. But this implies above all that the institution permanently puts its own attitude into play, that the institution exposes itself, that it generates its attitude together with various groups and individuals. •

Note

‡ The GfZK hosted the one room Hotel Everland developed by the Swiss artists Lang & Baumann in 2006 and 2007. In 2009, the studio-apartments are going to be transformed into hotels. They will be designed by artists, too.

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The Relational Museum

Katarina Pierre

What kind of social and public space does the contemporary art museum represent? What experiences and knowledge does it offer? Could it act as a site for debate and critical encounters? What relations does the contemporary art institution establish towards its audience and community? In the project The Relational Museum, our own institution, Bildmuseet, has served as the basis for a discussion on the present and future role of the contemporary art institution.

When we wrote our application for the project to *Framtidens kultur* (The Foundation for the Culture of the Future) nearly three years ago, we found ourselves at a point where we felt we needed to take a step back from our immediate daily routine —running exhibitions and programs at Bildmuseet —and to look at and examine our own institution critically. We felt a certain need for self-reflexivity and self-articulation. We were particularly interested in investigating Bildmuseet's relation to its audience. What sort of situations and encounters does Bildmuseet facilitate? What is the public and social space that Bildmuseet represents?

One particular source of inspiration for the project were the writings of the French curator Nicolas Bourriaud. In his book *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriaud shifts the focus from the singular art object to the kinds of encounters it produces.[1] Bourriaud is interested in the temporary collective form that art produces by being put on display. His thesis is that meaning within art only happens when individuals come together and discuss the work and that the ›

an entertainment program, with a concentrated program giving visitors the option of positioning themselves, beyond mere consumption, as active participants in the institution.

Against this background, the art institution can be conceived as a place where discourses arise which also include, in a self-reflective way, the contemporary potential of social relationships—as they are produced precisely in these institutions—their social relevance and the potential for action of communities in general. The philosopher Charles Taylor speaks in an article in *Public Culture* of institutions as places where people can imagine their existence as part of a large social structure, fashioning their social relationships, what they expect from them and also which normative pressure these relationships are subjected to.[10] The institution is therefore not only a place for social events where a public receives and appraises, but also offers a place for public thinking and acting which is shaped not only by the institution's staff but also by its guests and its publics.

The art institution steers these discourses by selecting themes and inviting certain guests. Through the museum, art gallery or any other form of art institution selecting artists, art works, theorists, catalogue article writers, etc., it automatically includes certain artistic, theoretical and political positions and excludes others, thereby building up the profile of its position in the public sphere. Because the physical spaces of the art institution with all their social thresholds and restrictions can only be viewed as semi-official spaces, one task of the institution is to transgress these restrictions and to confront them with democratically organized public spheres. In this sense, artists and theorists appear in their function as "public intellectuals" who, in the institution, have a public platform for their work, on the one hand, and, on the other, through their specific work and in collaboration with the institution, can potentially produce alternative publics that deviate from the hegemonic social groups.

Institutional alternatives: Relationalities and temporary disappearance

In this context, the central question is how an art institution is shaped by ideas about the public sphere and how, in turn, it can have an effect on the structure of the public sphere. Here, the special status of the art institution as a "wild child" among the institutions comes into play and hence the thesis that the status of an institution as an instrument of the prevailing neo-liberal social order of values can only be subverted by the *art* institution. How can the art institution, therefore, on the one hand, employ its general status as an institution in the sense of a socially relevant platform and, on the other, extend its special status, its marginal existence, within the institutional landscape that operates at arm's length from the governmental constellation of power? It can try to set up an antithesis to the neo-liberal idea of the public sphere, i.e. of consumption and constant, senseless communication, and to produce a non-branded space.

Since, as I have said, a stock-taking can only be achieved from the inside, the attempts begin with the structure of the institution's own institutional and institutionalized work, its positioning vis-à-vis private and public sponsors, as well as the orientation of its program and its formats. In this context the question is posed concerning the alternatives to the dependent art institution that constantly develops new fund-raising strategies, is understaffed and overworked, and has internalized the mechanisms of the free job market, without adequately profiting from it, but rather ultimately is forced to be satisfied with "peanuts".

Several smaller, medium-sized, and even a few larger institutions are currently occupied with the question concerning who can be the peer group for a new, transgressive art institution, and how the institution can involve diverse public groups, thus assuming an active agency within the public realm that can assert itself in society and defend a new institutional model.

In this context, the model of a "relational institution" currently seems to be attractive for some curators and directors. It means that the institution defines itself via its relations with various public groups, their interests and participatory potential.

MACBA in Barcelona, a museum that conceives of itself under Manuel Borja-Villel as a pioneer in these efforts, has developed various projects in recent years that propose new models for how art can exist in the public sphere. Thus, for instance, in its announcement for a conference under the title of *Another Relationality: Rethinking Art as Experience* in 2005 and 2006, MACBA made its own position in this process manifest. "Relationality is a concept that enables us to intervene controversially in the debate on art institutions and their audiences. [...] From the standpoint of the museum, we understand the relational as a space for art that temporarily suspends institutional autonomy and explores new forms of interaction with the social. [...] We seek ways in which art can make a meaningful contribution, through its specific nature, to multiplying public spheres. And this process can be defined in terms of relations between different subjects, different forms, different spaces". With this, MACBA opened up discussion on its own position in the public sphere and announced that it would temporarily put its institutional autonomy on the back burner in order to open itself up to new, experimental social structures.

Furthermore, MACBA shifted the responsibility of the department for public programs from a purely communicative campaign for existing exhibitions to an active post for shaping the program and the public. The department has "ceased to play a purely exegetic role and to restrict itself to the contents of the museum's program, and its activities have become constitutive for the production of public spheres".[11] This became manifest in the planning of seminars and symposia which targeted and involved certain local groups. One much discussed case is the collaboration with groups of activists critical of capitalism and which plunged the museum into a public controversy.[12] As Carles Guerra elaborates, the "production of a public counter-sphere" in collaboration with activists suffered under the "fetishization of communicative structures. These structures became visible and celebrated as aesthetic production, which, however, was determined by an authorship regarded on all sides as counter-productive. Suddenly those responsible within the museum saw how a structure which had arisen under the protection of the museum operated in real-time but simultaneously outside any control".[13]

"Art institutions, as distinct from other institutions such as state authorities, parties and trade unions, are not given any direct participation in political processes"

Here a general problem of the public sphere is addressed which has to do with visibility, the distribution of power and control. It shows also the possible weak points in transferring the "agonistic" model to the art institution. These concern the automatic legitimation of interests that really can no longer be tolerated within the institutional profile.

The specific experiences of MACBA suggest an extended model that adds to the relational component a strategic one of temporary retreat. The institution that finds itself in a diplomatic position between a broad public responsibility and the particular interests of the group it has invited must mediate between the two camps. It provides the platform for formulating and publishing particular interests, and the selection of these interests and interest groups shapes the

artist produces relations between people and the world by way of aesthetic objects. In Bourriaud's reading, contemporary art is developing a political project by turning the relational into an issue.

An additional source of inspiration were contemporary art practices as such, specifically, artists working with a process- and action-based approach. Artistic practices with a particular interest in social and political dimensions and with the aim of intervening in or changing the state of things, rather than producing representations of the world. One of the artists that inspired us was the artist and architect Apolonija Šušteršic. In her work Šušteršic has explored the physical, social and political aspects of space and architecture. She has looked at public space in relation to questions of participation and some of her work has dealt specifically with art institutions and has been about redefining these spaces. Our first contact with her was in 2001 when she presented her installation *Light Therapy* at Bildmuseet.[2] In one of our exhibition galleries she created a new space and a new function in the museum when during the darkest months of the year visitors were invited to come to Bildmuseet for a light therapy session. In another project, Šušteršic explored visibility and organization of space in an art institution. In the project that she did for Kunstverein München, she designed a multifunctional lobby by redefining the reception area and transforming it into a space where office spaces and visitors' spaces were combined or intertwined. She blurred the boundaries between the two whereby she also disclosed and made accessible the behind-the-scenes of the art institution.

We were very pleased when, in the spring of 2006, Šušteršic agreed to work with us in The Relational Museum project. By then, the plans for an Artistic Campus had been launched by Umeå University and we then decided that our collaborative effort could use the possible relocation of Bildmuseet as a focal point. Together with Šušteršic and the architect and researcher Meike Schalk—who joined the project at a later stage—we have had an on-going dialogue where we've discussed ideas for a new Bildmuseet: a hypothetical model for a new museum, a model which isn't based on a definition of a new physical space, but rather on a questioning and examining of the elements making up the museum. We have had a number of meetings, discussions and seminars including a workshop directed towards Bildmuseet's visitors. In this workshop visitors were asked about their concerns and ideas about Bildmuseet and their thoughts on the contemporary art museum in general. A public conference at the end of last year also formed part of this on-going conversation where Šušteršic and Schalk presented their analysis on possible scenarios for a future Bildmuseet.

I would say that Bildmuseet finds itself at a point in time where self-reflexivity is crucial. We do not only find ourselves in somewhat uncertain times concerning Bildmuseet's future location in relation to the current plans of establishing an Artistic Campus. The need for self-articulation is also linked to existing and conflicting expectations concerning Bildmuseet's program and future identity. I would describe the present situation as one of inherent possibilities, but also a situation characterized by a certain precariousness or vulnerability. Bildmuseet, like many other art institutions, is on a daily basis struggling with running a public institution and realizing an interesting program on a very scarce budget.

When looking at Bildmuseet's present situation one also has to take into account the recent developments on the national museum scene where contemporary art institutions situated outside of Stockholm have been closed down, like Rooseum in Malmö and Baltic Art Center in Visby.[3] The reasons for this development might be multiple—economical, political or other—but the situation raises the question of why the public contemporary art institution is important. What does it add to society and contemporary life? What would be lost if it disappeared?

At present Bildmuseet is an art institution offering a multitude of exhibitions and events (artist's talks, lectures, film screenings, conferences, workshops, etc). It is also a social venue with high attendance figures.[4] Bildmuseet provides a public space in Umeå for encountering and engaging with a wide range of ideas in contemporary art and critical debate, as well as current academic research. It is an acknowledged institution in its particular field, recognized for its high profile exhibitions of international contemporary art. It could be argued that Bildmuseet is an odd species in the Swedish museum context: it is a rare institution that claims citizenship in two worlds.[5] First the university world as a department at Umeå University and secondly, it claims citizenship in the world of culture as a public contemporary art institution. This situation, being located in between present possibilities, inhabiting the two worlds simultaneously, not only enables collaborations between the two but encourages cross- and interdisciplinary projects. Bildmuseet is a rare combination of art institution and university and as such it represents unique qualities.

A possible relocation of Bildmuseet to an Artistic Campus presents possibilities for exploring new collaborations as well as elaborating existing ones: collaborations with the fellow institutions on the new campus—Konsthögskolan, Designhögskolan, and a new school of architecture—but also partners in the city and in the region. A possible move from an existing public venue like Gammlia, beside Västerbotten's Museum, to a new site by the riverside that needs to be inscribed or produced as a public space, obviously presents a challenge. As the only public institution on the Artistic Campus (the other university institutions are all educational departments) Bildmuseet has a key role in making the new campus attractive and accessible for the general public. Hence, it will be crucial to develop an intensified public approach combined with a strong exhibition program in order to secure and further develop the dialogue with a wide range of audiences, and to acknowledge and support Bildmuseet's contribution to the national art scene, as well as appreciate the institution's role in the social and cultural life of the city of Umeå.

Let us return to the question of why we need public contemporary art institutions and what would be lost if they disappeared. Simon Sheikh offers a possible answer in "The Trouble with Institutions, or Art and Its Publics", in which he talks about how contemporary art practice with its increasingly interdisciplinary approach has become a field of possibilities, of exchange and comparative analysis.[6] He describes art as a site for "alternativity", and how art can act as an intermediary between different modes of perception and thinking, as well as between very different positions and subjectivities. As such the art institution has a crucial position in the public sphere and a large potential in contemporary society.

The Relational Museum has given us the opportunity to rethink our institution and to look at the ways in which Bildmuseet could develop its role as a site for critical encounters. The project has also created a space for us to articulate and to initiate a public discussion concerning our institution. In this respect the project could be seen as an investment in relation to the shaping of Bildmuseet's future identity and existence. •

Notes

1. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, translated by Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland (Paris: Presses du réel, 2002).
2. *Light Therapy* was initially produced for Moderna museet.
3. See also Maria Lind's and Niclas Östlind's article "Finansiering i otakt" in Dagens Nyheter, 22/11, 2007.
4. 2005–2007 Bildmuseet had 48 064–75 988 visitors a year.
5. The second art institution in Sweden with a university affiliation is Skissernas museum in Lund.
6. Simon Sheikh, "The Trouble with Institutions or, Art and Its Publics" in *Art and Its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, ed. Nina Möntmann (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006).

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The Relational Museum

institution's profile. Because the ramifications of the project evaded institutional control from a certain point on, the museum published an agenda with a general direction and thrust that it had underwritten, which, however, in its decoupled continuation, went against the institutional profile. To stand up to public pressure and maintain one's own profile, an invisibility of certain processes, at least temporarily, is an important factor. To avoid instrumentalization from below and also censorship from above, it is necessary to especially protect the institution itself. It may seem paradoxical, but a concentrated non-public phase ultimately serves the success of a public program. Projects which represent only the interests of a certain public group require a close, undisturbed productive phase before opening up to discussion in a larger public sphere. In this connection Brian Holmes speaks of a "tactical necessity of disappearance".[14]

I have tried out this element of temporary retreat within the framework of a project called *Opacity*.[15] In close collaboration with artists and curators from various institutions, and in a combination of public and non-public events, it was a matter of involving artists (whose participation in institutional processes is normally restricted to presenting the results of their work to a public in the exhibition space) in the institutional processes of planning and decision-making, which does in fact correspond to their position as active co-producers in the art industry. The phase of spatial and temporal retreat serves to balance out the interests of artists and curators who in this project transgress their status as representatives of certain positions within the art industry. At the same time, new questions cropped up concerning how hidden spaces for action can be established and legitimated behind the scenes because outside the art institution, which is calibrated to a constant, visible output, no one is interested in these opaque projects because they can only be viewed indirectly as a function within a value-creation process.

The present interest of some curators in the academy and theory goes in the same direction, whether it be manifest in exhibition projects, or in the fact that many curators have switched over to the academic side or have a foothold in academia and curate from this position.[16] The academy represents the last refuge where work as regards content can still be done under legitimized circumstances and where one can devote oneself without distraction to theoretical reflection without having to cut oneself off completely from practice.

I see the options for contemporary art institutions to assume a relevant (counter-)position within a public realm that is reconstituting itself to lie in a combination of precisely these relational concepts and an interplay with opacity. This would be a transgressive institution positioning itself in its relations to various publics, including minorities, against the populist conception of a public in consumer society with its neo-liberal politicians. It would be an institution oriented toward various disciplines, thus creating alternatives to the event economy, involving its local publics and networking internationally with other platforms inside and outside the art world, temporarily retreating in order to have sensible communication in closed thematic workshops and to establish discourses, thus not enclosing its staff within the flexible management of creative industries.

This would also be an institution closer to research-based and artistic strategies than to corporate strategies, which would produce publics no longer based on the principle of prestige, but ones that would emerge from constant exchange among diverse interest groups. As with all institutional models here too the question is posed concerning adequate financing. There is no question that the financing of art institutions everywhere represents a growing problem. But to consume oneself in permanent fund-raising and to develop ever-new strategies for how to keep playing in the great game cannot be the only solution. It is apparent that an institution casting emancipatory ideas for the use of the public realm cannot fall back on the general strategies for fund-raising. The question concerning how such models are to be financed coincides with the question concerning who is at all interested in supporting art institutions that do not give back what counts in the dominant contemporary social forms, namely, an effective production of mass images and the revenue from a paying mass public. Private and public thematically oriented foundations, whose interests are freed from a Western standard of exhibition policy and that try to establish self-determined transnational structures, provide a ray of hope for future financing models. Even if the major financial sources keep a distance, it is nevertheless rewarding for the sake of emancipatory publics to exploit the special status of the art institution and to play the wild child among all the other institutions. •

Notes

1. John R. Searle, What is an Institution?, in: John C. Welchman (ed.), *Institutional Critique and After* (Zurich/Los Angeles, 2006), 21–51: 50.
2. "Whereas other institutions, like civil services, parties and unions, have a direct mandate for political action—which is also socially accepted as such—an art institution is expected to deliver and produce images or rather an "image" of what is happening outside; to transform social and subjective realities into a format in which we can handle and conserve it, but not to interfere and take an active part in the production of social and political realities. The question is, how do art institutions deal with these expectations, how do they develop room for manoeuvre, and how do they relate their work to the political contexts they are confronted with and thus also to the activities of other institutions?" Nina Möntmann, Art and its Institutions, in: Möntmann (ed.), *Art and its Institutions* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006), 8–16: 8.
3. "Institutional facts only exist from the point of view of the participants". Searle, ibid, 50.
4. Cf. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London, 2000) Cf. also Claude Lefort, "The Question of Democracy", first chapter in: *Democracy and Political Theory* (Minneapolis, 1988).
5. Cf. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, London 2000. Cf. also Claude Lefort, "The Question of Democracy", first chapter in: *Democracy and Political Theory* (Minneapolis, 1988).
6. The by far earliest references are certainly to be found in Rosalyn Deutsche, who wrote already in 1996, "Social space is produced and structured by conflicts. With this recognition, a democratic spatial politics begins". Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions. Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press, 1996), xxiv.
7. Nancy Fraser, "Die Transnationalisierung der Öffentlichkeit", in: Gerald Raunig and Ulf Wuggenig (eds.), *Publicum. Theorien der Öffentlichkeit* (Vienna, 2005).
8. Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire. Die neue Weltordnung* (Frankfurt/Main, 2002), 13. (Engl. orig. 2000).
9. Paolo Virno, *Grammatik der Multitude* (Berlin, 2005).
10. "I am thinking rather of the ways in which people imagine the whole of their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met and the deeper normative notions that underlie these expectations". Charles Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries", in: *Public Culture* Volume 14, Number 1, Winter 2002, 91–124: 92.
11. Carles Guerra, "Das MACBA—Ein unter Widrigkeiten entstandenes Museum", in: Barbara Steiner and Charles Esche (eds.), *Mögliche Museen*, Jahresring 54 (Cologne, 2007), 149–158: 155.
12. Cf. Guerra 2007, 156–157.
13. Guerra, 156–157.
14. Brian Holmes, *Transparency & Exodus. On Political Process in the Mediated Democracies*, 2005.
15. I curated the Opacity project in 2005 as curator for NIFCA, the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art. The artists participating were Kajsa Dahlberg, Danger Museum, Markus Degerman, Stephan Dillemuth, Gardar Eide Einarsson and Sophie Thorsen, the institutions Index in Stockholm, UKS in Oslo, Secession in Vienna and NIFCA itself. Apart from internal workshops we realized an exhibition at UKS realisiert, a fanzine and a panel discussion at Secession.
16. Cf. e.g. the project A.K.A.D.E.M.I.E., a collaboration between the Siemens Art Program and the Van Abbe Museum Eindhoven, MuHKA Antwerpen, Kunstverein Hamburg, Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmith College in London, 2005.

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Governance and Rebellion: Foucault as a Reader of Kant and the Greeks

Sven-Olov Wallenstein

I. Beginnings and endings

The joint publication of two crucial texts by Foucault, the lengthy introduction to his translation of Kant's *Anthropology*, submitted in 1961 as a *thèse complémentaire* to the *History of Madness*, and the penultimate lecture course at the Collège de France from 1982–83, "Governing Oneself and Others," permits us to trace a path connecting the beginning and the end of his work in a fascinating way. To some extent this would amount to a circle: in the end, we come back to the beginning—but not in order to close knowledge in upon itself, not in order to form some absolute knowledge, but to begin anew with a painful awareness of an incapacity that is however only the other side of a joyous opening.

The reference to Kant and the possibility of a critique of reason remains constant throughout Foucault's work. The meaning of this reference shifts, however: in the series of readings that make up first phase, beginning with the text on the *Anthropology*, Kant was portrayed as the forefather of a certain philosophical modernity, centered around the concept of subjectivity and an "analytic of finitude" whose end Foucault predicts, for instance in the famous conclusion to *The Order of Things*. Here the figure of Man appears as "a face drawn in the sand," which will be erased by the next wave, or more precisely by the epistemological shift that Foucault wants to locate in the present. For this a certain kind of "structuralism" could function as a shorthand description, as in Lacan's decentering of consciousness in favor of language, or in Lévi-Strauss' declaration against Sartre at the end of *The Savage Mind* that "the ultimate purpose of the human sciences is not to reconstitute man, but to dissolve him".

In the various readings of Kant that we find in the latter part of the '70s, a different picture of Kant's modernity emerges, and many of the themes that structured the earlier reading are relegated to what Foucault now refers to as "structural analysis of truth," i.e., the legacy of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which in this later perspective becomes the predominant feature of the tradition of analytical philosophy. What now interests Foucault is rather the Kant who wrote on the Enlightenment, on the idea of progress in history and the "conflict of faculties," and who can be taken as the first philosopher to ask the question of the significance of our historical present. In this he inaugurates a discourse on the "ontology of actuality" that was to be pursued by a tradition from Nietzsche to Weber and the Frankfurt School, and of which Foucault now perceives himself to be a part. Rather than belonging to a humanist past, the moment of Kant in this reading appears as the inauguration of a radical questioning of the present, within which the ideas of "Man" and "experience" constitute an essential *knot*, where forms of truth, modalities of power, and facets of possible self-relations are brought together in a way that still defines the horizon of the present.

In spite of these obvious differences, both of these readings engage the problem of the facticity of reason, the concrete life of mind. The first investigates the parallel between transcendental philosophy and empirical-anthropological knowledge that came to form a matrix for 19th and 20th century philosophies of subjectivity, in order to point to a way out of a certain "confusion"; the second points to the necessity of being implicated in factical life if thought is to become *action*, and not just an abstract reflection on universals. This second reading of Kant thus engages the sphere of governing, of conduct, and of intersubjective relations—"the conduct of conducts". If Foucault at the end of his life constantly returned to the Greeks and the Romans in order to reflect not only on desire, asceticism, and technologies of the self, but also on models for governmentality and conduct, perhaps this is a return that to some extent occurs under the aegis of an interpretation of Kant, re-read in terms of an ontology of actuality and a more profound questioning of the present—which would trace another circular movement, not just within Foucault's own work, but in relation to the possibility of writing a "history of thought," as Foucault now without hesitation calls his work.

II. Anthropology and the death of man

The extensive introduction to the *Anthropology* may at first appear overtly scholarly and forbidding, and yet the question that it locates throughout many of Kant's shifting formulations is decisive, first for an understanding of the whole enterprise of Kant's critical philosophy, but then also for Foucault's own trajectory, that was to lead up to the magnum opus *The Order of Things* (1966). The analysis of "Man and his doubles" that forms the core of the ninth chapter in the latter book, and that passes through the "repetition" of the figures of the empirical and the transcendental, the cogito and the unthought, and the return and retreat of the origin, is rooted in a certain reading of Kant (although transferred to the three archaeological strata that form the object of the book: life, labor, and language), and in the introduction to the translation of the Anthropology we find this problem stated with great audacity and force.[1]

The overarching question that Foucault asks is: What is the image of man, the *homo criticus*, projected by the transcendental turn? Does it break with the pre-critical formulas, or is there in fact for Kant a kind of critical truth *of* man that precedes and supports criticism, and also to some extent already points beyond it? The text of the *Anthropology*, published by Kant in 1797, when he was about to enter into the final phase of his work, just before the *Logic* and then the *Opus postumum* would ask the question whether there could be a "system of transcendental philosophy," in fact draws on lectures going as far back as 1772. This is the moment when Kant crowns his early work with the dissertation on sensible and intelligible worlds, and the possibility of a Critical philosophy began to dawn on him for the first time; in this sense, Foucault writes, the text from 1797 is "at once contemporary with that which precedes the Critique, that which accomplishes it, and that which will soon liquidate it". (14) In spite of its seemingly empirical and even erratic character, the *Anthropology* as it were traverses and envelops Kant's whole path, and it also points beyond to a decisive aspect of modern philosophy, which is the ultimate horizon of Foucault's introduction, beyond all the slightly over-zealous philological precisions that obscure parts of his argument: how should one understand the Kantian heritage, not only in relation to everything that it made possible, from various idealisms and positivisms to phenomenologies and neo-Kantianisms, but also as an injunction to think today? What would it mean to pursue Kant's critical philosophy in the present, even in a way that would undo the humanist bedrock of Criticism itself?

As a way into these questions, and in order to begin to locate the position of anthropology within Kant's itinerary, Foucault points to the similar, and yet different form of doubling of consciousness that connects the *Anthropology* to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the Critique, we find on the one hand the spontaneity of rational thought (the "I think" of apperception, self-consciousness), on the other hand the always deferred self-presence of inner sense, where time always forces the I to grasp itself as an other. This split reappears in the *Anthropology*, but now interpreted as the movement of a subject that affects itself, and which, as Foucault writes, is "wholly inhabited by the mute presence, often disconnected and dislocated, of a freedom that is exercised in the field of an original passivity" (24). Anthropology is then neither critical philosophy nor a science of an empirical object ("physiology"), but stakes out a *middle ground*, a concrete unity of activity and passivity that defines its "pragmatic" character.

The same kind of intermediary position transpires in the analysis of social relations: there is on the one hand a legal relation between humans, where a person can be treated as a mere thing, on the other hand everyone is, *de jure*, a pure subject of morality. Instead of simply reinforcing this difference, the pragmatic-anthropological perspective understands man as a "citizen of the world," belonging just as much to the practical-moral sphere as to the legal sphere. But rather than solving the problem, this in fact plunges us into a world of subterfuge and ruse, for instances in the way in which the two sexes interact by way of "lewd intentions and dissimulations, secretive efforts to gain influence, patient compromises" (27). To understand man as a "freely acting being" (*freihandelndes Wesen*) as Kant's own preface to the *Anthropology* says, means to discern a zone of free exchange, where influences interact and the difference between law and morality is constantly renegotiated.

A third intermediary level can be found in Kant's reflections on dietetics and the philosophy of medicine, which also hold center stage in the curiously autobiographical third section in the *Conflict of Faculties*. The problem of old age and the feeling that life is slipping away raises the question of the wearing down of our faculties, and of how this inevitable process could be slowed down. What Kant is looking for here is however not the truth of man as a physical being (death is always the ultimate truth of life), but rather what we can *do* with ourselves, the extent to which a certain wisdom or serenity, or a practice of liberty in the sense of a more profound *ethos*, can gain the upper hand over decay, above all by containing and mastering our vital movements in their changing paces and in making them productive for thought. Excessive speed and pure immobility would both imply death, and there is need for a certain *economy* of movement, as comes across in the theory of "spasms" that forms the intersection between the spiritual and the physiological. And is it not true that Foucault, at the very end of his intellectual trajectory, in the second and third volume of the *History of Sexuality*, would come back to some of these problems, when he on the basis of a re-reading of ancient Greek and Roman texts asks in what way we can gain control over own nature and achieve *enkrateia*, not so much by the application of a theoretical knowledge of *physis* as by a more profound and reflexive *ethos*? As we will see, many of the motifs that he unearths in this first reading of Kant in order to ultimately reject them as an "anthropological sleep," akin to the dogmatic sleep from which Kant himself had been awakened by Hume, will come back at the end, although now with the positive tasks of locating a place for "subjectivation," or "modes of virtual existence for a possible subject."

The problem that occupies Kant in his anthropological investigation is the relation between the *homo natura* and the subject of freedom. This becomes a perpetual inquiry, an investigation that can never reach a conclusive result, since it deals with a "whole" that is determined through *use* and that can never be sealed off. This idea of "use" (*Gebrauch*) will eventually be transformed into the question what we can "expect" of man, located in the tension between what he *can* and what he *ought* to do, between the *Können* and the *Sollen*. As we have noted, the *Anthropology* is "pragmatic" precisely in the sense that it attempts to stake out a middle ground between law and nature, and it treats man as a "citizen of the world" (*Weltbürger*). In anthropology neither law nor nature are given in their pure state, instead we enter into a sphere of their "free exchange," or a *game* that we can play with ourselves. As Foucault writes: "man is the play of nature: but this game, he plays, and he plays it himself; if it so happens that he is himself played, as in the illusions of the senses, it is because he has played himself so as to become the victim of this game" (33). Because of its constant hazards and setbacks, this *Spiel* calls upon a *Kunst*, an art of mastering or at least of understanding the game, instead of being blindly played by it. For Kant this also means that anthropology must take us from the "school" and into the "world," a world that requires that we "play along" (*mitspielen*).

The actual analyses carried out in the text of the *Anthropology* however only touch in passing on this new idea of the world—which to some extent comes close to the existential idea of "worldhood" that we find in Heidegger, and that occasionally seems to inform Foucault's commentary—and instead it focuses on the *Gemüt*, the "mind". This mind must be distinguished from rational psychology and speculative metaphysics, as Kant stresses already in the first Critique, if we are to understand it as the basis for an analysis of what it means to be a citizen of the world. And furthermore, this mind must be understood in relation to yet another concept, the "spirit" (*Geist*), which is the "animating principle" (*belebende Prinzip*) in man—although not in the sense of the Hegelian spirit that guides the development as a secret *telos*, nor as an Idea that would remain forever inaccessible, as the Ideas of Reason in the first Critique, whose function is only regulative—but as a principle that sets these ideas *in motion* and imbues then with *life*. This animating principle brings about the irruption of an infinity in empirical reason, a breaking-open that allows the mind to live in the element of the possible, which is why the mind is never simply what it *is*, but more fundamen-

tally what it *makes* of itself, mind *in the making*. Reduced to a physiology, anthropology would be the science of a dead entity, and it would lack precisely the dimension of the pragmatic. In this sense, the spirit is turned towards both transcendental philosophy and anthropology: "*Geist*," Foucault suggests, "would be that original fact which in its transcendental version implies that infinity is never there, but always in an essential withdrawal—and in its empirical version that infinity nevertheless animates the movement towards truth and the inexhaustible succession of its forms" (40).

But what happens here to the idea of a transcendental philosophy? Is the whole of the Copernican revolution here brought back to an empirical genesis? Or should we understand this idea of spirit as the constitutive moment of Criticism, as the very core of reason, the original *factum* of the withdrawal of infinity that gives direction and movement to empirical experience—no longer *the factum rationis* of the moral law, but more something like the *facticity of reason itself*, that would subsequently be discovered by a long line of post-Kantian thinkers, from Schelling to Heidegger and beyond, and in relation to which the Hegelian *Geist* would be at once a part and a bold countermove? In Kant, Foucault says, this original fact indicates the *necessity* of a Critique and the *possibility* of an Anthropology, and let us first see how these two are intertwined.

At first sight the collection of examples presented in the *Anthropology* seems to have little or no connection to the Critique, but as Foucault shows, the *Anthropology* provides the element of Criticism by presenting a *reversal* of its basic themes. The syntheses of the given are here inverted: so for instance the I, which now appears in the "depth of a becoming," as something always already there, just as the results of the synthesizing activities present themselves as already finished (and in this Kant already opens up that which in Husserlian phenomenology and its offspring will become the domain of "passive synthesis"). The manifold that appears to the categories in the first Critique is here already reduced, and in a certain sense anthropology acknowledges no primordial passivity, since this only makes sense within the analytic of the understanding, whereas passivity and activity here appear only as already intertwined in the result.

In a similar overturning, the various faculties whose proper legislative application was circumscribed and founded in the three Critiques in anthropology appear as different possibilities of illusion and deception: self-consciousness becomes the possibility of a polymorphous egoism, the well-founded nature of appearances gives way to their capacity for deluding us, and the possibility of mental disorders and pathologies imposes itself as essential to the study of reason. Instead of a *foundation* of phenomena, we get a study of what is *unfounded* in them, and there is always an threat of reason "foundering in upon itself". This is also why the division between the Doctrine of Elements and a Doctrine of Method that organizes the Critiques in anthropology becomes a division between a Didactic and a Characteristic. In the Didactic we study the foundation as well as the possible *perversion* of the order of appearance, and Foucault locates a tripartite rhythm in Kant's analyses: in the passage from the faculty to the phenomenon, there is both a movement of manifestation and a loss, a *derailing* that must be overcome by an ethical liaison that man forms with himself, and that binds the *Sollen* and the *Können* together. In the much shorter Characteristic we follow the transformations of that which man may effect by performing a certain work on himself, which leads us back to the proper use of the faculties. The *Anthropology*, Foucault proposes, can in this sense be seen as a mirror inversion of the Critiques.

But what is then the proper and positive relation between anthropology and criticism? In the section on Architectonics in the first Critique there seems to be no place for an anthropology; on the other hand, as Kant famously will say later in his *Logic*, the three questions of philosophy that he had already proposed in the first Critique—What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope for?—in fact all relate to a fourth: What is man?, *Was ist der Mensch?* Now, does this imply something like an conversion of philosophy, which would make anthropology into its highest aim? How should we understand that the first three questions all "relate to" (*beziehen sich auf*) the problem of man? The *Anthropology* provides no direct answer to this, and Foucault instead takes his cues from the *Opus postumum*, where Kant at the end of his life reopens the question of the ultimate status of transcendental philosophy. Here Kant speaks of a "System of transcendental philosophy" comprising "God, the world or universe, and the I itself as a moral being". The last is the "medius terminus," the "being that unites these concepts," Kant says, or the "copula" or the mediation through which "an absolute whole appears". But this reference to man does not close the system in on itself, since man is also someone who "inhabits the world," a *Weltbewohner*, although not in the sense of belonging to a system of objects conditioned by the law of physics. In this threefold structure, Foucault suggests, the three questions of the *Logic* are reinterpreted as a *source* (*Quelle*), a *domain* (*Umfang*), and a *limit* (*Grenze*): a *source* of human knowledge, the practical *domain* in which this knowledge is put to use, and the *limit* against which it comes up.[2] In this sense, the fourth question does not provide the first three with a new content, but brings them together in a "anthropologico-critical repetition" (52) that no longer simply relies on the division of the three faculties of knowledge, desire, and judgment as they are distributed within and between the Critiques, but brings them into a fundamental cohesion in terms of man's relation to the world.

As we have seen, this "pragmatic" relation to the world however entails a reversal of the Critiques. We have seen how time no longer constitutes a form that brings everything together into the form of a synthesis, but a dispersal of all syntheses that has *always already* begun. This "always already" does not point to some distant empirical facts buried in our past, instead it opens a temporalization of reason itself that is at once supported by and reverses the Critiques, and the "art" that corresponds to the temporal dispersal, the always insecure *Kunst* of surmounting the destructive force of time, is also a dimension of freedom. But this temporal and pragmatic inversion of Criticism, the new relation to the world, also means that anthropology must attempt to become "popular" on the level of its own vocabulary. It must constantly find its resources in everyday language, in common sayings and figures of speech, all of which implies that it remains tied to a linguistic community out of which it draws a vocabulary that can no longer be "technical" (as in the constant reference to Latin words and expressions in the previous Critiques), but must seek to exhaust normal parlance in all of its ambiguities. The problem of the origin of philosophy not only in language *as such* (an objection already proposed by Hamann against the first Critique), but in a *particular* language, is not yet explicitly posed by Kant, and yet we can see it at work everywhere in his text. The *Anthropology* is indeed, as Foucault notes, a "philosophical banquet"—entertainment and vivid exchange are essential to the "animation through ideas," and the "society of the table," the *Tischgesellschaft*, recurs throughout the text as a model for communication. Here we can see why the analysis of the "Welt" of the "Weltbürger" was lacking—man is a citizen of the world not because he belongs to a particular group, but simply because he *speaks*: "His residence in the world," Foucault notes in a phrase that is (curiously) close to and yet (no doubt ironically) remote from Heidegger's famous statement about language as the house of being, "is originally an inhabiting of language" (65).

The universal must then be understood as born out of what is *truly* temporal (according to the dispersal of the always already there) and what is actually exchanged in a linguistic community, from a place where the practical and the theoretical coincide and the link between freedom and truth is established, which is also why the *Anthropology* can form a passageway toward the *Opus postumum* and the system of transcendental philosophy. God, man, and world here form a unity, and this unity is established in man, but only as part of the structure, which indicates that finitude still holds sway, and that Kant's last stance does not imply a return to classical infinitism. Now, in Foucault's reading—and here he abruptly moves from an analysis that with great sympathy and understanding follows the meandering movement of Kant's text to a denunciatory and even moralistic language, which somehow implies that Foucault himself would know what philosophy *is* and *should* be—when post-Kantian philosophy attempts to overcome this triad of the a priori, the original, and the fundamental, the ambiguous position held by anthropology will turn it into formidable *temptation* to create impure mixtures, and anthropology becomes that which "tends to *alienate* philosophy" (67, my italics). "One day," Foucault adds, "one would have to look at the whole of post-Kantian and contemporary philosophy from the point of view of this confusion, i.e. from the point of view of this *denounced* confusion" (ibid, my italics). In a short passage, which already prefigures the much more developed discussion in *The Order of Things*, but which here appears as little more than an ungenerous side remark, modern phenomenology is particularly singled out for making this "destructuration" of the philosophical field visible. In attempting to free the a priori from the "original" (in this case psychology), Husserl's *Logical Investigations* was the promise of a new start, but the path of phenomenology, caught up in a theory of subjectivity that could not resist the anthropological illusion, led back to the "depth of passive syntheses and the already there" (68). And similarly in Heidegger, the "problem of *In-der-Welt* could not escape the claim of empiricity". Against this "confusion" and "impurity," Foucault pits Nietzsche, whose "philosophizing with the hammer" has already "thought the end of philosophy," and thus made it possible to philosophize anew, and to answer to the "injunction of a new austerity."

The invention of anthropology no doubt coincides with the emergence not only of new empirical knowledge, but also of a new style of epistemological reflection that Foucault in this phase of his work more or less simply rejects; later he will come back to some of these themes in a much more thoughtful way, perhaps as if this *return* would have required the first *rejection* as a certain breaking-free from his own present. In the 1961 essay he notes how, in breaking with Cartesianism, these new investigations of the human body from the early 18th century and onward opened up the quest for what is "the physical for the body" instead of "physics for bodies," for something that would be *nature* without being the object of *physics*. These investigations were still dependent on a certain metaphysical priority of the soul, but they also point ahead to an emerging medical science for which man at the end of the 18th century would become a new dense object. Anthropology delimits *physis*, but it is also a science *of* this limit, and of what makes it possible. It is a science of a living being that is functional, of a health that is a sound animation, and thus a theory of the normal vs. the pathological. But even more profoundly, as a science *of* man, anthropology is also a science of everything that becomes possible *through* man: his history, culture, works, and deeds. "It finds its equilibrium in something which is neither the human animal nor self-consciousness, but the *Menschenwesen*, i.e. at once man's natural being, the law of his possibilities, and the a priori limit of his knowledge. Anthropology would then not only be a science of man, and the science of the horizon and of all the sciences of man, but also a science of that which founds and limits man's knowledge" (74). In the wake of the death of God and the disappearance of Classical infinity, anthropology asks: "*Can there be an empirical knowledge of finitude?*" (ibid), i.e., a positive knowledge of something that would make knowledge as such possible, and would allow the contents of a particular empirical science to function as transcendental reflection. The various adventures of the 19th century, psychologism, historicism, and then later sociologism and several other such "isms," testify to this doubling and twisting that characterizes all "sciences of man."

All of this, Foucault claims, is oblivious to the lesson of Kant, that no such contents can be allowed before they are subjected to an epistemological critique. And yet Foucault notes that Kant's constant accumulation of anthropological material indicates the centrality of the issue. The *Anthropology* is at once essential *and* inessential in the working out of the problem of how to think finitude through itself and not simply as privation of the infinite; it is both subjected to the Critique and an opening towards the system of transcendental philosophy, precisely as the ambiguous passage between them. Today, Foucault continues, this ambivalent heritage has ensnared us in a plethora of philosophical

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Richard Westall, *The Sword of Damocles*, 1812. Ackland Art Museum.

anthropologies that variously parade as a critical philosophy liberated from the constraints of the a priori, as a new form ontology, as the foundation of the human sciences, etc. This is in fact an anthropological mirror image of the transcendental illusion once dispelled by Kant, and into which Foucault seems to include most modern reflections on finitude, from Husserl to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, as comes across in his dense and allusive description: This illusion "became the truth of truth—that on the basis of which truth is always there and never given; it thus became the raison d'être and the source of critique; the point of origin of that movement whereby man loses the truth and ceaselessly finds himself summoned back to it. Defined today as finitude, this illusion became in the highest sense the withdrawal of truth: that in which it hides itself, and in which one can always find it" (77).

These "twisted and warped forms of reflection," as he will later call them in *The Order of Things*, demand a more radical critique, and once more, in the final two paragraphs, Nietzsche reappears, once more somewhat like a *deus ex machina* who heralds a new type of knowledge that would go beyond man towards something radically other and different. The tone is prophetic, as will also be the case in the famous final section in the 1966 book; in a certain sense Foucault's later development can be seen as a prolonged reflection on these passages, and a series of qualifications, if not renunciations, of the exorbitant claim that these early texts make. Here is Foucault in 1961: "The Nietzschean enterprise can be understood as an ending-point for the proliferation of interrogations of man. The death of God, is it not manifested in a double murderous gesture that, while putting an end to the absolute, assassinates man himself? For in his finitude man cannot be separated from the infinity of which he is at once the negation and the herald; the death of God is accomplished in the death of man. Would it not be possible to conceive of a critique of finitude that would be liberating with respect to man as well as to infinity, and which would show that finitude is not a termination, but the curvature and knot of time where the end is a beginning?" And then, in a separate clause, as if to further stress the quality of an Annunciation: "The trajectory of the question: *Was ist der Mensch?* in the field of philosophy is fulfilled in a response that challenges and disarms it: *der Übermensch*" (78f). As we will see, when Foucault some fifteen years later returns to Kant, the claim that the historical relativity of our modern concept of man must be understood as an imperative to go *beyond* him, will be considerably tempered, and it will be in terms of a reflection on our actuality precisely as a limit and possibility that joins together freedom and truth—in short, in a way that returns to the ideas of a pragmatic anthropology, although without mentioning them—that the positive task of thought will be determined.

III. The ontology of actuality, parrhesia, and the task of candor

Between 1978 and 1984 Foucault wrote a whole series of short essays on Kant and the Enlightenment, where once more the moment of Critical philosophy appears as the inauguration of a certain philosophical modernity. The differences with respect to the reading in 1961 are obvious, but there are also subterranean links; Foucault's trajectory should perhaps, as Deleuze once suggested, be understood as a broken line unified by its *crises* and *impasses*—not because of simple mistakes and errors, but in terms of necessary aporias that his thought had to overcome in order to come into its own.

In the first reappraisal of Kant, a lecture from 1978, "Qu'est-ce que la critique? Critique et *Aufklärung*,"[3] Foucault suggested that Kantian criticism should be understood as a will *not to be governed* and a rejection of the "pastoral" scheme of power—a "moral and political attitude, a way of thinking, etc., which I would simply call the art of not being governed or again the art of not being governed like that, or at that price ...the art of voluntary non-servitude, a considered non-docility". Subsequently he also associated this with the possibility of self-fashioning, and drawing on Baudelaire, with the idea of making one's own life into a work of art, but he also related it back to the initial formulations of political non-servitude, now rephrasing Kant's essential question as "How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?"

Some of these remarks should no doubt be understood in the context of the debate with Habermas on the idea of Enlightenment as a "project," and as preparatory notes towards the seminar in Berkeley on modernity (a theme proposed by Habermas) that in fact never materialized, but they also correspond to a shift since long underway inside Foucault's own work. In the 1982–83 lectures he brings together several of these themes, and articulates the reading of Kant's political philosophy in terms of the ontology of actuality with the theory of governing and "governmentality" in a way that, at least implicitly, returns us to issues that were central in the first reading of Kant in 1961. The later reflections on Kant, drawing mainly on the 1784 essay on the Enlightenment and the 1798 *Conflict of Faculties*, only occupy some twenty-five pages of the printed text—they are an "excursus" on a text Foucault describes as "something of a personal fetish" (8)—and they are located outside of the main trajectory of the course, and yet they point in a precise way to the guiding problem, i.e. the "governing of oneself and of others."

When Kant asks the question of how we should understand the Enlightenment, Foucault proposes that he is not only engaging a new sense of the audience, of a public realm that should allow for a free discussion (that we already find addressed as a "Leserwelt" in the preface to the 1781 edition of the first Critique), but in connection with this he is also asking a new type of question: What is this present to which I belong, what is the significance of the present moment, and what is taking shape in our moment as a possibility of new experiences? This does not simply bear on an idea of "history," but on a particular experience on the basis of the present of writing, and of the author's own implication in this present as an "event"—the thinker does not speak in the name of humanity or of tradition, but of a certain and precarious "we" that emerges in the moment, and that must become the object of reflection. This is for Foucault one of the fundamental features of the "philosophical discourse of modernity," which disentangles itself from the *querelle des anciens et des modernes* in rejecting the question of authority and inherited models, and instead of the "longitudinal" question poses a "sagittal" one, an arrow shot into the heart of the present. This is modernity not as a chronological demarcation, but as a *question*, and in this sense it is important that Enlightenment also names itself as a task or a process, a series of operations that thinking has to perform on itself.

For Kant, the question of the significance of the present will be a particular and precise one: the meaning of the French *revolution*, as becomes evident in 1798, in the second section of the *Conflict*. Kant here argues that the true significance of this event lies in the effects that it produces in the spectator, and in the "signs of history" (*Geschichtszeichen*) that it allows us to decipher as pointing toward a possible progress in history. The sign of history will have a tripartite form: it is a *signum rememorativum, demonstrativum et prognosticon*—there has always *been* (sign of memory, re-memoration), there *is* (demonstrative sign, pointing a case that appears to verify the hypothesis), there *will be* (prediction, prognosis) signs of progress that establish the hopeful continuity of history, a constant tendency toward improvement. But if the French Revolution for Kant is such a sign of historical progress, it is not because of its violent effects—a utilitarian calculus weighing losses and gains, for instance in human lives, could in fact lead us to say that we had been better off if the revolution had never occurred. The value of the revolution does not lie in its factual success or failure, but in the change in affectivity it produces among its spectators, which is what Kant calls *enthusiasm*.[4] Since the spectators (in this case, the Germans) stand outside the pathological affects of the event—they have nothing to gain by acting like the furious actors on the stage of history, but in fact everything to lose in their own country—their enthusiasm will be directed toward pure moral principles, and it indicates a *receptivity for ideas* ("eine Empfänglichkeit für Ideen," Kant says) hitherto unknown in history. And in this case, these ideas relate to the right for a people to give itself the constitution that it wishes, and furthermore a constitution that avoids all wars of aggression. Such events, Foucault says, and in this he goes beyond Kant's text and adds a slightly Nietzschean accent, could be "almost imperceptible" (18), they require a "hermeneutics," and we should not confuse grandeur with importance.

Against this hermeneutics there is however another Kant, the Kant of the three grand Critiques, which Foucault now locates in a different tradition of an "analytic of truth," continued today in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of analytical philosophy, whereas the other tradition, which poses the question of an ontology of "actuality," of the "present," or of "modernity," and which runs from "Hegel to the Frankfurt School, via Nietzsche, Max Weber, etc". (22) is the one in which Foucault locates his own type of questioning.

In Kant's text on the Enlightenment there is a second strand, which forms the bridge to the general topic of the lectures, and this is the idea of the Enlightenment as "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity". Foucault first focuses on the idea of "emergence," as the English translation has it, or more precisely "exit" or "stepping out" (*Ausgang*), and he emphasizes the indeterminacy of Kant's term: we are not told where we are going, only that we are leaving a state of self-imposed immaturity. The second and more crucial argument, which will lead over directly to the discussion of governing, examines "immaturity" (*Unmündigkeit*), which must be distinguished from physical or intellectual incapacities of any kind, from a natural infancy of mankind, as well as from any subjection, willing or not, to a legal order (despotism, sovereignty, political repression, etc.). The issue is rather a comportment, an attitude to oneself, and Kant gives three examples: "If I have a book to serve as my understanding, a pastor to serve as my conscience, a physician to determine my diet for me, and so on, I need not exert myself at all". Kant's problem is obviously neither with books nor pastors or physicians, but with the way in which we allow ourselves to *be conducted by others*, and Foucault points to the (admittedly somewhat loose, at least in the third case) connection between these examples and the three Critiques: the use of one's own understanding, of one's moral conscience, and the problem of vital and animated life—which in fact has little to do with the third Critique, and more with the pragmatic anthropology investigated in the 1961 Introduction.

This subjection is due to *ourselves*—as in the Anthropology, it is not a question of *what* we are, but of what *use* we choose to make of ourselves, of what the kind of *relation to ourselves* that we establish. The *Aufklärung* will then be the awakening to this question of governing. When Kant proposes the distinction between a "private" use of reason (where I act as the bearer of a public office, and must obey the laws and the codes) and a "public" (where I am entitled to voice a free intellectual reflection), he provides yet a clue to this, Foucault argues: immaturity occurs precisely when the first role is allowed to absorb the second, and I willingly thwart my own reflexive and moral capacity, and relinquish my own autonomy—which also includes the case when I subject to those who see it as their "profession" to speak on behalf of the liberation of others. This is why there cannot be a proper *agent* of Enlightenment, and we cannot claim to live in an *enlightened* age, since that would reduce public discussion to a set of fixed theoretical dogmas, to a *result*, only in an age of enlightenment as a *process*. Thus it is all the more curious, although from a political and strategic point of view undoubtedly understandable, when Kant at the end of his text points to such an agent: the Prussian emperor, who has guaranteed peace and tranquility in his land due to his "disciplined army". The latitude of free debate will in fact serve the emperor's own power, Kant argues, since it will produce a happy and obedient people, and reinforce the division of labor between the private and the public use of reason. This slightly uncomfortable twist, which introduces a certain cunning of (State) reason and to some extent undoes the earlier argument, may be one of the grounds for Kant's later transferal of the agency of Enlightenment to the enthusiasm produced by the revolution.

Foucault's reading of Kant ends here, with a series of question marks, and the lecture series proceeds to a lengthy analysis of ideas of governing and free speech in Greece, but the initial problem remains Kantian: private vs. public speech, the task of philosophy in relation to politics, and the problem of how to govern in a just way.

But why a return to Greece, if the question bears on *actuality* and the *present*? Just as in the history of sexuality, whose second and third volume Foucault was in the process of completing in the same years as these lectures, the reflections on governing take us back to a reflection on ancient Greek (and Roman) culture that characterizes the last phase of Foucault's thought. Unlike the work from the '70s on the structures of discipline and the emergence of a modern "dispositif" of sexuality, the latter work points to the necessity of assessing our actuality and present as a more complex overlay of many times and histories: the fact that sexuality is a recent invention should neither be underestimated *nor overestimated*, Foucault says in the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*, and if we are irrevocably modern (the sex is not an ideology or a mirage, it is wholly real *and* historically constructed), there is still a Greek inside of us, a Roman, and an early Christian, and this *longue durée* is what gives subjectivation a slower rhythm than the transformations within knowledge and power.

Now, the reflections on "governmentality" too seem to introduce a similar and more encompassing time frame, and perhaps it could be said that the whole of Foucault's later work was a gradual rediscovery of a certain historical continuity, not in the sense of teleology or progress of Reason, but in the sense that the rather sharp cuts that opened modernity, which his earlier work, at least the published books (the complete edition of the lectures provide a different picture), had tended to locate somewhere in the 18th century, were both made less trenchant and pushed further back in history. Finally, modern governmentality must be seen in the light of antique models, not because of some perennial quality that would pertain to the Greeks, but because they created a set of problems that still remain with us today. Returning to the sources, or to write the "history of the present," means to assess the both past and present differently, and to open another, perhaps "untimely," time, that dislocates present and past alike.

The general frame of these inquiries is the theme of "subjectivity and truth," which Foucault had announced in the lectures from 1981–82 on the "hermeneutics of the subject". There Foucault dealt with various techniques for the "care of the self" (*epimeleia heatou*), which however always involved a relation to others, and eventually also to the problem of how to govern others. We have to be called to this task by another, i.e., the problem of the *master* of truth, which Foucault perceives as a Greek alternative to the Christian spiritual advisor: the Greek master speaks, he proposes problems and solutions, instead of listening or taking confessions. In this first context, the idea of *parrhesia*,[5] a certain candor or free speech, surfaces in relation to the pupil, examples of which Foucault locates in the writings of Galen and in Seneca's letters to Lucilius, and which takes the form of a community of friends correcting each other.

As we have already noted, the new departure in 1983 takes its cues from Kant's writings on politics and the Enlightenment, but at the outset, before the digression on Kant, Foucault also provides a condensed retrospective view of his work that emphasizes the link between the concepts of governing and subjectivation, instead of the earlier couple power/knowledge. His true question, he suggests, has been to write a "history of thought," of various "foci of experience"(3) where three axes intersect: forms of knowledge, normative matrixes of conduct, and finally "modes of virtual existence for possible subjects"(4). Just as he in the first works on madness, the clinic, and the archeology of the human sciences shifted the attention from the progress of knowledge to variable discursive practices and rules for "establishing truth," he subsequently, in the work on prisons, hospitals and schools shifted the attention from "Power with a capital P" towards the "techniques and procedures through which one attempts to conduct the conduct of others," i.e., the field of "government," he in the end, beginning with the study of sexuality, had to displace the "theory of the subject" and provide space for an analysis of the "different forms in which the individual has been led to constitute himself as a subject," i.e. "subjectivation"(5).

Connecting these three major axes of his work in a way that addresses them precisely as unsolved *questions*—as Frédéric Gros notes in his lucid postface, Foucault has never to this extent been "at the edge of himself" (350)—Foucault then once more directs us to the problem of "governing oneself and others," which occupies the major part of the lectures, although this time he moves on from the Master to the one who has the courage to speak *in his own name*, to speak the truth in the face of power and authority with an obvious risk for his own life. This is how Foucault introduces the theme of *parrhesia*, in drawing on Plutarch's description of Plato's candor in the face of the tyrant Dionysius in Syracuse. Such speech implicates the subject, it is a discourse that puts the one speaking at stake and at risk, which in Foucault's view is precisely the true task of political philosophy: not general reflections on rationality or forms on governing, but a claim to truth made in the first person singular, in a way that always opposes governing to the possibility of rebellion, of a radical difference, not only with respect to authoritarian forms of governing, but also to democracy. Here we can see that what interests Foucault is neither to celebrate democracy nor to reject it, but to understand it as *problem*.

This structure of *parrhesia* has an essential relation to democracy and to the idea of a public space (and in this it obviously prefigures basic features of the Kantian idea of *Öffentlichkeit*, as well as the conflicts generated in this space between public and private use of reason), and the great historical model for this Foucault locates in the word addressed to the Assembly; the other side will be the word addressed by the philosopher to the ruler in privacy, a word that breaks the circle of flattery and where the philosopher comes to reflect on his own mode of being. The first aspect Foucault studies on the basis of the tragedies of Euripides, above all *Ion*, and the discourses of Pericles that we find in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In the close reading of *Ion*, where Euripides tells the story of how Ion discovers his true origin (he is the secret son of Apollo and Creusa, and the main part of the play is devoted to the tortuous process whereby the mother and son discover their respective true identities, after having attempted repeatedly to kill each other) and eventually becomes the founder of democratic rights in Athens, Foucault locates *parrhesia* as a moment of rivalry over the right to govern, a conflict between the *dynasteia* and the *politeia*. Here someone assumes the right of speech in order to demand his right in a movement of opposition to a constituted order, and in this way *Ion* is the story of a foundation. In Pericles's speeches as narrated by Thucydides this comes across in an even more pronounced fashion, which leads Foucault to analyze the difference between *isegoria* as an egalitarian speech and the singularity of speech that introduces truth as a difference and violence, and that breaks the order of constitutional egalitarianism.

Any government, no matter how just, Foucault notes, must be animated by this polemical *parrhesia* if it is to remain alive. And yet, the idea that truth never rests in itself but is always caught up in a game, an *agon* that pits equal or unequal parts of the *polis* against each other, also entails a series of risks. First of all there is the obvious possibility that the government itself will fall. But furthermore, to speak the truth is also to aspire to govern others, as we saw in the case of the enlightened one who demands to lead others towards the light in Kant—the one who puts his existence at risk by speaking the truth indeed also speaks *his* truth, and he is by no means without his proper will to power, to state this in Nietzschean terms (as Foucault here no longer does, which in itself could be taken as the indication of a theoretical shift). This parrhesic speech is indeed too a destabilizing of democracy as *isonomia*, of the egalitarian form governing equals—it opens the avenue of rhetoric, as Plato did not fail to acknowledge, where personal quest for power becomes the dominant motif. If democracy and truth always presuppose each other, they also inevitably put each other at risk. As Foucault notes: "There can be no true discourse without democracy, and yet true discourse introduces a difference within democracy. There can be no democracy without true discourse, and yet democracy threatens the existence of true discourse."

But as we have noted, there is also the private *parrhesia* of the philosopher in the face of the ruler, and here Foucault scrutinizes Plato's famous *Seventh Letter* in order to determine the relation of the philosopher to "reality" as that against which he has to measure his own truth. When Plato explains his reasons for going to Sicily, he says that what we must seek is not only an active confrontation with external power, but also a practice that relates to the self and not only to the order of pure knowledge, to the *mathemata*.

Foucault here also briefly and somewhat unjustly addresses the reading of Plato proposed by Derrida (construed as if Derrida's proposal was that Plato simply *rejected* writing; nothing could in fact be further from the case), and he claims that what Plato seeks is not the pure logos, but a way to model the self, one that takes leave of both speech and writing in favor of an inner experience.[6] A more surprising conclusion of this is that the image of the philosopher-king for Foucault is less a legitimization of power through knowledge, but once again a particular work on oneself, on one's own *ethos*.

The last four lectures then move to a different problem. Beginning a discussion of Plato's *Apology*, *Phaedrus*, and *Gorgias*, which would then be continued in the last and still unpublished lectures from 1983–84, Foucault now approaches the "courage to truth" and the problem of "true life". To some extent we could not have come further away from the initial and somewhat violent denunciations of the "anthropological illusion" in 1961: the question in these late texts is, precisely, not what man *is*, but what man can *do* with himself in terms of ethics, pragmatics; and a continual labor on and of the self now constitute the overarching question. The triumphant Nietzschean response to the question "What is man?" now only seems like a distant memory. To some extent this may have to do with the proximity to death, and the attendant serenity that comes when one knows that all the bets have been placed. But biographical information aside, going back to the beginning and retracing one's steps at such a late hour testifies first and foremost to a remarkable "courage to truth." •

Emmanuel Kant/Michel Foucault *Anthropologie du point de vue pragmatique / Introduction à l'*Anthropologie (Paris: Vrin, 2008)
Le gouvernement de soi et des autres. Cours au Collège de France (1982–1983), ed. Frédéric Gros (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2008)

Notes

1. Foucault's first preserved philosophical text dates from 1952–53, a series of lectures at the University of Lille, under the rubric "Knowledge of man and transcendental reflection". These still unpublished 97 manuscript pages discuss Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Dilthey, and form an early matrix for the ideas in the Introduction to Kant. Two years later, the preface to the translation of Ludwig Binswanger's *Traum and Existenz* carries out an extended and subtle dialogue with both Freud and Husserl. An in-depth analysis of Foucault's early work, and of how he gradually disentangles from and in the mid '60s even comes to violently oppose himself to phenomenology and a philosophy of facticity, remains to be written.
2. Foucault here draws on notes from the *Opus postumum*, in the *Akademieausgabe*, vol. XXI, 27 ff, and from the *Logik*, vol. IX, 25.
3. Originally published in *Bulletin de société française de philosophie*, vol. 84, no. 2, 1978, not included in the four-volume edition of the collected essays, *Dits et Écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).
4. Three years later, the same text would become the object of a lucid commentary by Jean-François Lyotard, who develops a reading close to Foucault, although phrased in terms of Kant as a possible precursor to "postmodernity" *avant la lettre*; see *L'enthousiasme. La critique kantienne de l'histoire* (Paris: Galilée, 1986).
5. This topic was also treated in a series of lectures at Berkeley, which has been published as *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), and that provides a condensed version of the argument in the lectures at the Collège de France.
6. This criticism against Derrida in fact repeats the arguments of the quarrel over Descartes: when Derrida in "Cogito and the History of Madness" defends the transcendent and even hyperbolical quality of the *cogito* against the reading advocated in Foucault's analysis of it as one of the agents of the "interment" in *History of Madness*, Foucault retorts that what Descartes undertakes in his *Meditations* is a practice that wants to transform the self, and that Descartes indeed has good reasons to exclude the possibility of being mad from the mind's own operations. More than just a scholarly quarrel over a few passages in the *Meditations*, this obviously involves two different views of philosophy: Derrida pursues the quest for transcendental foundations, albeit in a displaced and more open form (which would be able to accommodate even a certain type of madness, since the cogito transcends all finite and intra-worldly orders of knowledge), whereas Foucault wants to bring these questions down to an immanent analysis of practices, where what is at stake is a kind of institutionalized legitimacy (the madman cannot be held accountable, he is not entitled to be subject of his discourse).

"Criticizability", the New, and Experimental Criticism

Lars-Erik Hjertström Lappalainen

Art critics have done a great service in treating artists' work in relation to several important factors, such as institutions, art history, cultural theory, political situations, etc. To a certain extent though, this has been done to the detriment of the effort of the artists and their works. Sometimes they are treated only as a pretext to talk about these other things. This is done at the expense of immanent criticism that should be a start for almost any critical reception of an exhibition.[1] The philosophical reason for this neglect is probably to be found in a disregard for the question of the "criticizability" of art works. Back in the days when the critic was a man of taste, the criticizability of a work was quite obvious: did the work correspond to the criteria of judgment or not? Its criticizability stuck to that correspondence. Now, when we don't believe in criteria of judgment, we could try to enter the works directly, finding the criticizability within them. This is the early German romantic approach: "The entire art-philosophical work of the early Romantics could be resumed as a tentative attempt to demonstrate the criticizability (*Kritisierbarkeit*) of works of art by principle."[2] They found that a work could become an object of criticism if it contained the kind of thinking they called reflection. This was what made immanent criticism possible, a criticism that, in its own power of reflection, could join the work on the inside. Today, this immanent criticism is not the default option for critics. Indeed, even a critic like Jörg Heiser, editor of *Frieze* and also the curator of an exhibition called precisely Romantic Conceptualism, sidesteps the possibility of immanent criticism in favor of a brave subjectivism—brave because he is explicit in his making the critic's subjective taste and her ability to argue for it the sole ground of critical thinking, brave also because he, despite this subjectivism, extends the critic's responsibility even to the future: his expertise in art argumentation legitimizes her to tell us which of today's works will be important even in or for the future.[3] The criticizability of a work is thus determined as the possibility it gives the critic to argue for the worth of its effects on her subject. Criticizability has then been perverted into "discussability". It has lost firm ground in the work and has been substituted with a procedure designed to convince people to adopt this opinion instead of another. It is a good thing Heiser does not stick to his theory, but actually works with other criteria of criticizability. Even so, or even more so, let's take on the problem of criticizability once again.

The problem is to find some kind of foundation for a thinking operating in and through works of art, i.e. a foundation for immanent criticism. What is needed is an entrance through which to reach what is going on in the work, i.e. an appropriate notion of criticizability, and a criterion for it. A work of art can probably have several criteria of criticizability, several entrances connecting directly to the criticizable itself, in relation to which the work should be explored.[4] Here only one will be treated, extracted from the works of Gilles Deleuze: the criteria of novelty. Deleuze never claimed novelty to be a criterion of criticizability, but something he said in an interview to the French writer Hervé Guibert suggests it. After having told him that spectators only have empty intuitions if they do not understand how to appreciate the novelty of an image, Deleuze received this skeptical reaction: "Novelty, in what way does that count?" This reply indeed expressed an attitude that was very common for several decades. It bestowed Harold Rosenberg's thought of the new as a *sine qua non* of the intellectually significant (back in the fifties) with an air of naive hope built on an idea about the deep authentic originality of a heroic artist.[5] Still in 1999, when Boris Groys published his *Über das Neue*, the current opinion was that we were over and done with the problem of the new.[6] It seems like the evaluation of the importance of the new has again shifted back these last years. Antoni Negri has spoken of it as an "opening" leading out of a determined historical construction and Slavoj Zizek finds what multiculturalism lacks is "the explosion of the eternally new in or as a process of becoming."[7] For Deleuze, the new was always an important aspect of art and philosophy. It has even (to exaggerate slightly) been claimed that the very "task" of art, by which it can be defined, consists in the "making of something new".[8]

Deleuze's response to this skeptical reaction ("Novelty, in what way does it count?") hints at something else: at a specific role or use criticism and art theory can make of the new, "For every work of art, novelty is the only criterion."[9] This unique criterion is not, I believe, one of criticism but one of criticizability. Most obviously on the level of motivation: why make a work of art, and why write about it, if you haven't seen or thought something new, if you don't have anything new to show or tell? This motivation is like a forerunner of criticizability, giving the artist and the critic a common cause. The work can become an object of criticism since there is a subjective reason (the motivation) for doing it: the new experience given by the work. Novelty as a motive obviously opens up for a creative criticism. If the novelty of the work really is a reason to engage in critical inquiry, just reporting or describing the work will not do. No, the spirit of novelty necessitates a criticism inventive not only in relation to the work and its "problem", but also in regard to the problem of criticism.[10] If criticism were only fair to a work, of what interest would it be to the artist? If it didn't deal creatively also with its own problems, how could it possibly give something? And maybe this is what makes novelty a criterion of criticizability and not of criticism—as it refers to creativity it demands a creative response, it invites to a community in the work, or around it.[11] "[I]t is in the name of my creativity that I have something to say to someone [to an artist]."[12] Creativity would thus be the criticizability of a work, and the new the criterion of criticizability, the entrance to the inner action of it. Creativity, not subjectivity, is what could claim authority (if there were any to claim), because it is there the labor of the critic can connect to that of the artist, or more precisely, to that of the work.

In contrast, for Harold Rosenberg the new was a criterion of criticism, not one of criticizability. It was certainly his incentive to write, but in relation to the work itself, the new was only an extrinsic property. Novelty was not a criterion of criticizability for Rosenberg because it was not a part of the work's proper consistence. It was not the opening of the work to critical thinking. Before asking if something is new, Rosenberg's question was: what is this thing that is new? He asked for the identity of the object, not of the novelty; in relation to the essence of the object the new was purely accidental. Instead of entering the work through the new, the task of the critic was "to distinguish between a real novelty and a false one". That was the task of criticism: to make this distinction (between real and false novelty) by and as "an evaluation, perhaps the primary one for criticism…". So, this division is clear: not treating the something new as One, but asking for the identity, the being, of this something, and for the value of its novelty. The proper function of the new, in Rosenberg's use of it, is to keep the critic outside of the work, referring her to her own subjectivity (not one constituted by the work) or set of criteria in order to be evaluated. Identity and value: in both cases criticism is brought back to judgments (of identity and of value), but the spirit of novelty should appeal to creation, not to identification.

In order for novelty to give access to a work, it must pertain to something within the work itself, not only consist in its difference from other works. It must neither be a question of a comparative novelty, nor one of age, of how recently a work was made. Immanent criticism requires the entrance to the work to be a proper part of it. The novelty, as a criterion of criticizability, must have a proper consistence: "the always new" as Deleuze once said, the new that is "eternal and necessary".[13] This is a somewhat strange requirement, but without it, criticism would not only be referred to the subjectivity of the critic, but also be restricted to only recently made works, leaving vital works to art history. I believe there is a difference in nature between criticism and history, and that their respective domains are not demarcated by time, but by the criterion of criticizability. So, let us try to determine novelty without reference to its position in time or in comparison to other works.

If novelty denotes creation, does it also pertain to it? In fact, one could define creation in terms of novelty. To create is to put forth something that, in relation to history or the empirical situation, did not have to be nor was commanded by the future.[14] What is new is something that would not have come into being sooner or later anyhow. In relation to history, it is contingent, not inevitable. In that sense, the new is excessive. But of all contingent things, only those that are the outcome of an act of creation are new.

The making of something new is not a creation out of nothing. Therefore, it does not necessarily entail a break with the past or a constitution of a new beginning, but simply lets us stay *in medias res*. What creativity does do, is to transform or metamorphose the given, the products of the past: "the new, that means what is produced under the default condition and by the intermediary of the metamorphosis."[15] "The default condition" is the historical situation of the artist and the conditions or givens of his art (a picture must have a certain color, spatiality, shape, etc).[16] Those variables, part of what constitutes a "problem" for the artist, are given and repeated in a transformative way by creation: "That's the new: the way in which the problems are differently (*autrement*) resolved".[17] So, the act of creation is brought to operate upon its own conditions, thus making its way of liberating creativity, until it is nothing but its way of arranging a line of escape. Not a break, a leak. It is in relation to the problem and by the act of creation (the creation of creativity's own present conditions while creating something else) that the new receives a necessity literally its own, powerful enough to enable us to say that the new poses itself, that it is a kind of auto-position.[18] This leak is not a failure, not a lack, not a nothing—it is a German prejudice, almost a mysticism, that novelty and creation involve negativity—but a process of differentiation as well as one of creation.[19] The necessity and positivity come from creativity's creation of its own conditions of activity, i.e. from the metamorphosis of the given, the repetition of the given. That is why Deleuze says that repetition is "*a condition of action before being a concept of the reflection*".[20] This transformation of the conditions not only deterritorializes the problem the artist set out with, it also reterritorializes it, because while escaping, while repeating the given, new immanent rules for creativity are also created.[21] The way of becoming in relation to these immanent rules is the inner difference of a work. Here we have the difference needed, a difference that is not the result of a comparison with other work, but is the work's difference in relation to itself: its way of becoming, not its being. This inner difference is the life of a work: a "difference" that "realizes itself as novelty".[22] So, difference is a condition of novelty, and novelty is a realization of inner difference. But, in what does novelty *consist*? Both Rosenberg and Groys say that the new operates a break in time, but that even so it has a consistency over time as a tradition (Rosenberg) or as a law (Groys). According to Deleuze, repetition is what gives the new a consistency, turning auto-position (as repetition) into autonomy.[23] But this autonomy of a work is a mystery: the artist is not autonomous, nevertheless, "her" act of creation is new and neither an expression of the artist nor of the conditions of the artist. Deleuze's difficult philosophy of repetition almost seems to have been conceived in order to explain the relation between creation and the autonomy of a work. It is at the peak of it, in the thought of "the third repetition", of the eternal recurrence, that Deleuze takes on this problem: "Only on the condition of repeating once in the mode that constitutes the past, a second time in the present tense of metamorphosis, do we produce something new. What is produced, the absolutely new, is nothing but repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal recurrence". This repetition actually takes on the new in its aspect of excessiveness, of contingency, in relation to history. What gave the new a necessity was its creative relation to a problem, the components of which were given not only by history, but also by the artist. In a way, that problem is resolved in the new. The new is thus detached from the historical sources of the given as well as from the source of creativity (the artist). Only the new is left, virtually encapsulating the rules of its creation—that is the only object of this third repetition. It deals with that which is repeated (the problematic creativity) in the second repetition (the metamorphosis resolving the problem), i.e. the new, the outcome of that process. That is why Deleuze says: "The eternal recurrence does only affect the new." It only affects the effect, not the cause. This repetition of the new "is itself the new, the entire novelty". It excludes both the condition and the agent, and thereby

Claude-Henri Watelet, *La Font de Saint-Yenne*, etching after design by Portien.

it "constitutes the autonomy of the product, the independence of the work".[24] So, in some way, this third repetition captures the becoming of the work, but within the work. It encapsulates its manner of creativity, its immanent rules, but not the creator nor her situation. What is repeated is its inner difference, the differentiation or deterritorialization effectuated by the creative act, its very transforming of a problem and of an experience of something new. By this repetition a new reterritorialization in accordance with the work is prepared. That—this *manner* of leaving the given and taking place among the given—is what constitutes the autonomy of the work. This aspect of reterritorialization should not be overlooked when discussing repetition. It is at the same time that a thing is de- and re-territorialized. It is the two sides of the new. So far, the new has to a large extent been exposed from the side of becoming, particularly from that of deterritorialization. But it actually has a lot to do with reterritorialization, since that is what distinguishes a novelty from a bare haecceity and from a line of flight, of escape, of leak.[25] This has to do with creativity's creating of its own present conditions while operating. This implies that creation is not possible, not in advance. It is like Francis Bacon once said: it is impossible until someone does it. Creation goes from virtuality to actuality, not from possibility to reality. But, once the creation is done, the new is a being, a type, as well as a becoming, a metamorphosis. The specificity of the being is its "essence or novelty".[26] Here, essence is understood in the most traditional way: the essence of something is its proper, internal and eternal, possibility. Thus, the new is a new possibility, a new essence, and when realized, "a new type of reality (*type de réalité*)".[27] As such, it is true. It is a truth. That is why "the artist is a *creator of truth*, because the truth is not to be reached, found or reproduced, it has to be created. There is no other truth but the creation of the New".[28]

To resume the concept of the new: it is the product of a creativity that creates its own conditions of operation by its way of metamorphosing the given, thus constituting an inner difference and letting the created emerge through autoposition as a new truth and possibility. This difference can also become the object of a third repetition constituting the autonomy of the created, its own rule of becoming.

When used as a criterion of criticizability, this concept of the new demands a few things. First of all, it calls upon the creative capacity of criticism. Criticism could actually function as the third repetition, repeating the work from the aspect of its becoming, from its inner difference, and could constitute the effect of it, the effect in itself. This repetition is a matter of thinking, not of knowing, because the new cannot become an object of knowledge without losing its character of novelty.[29] Knowledge can come to grips with the new as a type of reality and reduce it to what already was, "surrealism to mannerism", but it cannot even start to reduce the new becoming into something else because it is not an object of knowledge, but of thinking. The becoming is not what a work is, but what is about to emerge in it, what is going on within the work. This becoming, the inner creativity of a work, is what constitutes its criticizability. Reaching creativity through the gate of the new, thinking, and thus criticism can merge with the work: "Thinking is experimenting, but experimentation, that is always what is going on (*en train de se faire*) [in the work]—the new".[30] Maybe the criticizability and its criterion actually merge in thinking, in experimental criticism, which is not historical, not scientific, but philosophical. The first task of criticism would then be to find the point of view of the work, the novelty, and see "what is going on" there, be animated by this becoming and to let the critic's subjectivity be constituted by the same rules;[31] but also joining novelty from the other side, from the type, form, or truth: "There is a point of view that belongs to the thing in such a way that the thing incessantly transforms itself in a becoming identical to the point of view. Metamorphosis of the true."[32] This is the point where criticizability and its criterion actually become One. Deleuze has given at least one example of such a creative, experimental way of doing criticism. This example is not one of "pure" criticism, but of Carmelo Bene's use of theater as a tool for criticism. Still, it is a good example. The creativity of this did not consist in an addition of something to the work, but in an "amputation" of it. By taking something away from a work, a different part of it was set into action (in criticism/theater) in order to cover up for the missing part. What happened was that a virtuality did develop and repeated the work according to itself: once Romeo was gone, Mercutio took over—but still it was the same play. That is of course a very violent art of criticism, but it makes the point of experimental criticism clear: "Criticism is a constitution."[33] As such, it would depend neither on an aesthetics of reception, nor on an aesthetics of the artist: neither artist, nor audience, the critic would have his own creative position to constitute novelties, truths, unexpected things.

Yet another task for criticism would be to evaluate the new. Contrary to the belief of the Romantics and of Rosenberg, the evaluation of a work is not immanent to its criticism (to the experimental thinking in connection to the creativity of the work), nor is every criticizable work a good one.[34] The task is not to distinguish the false novelty from the genuine, but to distinguish whether a novelty serves conformity or creativity; whether it has a sense of humor or is made in the spirit of vanity; whether it has integrity or is made to be sodomized by any force around; whether it is important or not, etc. To do so, the critic could use anything, any theory or event she finds relevant. Here, we are not work-immanent, but interpret the possible reterritorializations and their relation to the work's becoming. A work could also be in need of criticism in order to be protected from a conformist use of it, for example turning it into fashion or historical knowledge by "petrifying the metamorphoses, reconstituting models and copies."[35] Criticism should effectuate a repetition, recreate the work considered as a becoming, a creativity, in accordance to its immanent rules and material of creation, i.e. its *virtuality* should be re-*actualized* by it; the enemy of criticism, reproduction, will instead use the work as a product, as a realized essence and through abstraction reach its *possibility* in order to *re-realize* it. Criticism should evaluate the connections between the work and the historical; its enemy will introduce it into a system of already known parameters, political, sociological, institutional or (art-) historical.

This criterion, the new, also relieves the critic from the vain task of predicting the future, of telling people which recently made work will survive and which will not. There are two reasons to refrain from this. Art, from the point of view of criticism, is not a matter of expertise, but of thinking. The new is not yet another thing among things, but "a new kind of reality that history cannot grasp or replace in the punctual systems".[36] Therefore it is unknowable, but still thinkable. It takes place in a sphere different from history and knowledge (the untimely). Secondly, if a work has to be new, it is certainly unpredictable, unexpected, as is the future. Rosenberg explained the future as being obscure because the new always breaks with the past.[37] That is almost it, but as we have already stated, it does not break with the past; let's just concentrate on the fact that the new is unexpected, surprising. It is that quality that makes the future unpredictable. Furthermore, when the criticizability is connected to the new, it deprives the critic of the possibility of knowing which works of today should count even tomorrow. Because there is no sure way of recognizing the new: having no criteria, it simply isn't an object of recognition. There can always be new ways of being new, ways that are too new to be detected. And, there is no reason, again contrary to Romanticism, to state that all criticizable works are equally good or important. Maybe the best works of today and yesterday are still to be discovered. •

Notes

1. I don't mean to promote "works" instead of installations or object-less art. With a work, I just mean an art product, material or not.
2. Walter Benjamin *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), 110.
3. "Jedes Urteil über Kunst bleibt letzlich willkürlich und subjektiv—und genau deshalb muss es umso mehr argumentativ fundiert und überprüfbar sein. Ich werde bestimmen, welche Strömungen, Künstler und Werke die zeitgenössische Kunst weiterbringen…". *Plötzlich diese Übersicht. Was gute zeitgenössische Kunst ausmacht* (Berlin, 2007), 7–8.
4. One could imagine other criteria, maybe "the interesting" would be more readily acceptable, but also "the important" or "the remarkable" should be scrutinized one day, and "humor". In regard to humor, one could read the already mentioned book by Jörg Heiser. With great results, the first hundred pages of it takes on contemporary art from the point of view of slapstick.
5. "In our era, art that ceases to seek the new becomes at once intellectually insignificant, a species of homecraft". *Art on the Edge* (London, 1976), 138. And: "[N]o disagreement exists regarding the value of the new in art." Unpaginated text called "The Tradition of the New" in Rosenberg's *The Tradition of the new* (New York/Toronto, 1965 (1959)).
6. *Über das Neue* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004 (1999)), 9.
7. Negri in Jean-Luc Nancy, *Philosophische Salons, Frankfurter Dialoge I* edited by Elisabeth Schweger (Frankfurt am Main, 2004), 13; Zizek, *Körperlose Organe. Bausteine für eine Begegnung zwischen Deleuze und Lacan* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005) 29.
8. Ronald Bogue *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts* (New York, 2003) 3.
9. Gilles Deleuze, *Deux régimes de fous* (from now on: DRF) (Paris, 2003), 200.
10. Here we are on a parallel path to that of early German Romanticism. It understood criticism to be a creative activity ("poetry on poetry") as well as a philosophically reflective one (Fr. Schlegel wrote: "Every philosophical review should also be a philosophy of reviews"). Benjamin, ibid. 67–68.
11. DRF 321.
12. DRF 293.
13. *L'île déserte et autres textes* (Paris, 2002), 41; DRF 200.
14. By "history" is meant not only the story of what was before now, but also the level of ordinary subjects and objects coordinated within a time running continuously through past, present and future; or "the order of finality, causality, and possibility" determined in relation to the past as the domain of the given and in relation to an idea of totality, equally given. So, in large aspects of daily life, and to an even greater extent in our way of thinking, we're living in history. Marcus Steinweg's enumeration of things included in "the historical dimension" gives the picture: "Das ist die Dimension der sozialen, politishcen, kulturellen, biologischen, etc. Endlichkeit, die Dimension ebenso der herrschenden Doxa wie der überlieferten 'Wahrheiten'." "Das Unendliche retten. Kunst und Philosophie im Denken von Deleuze" in *Deleuze und die Künste* edited by Peter Gente and Peter Weibel (Frankfurt am Main, 2007), 84.
15. *Différence et répétition* (DR) (Paris, 1989 (1968)), 122.
16. Deleuze comes close to propose a media specific view of art, a bit in the manner of Greenberg, or Goethe, according to which the problems of painters are not those of a novelist, etc. Even more so as he denies the concept of Art and the thought of a system of the arts. But even so, he still finds it possible "to make a simultaneous use of different arts" and thus opens the door for the post-mediatic art. MP 369.
17. DRF 200.
18. DRF 200.
19. Theodor Adorno said that the new is "privative, from the beginning on more of a negation of that which should no more be now, than a positive" idea. *Ästhetische Theorie* (ÄT) (Frankfurt am Main, 1989 (1970)), 38. And Marcus Steinweg disregards most of the creative act, happy to say that "the actual creative act" is a touching on Nothingness. Ibid. 91.
20. DR 121 (Deleuze's italics).
21. Compare what Deleuze says about minor languages in *Superpositions* (S) (Paris, 1979), 102.
22. 72.
23. Both Rosenberg and Groys seem to be unsatisfied with the idea of a break with the past, so they try to give this rupture a single identity or consistency by making it into a tradition (Rosenberg) or even into a "law" (Groys), without explaining much of this paradoxical cohabitation of break and continuity. Deleuze does this through repetition.
24. All quotes from DR 121–122.
25. See *Dialogues* (Paris, 1996), 164. Adorno complains about the new being "empty like the perfect this here". (ÄT, 38.) That is right as far as the new that you experience is concerned. But the concept of the new is not one of experience, but of creation. In relation to experience, the new is empty (only more or less intense), a haecceity, a "this here". Referred to creativity though, it is far from empty.
26. *Cinéma I. L'image-mouvement* (CI) (Paris, 1983) 12.
27. *Mille plateaux* (MP) (Paris, 1980), 363.
28. *Cinéma II. L'image-temps* (CII) (Paris, 1985), 191.
29. This is sorrowful for Adorno: as soon as you want to know the new, you have to "translate" it into the old. ÄT p. 36, and see also p. 504–505 where he treats the "geisterwissenschafliche Manie, Neues aufs Immergleiche, etwa den Surrealismus auf den Manierismus zu reduzieren".
30. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris, 1991), 106.
31. S 114.
32. CII 191.
33. S 88.
34. About the Romantic's fundamental principles for critical judgment, see W. Benjamin, ibid. 78. See also Adorno on the impossibility of a bad work, ÄT, 246.
35. CII 192.
36. MP (Paris, 1980), 363.
37. *Art on the Edge*, 138.

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Postcards from New York

Karl Lydén

Glenn Ligon, *Notes on the Margin of the Black Book*, 1991–1993. Courtesy of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Dear R.,

The weather is great (almost like back home) and I'm having such a good time. So much has happened and I can't even tell you half of it. If I fall short of recounting this trip in a reasonable or coherent way, remember it's the other side of the postcard that counts. So when we arrived at the airport to get our eyes scanned,...

On December 1, the New Museum opened at its new address on the Bowery in New York. As probably nobody failed to notice, the media coverage was huge; it was the first museum built from the ground up below 14th St. on Manhattan, and it was built on the sketchy Bowery—home of restaurant retail and, until recently, much shadier business—on the Lower East Side, a traditionally poor neighbourhood in a period of transition and gentrification. Furthermore, the emerging architecture of Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa/SANAA Ltd. was spectacular. The unique building resembles boxes (or white cubes?) unevenly stacked on top of each other, all clad in a seamless, anodized aluminium mesh. The only sign or decoration on the whitish, seemingly windowless façade are the rainbow colored, round letters saying HELL, YES or, homophonically, L. E. S. as in the Lower East Side.

With the New Museum thus being new in all ways—swearing colorfully, architectonically spectacular, and with a new take on the city's geography, or maybe demography—the stakes were high for the opening exhibition. Unfortunately, it did not live up to them. The exhibition, entitled *Unmonumental*, deals with collage and consists of three separate but overlapping parts and phases: sculptures and objects, still and moving images, and sound. The first part, Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century, was exhibited alone for about a month, then Collage: The Unmonumental Picture was added on the surrounding walls, and finally the soundtrack, coming down from loudspeakers somewhere up high, was turned on. The curators state: "'Unmonumental' is an exhibition about fragmented forms, torn pictures and clashing sounds. Investigating the nature of collage in contemporary art practices, 'Unmonumental' also describes the present as an age of crumbling symbols and broken icons. [...] Historically collage tends to appear in times of trauma and social change".

This last sentence drops like a silent bomb of conflicting, or at least unexpressed, meanings. Historically, I guess it could be proved as much as disproved that collage appears in "times of trauma and social change". But if you believe so, what does the act of ordering or exhibiting such works mean: would they rather not "appear" by themselves? Or does it just mean that collage is a good art form to express the problems of trauma and social change, in the 1920s as well as in this decade? Does it say that we live in such a time? But what time would not characterize itself as one of trauma and social change?

In spite of its title, the exhibition is everything but unmonumental. The slow, broken, squeaking and industrial sounds of the audio-exhibition interrupt the silence from time to time, and the elevators open up directly into the museum's large halls, where the floor is littered with appropriated materials. Cardboard and half dirty plastic film, an old sofa with a neon spear through it, a burning candle light in the size and form of a person, a pile of chairs, Ikea tables with painted cardboard glued to them, a pink cube with belts, dirty buckets filled with bottles and plaster. On the walls there are portraits of different faces merging to create new faces, a digital montage of different landscapes,a huge half abstract painting covering a full wall. It is rather homogenous and, I would say, rather formalistic—even something like a monument of form. Maybe this is due to the strict division of different "arts": sculptures here, images there, sound somewhere else. It becomes a pretty authoritative curating, making a *Gesamtkunstwerk* to be experienced all at once, and, at the same time, a process where you have to come back three times. In this separation of genres or division of labor, the art is produced in three separate fields, like raw material for the final product, the grand collision or merging of forms. It reminds me of an art piece not made by an artist.

In general, I would say that the exhibition looks like a combination of pop art and abstract sculpture. There is an old plow painted in neon, sculptures in wax, a bale of clothes. These artworks no longer share the same context: the everyday objects from consumer culture that constitute their elements had a different meaning forty years ago and the abstract shapes do not turn the visitor's attention to the surrounding institutional space, the white cube, or to the spectator itself, like some of the 1960s minimalist art strived to do. But I am not sure what these appropriations mean today, what they refer to, what they want to say, or what story they would like to tell. There seems to be an inflation or devaluation of form. Maybe the most interesting aspect is that it looks like art, but does not feel like it. And maybe—in an effort of not seeing it as a curatorial failure, with all too many similar works and a formalistic meltdown—one could even think of it in terms of a breaking down of the exhibited to its different materials and to its smallest components, like a sort of "art materialism" similar to language materialism. However, "art materialism" seems rather tautological, and I am not sure where that line of thought would lead, or who would like to follow it.

Perhaps one possible discussion of the exhibition of Unmonumental is already conceived in Kristen Morgin's piece: her ceramic urns, placed in a showcase, seem to talk about the very conditions of the exhibited object. Looking like archaeological findings, found objects and constructed pieces at the same time, they actually seem to question the very act of collecting "real" things and exhibiting them. A more disparate work, one of the few works whose appropriated material is not reduced to formal or purely visual matters in the clashing totality of the exhibition, is Oliver Laric's *50 50*, a video consisting of fifty Youtube clips with kids rapping over songs from 50 Cent's album *Get rich or die tryin'*. The work is interesting in itself—it tenderly and ingeniously reflects mimicry, identification, the construction of identities, and the proliferation and reproduction of culture—but also because it belongs to a fourth part or final addition to the exhibition, Montage: Unmonumental Online. This part is curated by the New Museum's affiliate Rhizome.org, where you can see the works of the "Online"-exhibition, something that is surprisingly unusual—why do museums not exhibit more on the Internet? This externality proves to be fruitful, just like the New Museum's highly interesting workshop project *Night School* by artist Anton Vidokle. Maybe due to its traditional form, the series of free lectures actually feels a little like something new, or at least like something important. It actually does live up a little to the high expectations of the newly opened museum, but it also highlights this strict "division of labor" at the New Museum, where sculpture, images and sounds are being separated. Because what does it mean? Is it even possible to distinguish between different genres in that way? Why would one do it? This meticulous and rather formalistic separation of genres, materials and forms almost seems to imply the possibility of the old separation between form and content. And in one sense, it seems as if the exchange of ideas, the discussion of contemporary art and its conditions, the self-reflective discourse of art, is held at the Night School rather than being an integrated part of the museum's exhibition.

This emerging, seemingly formalistic trend of stacking used material confuses me. Everybody seems to agree that there is such a trend, but when I ask, nobody can explain it. The reemergence of junk art, the return of piles of trash on the floor, the wave of silent shapes: is it all just a sort of reaction against the predominantly conceptual, archival, or documentary aspects of art over the last few years? That might well be the case, but what then is it about other than a reaction? Who—except for a commercial scene that might wish for a return to something purely "aesthetic"—is happy to see it, and more importantly, why? I am sure someone will explain this to me. Unfortunately, it will not be the New Museum: when clicking the "Mission Statement" on their web

▼
Eyal Sivan, *The Specialist: Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 1999. Copyright Eyal Sivan. Courtesy of Momento!.

▲
Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica, *Videograms of a Revolution*, 1993. Courtesy of Harun Farocki Filmproduktion Berlin.

◂
Anri Sala, *Intervista*, 1998. Copyright Anri Sala. Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. Courtesy of Ideal Audience International, Paris; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Johnen / Schöttle, Berlin, Cologne, Munich.

site, you find something of an analogy of the whole exhibition. It is blue, round and big, but it is only four words that monumentally and somewhat hollowly read "New Art, New Ideas".

> *...and Jake and him got so drunk. Anyway, I'm doing well here, even though I sometimes feel very confused. It is another kind of system, so much more driven by money. Remember when we were in Italy? It is like the architecture of the betting shops in San Marino and Lago Ramsino, or the billboards in San Ferdinando, just close to the church.*

Archive Fever at the International Centre of Photography is curated by Okwui Enwezor and sets out to "explore the ways in which artists have appropriated, interpreted, reconfigured, and interrogated archival structures and archival materials". So this archive of the archive, does it organize its content according to the rules and traditional aesthetics of its object? Not really. Entering the exhibition, there are the wooden shelves with cardboard boxes by Christian Boltanski, which invoke a certain presupposed image of the archive, but other than that, Archive Fever consists of mainly film and photography, displayed in a well-organized, but rather conventional way. That does not, however, stop it from being a very interesting exhibition. The archive seems, per definition, to deal with history, truth, and knowledge. And if the archive is a way to organize and produce all these things, archive art, naturally, seems like a way to question this production and organization.

This kind of questioning might be what goes on in Eyan Sivan's *The Specialist: Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Here, the question seems to focus on the judicial and moral process of determining the Nazi criminal's guilt, but also how Eichmann tries to move away from the archival facts and body of evidence employed by the Israeli court, for example when he says: "I did sign the letter, but it was not I who wrote it". In his catalogue essay, Enwezor suggests that Sivan's editing and dramatization of the judicial trial opposes the logic of the archive, and brings out the relation between trauma, history and memory. I do not know whether it is productive or unproductive to distinguish between the documentary and the archive, but there seems to be some differences. Opposed to the narrative and editing of the documentary, Jan Verwoert gives two possible definitions of archives in artworks. One where the archive is overwhelming, enormous and infinite, creating a feeling of smallness in relation to the immense amounts of stacked knowledge, and the other suggesting an archive possible to use, which actually invites the visitor and engages her to interact with it. I think a third definition—of an infinite number of definitions—or aspect of the archive could be found in its form as something nonarbitrary. While the documentary creates its own narrative temporality, the archive seems to negate temporality. While the documentary contains an evident amount of editing, the archive seems to be unedited, in the sense of including everything. Creating an archive is probably as arbitrary as making a documentary, but it does not appear arbitrary at all, or at least not conspicuously. This could easily be employed as a formal strategy or an aesthetic choice to escape a certain linear narrative. In a way, this is what Glenn Ligon does in his *Notes on the Margin of the Black Book*. A whole room is filled with Robert Mapplethorpe's photos of nude black men from his *Black Book*. The photographs are hung in two horizontal lines across the walls, and between them there are two lines of smaller but equally framed quotes on Mapplethorpe's project. The little explanatory text next to the title talks about Ligon's fervent critique of the *Black Book*, but that is not what I see. Ligon quotes some of Mapplethorpe's models who seem happy about his work, but he also quotes negative as well as positive reviews and opinions. He includes "everything", or at least different and contradicting sides of the matter, and it is the ambiguity of the work that I think is fervent. It is an open discussion rather than an argument, or, in some sense, an archive rather than an appropriation.

The documentaries are the strongest part of the exhibition. For example, Anri Sala's fascinating *Intervista*, in which he conducts an interview with his mother concerning a film he managed to develop, where the mother—to her surprise—and communist patriarch Enver Hoxha are talking about the revolution. There is also Gediminas Urbonas and Nomeda Urbonas *Transaction*, an archival film about how the image of Lithuania was produced in the nation's Soviet-controlled films, in which clips from old films are mixed with feminist scholars discussing their meaning. *Videograms of a Revolution* by Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica is a grand work: a thrilling compilation of amateur and professional video footage of the Romanian revolution and overthrow of CeauAescu. There is abuse of suspected government informants, shooting at revolutionaries, and snipers whose existence nobody is really sure of, interrogations of government officials, and a scene at the National Television where the revolutionaries proclaim: "We are victorious! The TV is with us!" All of these events are superposed to create the crescendo of when Nicolae and his wife Elena CeauAescu are executed, but at the same time they create a strong consciousness of the presence of the camera and how the footage has been saved. It is a form of historiography that, whether it would be accepted by a historian or not, is intriguing. Maybe this amount of video footage—and for each year there will be more, better, and cheaper cameras—is what calls for an examination of the archive.

The name of the show, "Archive Fever", is taken from a book with the same title by Jacques Derrida. When asking how the validity of statements posited in an archive should be judged, Enwezor quotes Derrida on a science of the archive, "which must include the theory of... institutionalization, that is to say, the theory both of the law which begins by inscribing itself there and of the right which authorizes it". Law and right thus seem to be the mechanisms of knowledge, memory, truth, and history: law and right also seem to be the themes of many of the works: the judicial process of Eichmann, the overthrow of CeauAescu's government, the Soviet censorship of film, the words of an Albanian communist revolution, but also in Fazal Sheikh's work, where photographs of persons who died or disappeared in war are held in the hands of their relatives. So rather than devoting itself to the mere aesthetics of the archive, or the rituals and the frantic desire for order and systematization, this archive of the archive looks in the empty space of the shelves and grey boxes, a space where law and order reside—law and order, which of course also goes by the name "politics".

> *Our hotel at St. John's Forest was all-inclusive. I really liked it, but more as a spectator sport, watching the other eat and drink. Anyway, the food here is great, but my tongue is all weird because I got an infection in a taste bud.*

The day after the opening of the Whitney Biennial, the New York Times said that it was an economic indicator, correlated to the American recession, because unlike most other biennials, the Whitney Biennial bases its selection on national and geographical borders: it is a biennial of contemporary art from the United States. It is not a celebration of the most famous figures, even though some of them are present, nor is it about finding the new, young, unrecognized artists; it is something in between, or something tending to the second feature. How do you curate a show with such immense claims? The question will obviously not be answered here, but maybe one could point to two extreme, opposite possibilities. Either you, in a rather predictable manner, include the most recognized artworks and artists recently exhibited in galleries—which seems to have been the case for some of the previous biennials—or you make a very distinctly curated show, where you choose artists according to how well they fit your agenda, some common theme, or your very specific notion of contemporary American art. This year, the Whitney Biennial does neither of that.

It is a diverse show. There is Phoebe Washburn's floral ecosystem fuelled with a famous energy drink, which is a big installation with water tanks, plants and plastic tubes; there is the

Mika Rottenberg, Production still from *Cheese*, 2007. Digital video, color, sound; approximately 12 min. Collection of the artist.

Javier Téllez, Production still from *Letter on the Blind, For the Use of Those Who See*, 2007. Courtesy Peter Kilchmann Gallery, photograph by Cleverson.

Natalia Almada, Still from *Al Otro Lado*, 2005. Collection of the artist.

bluish lounge with high-tech audio equipment, showing a boat and broadcasting Stephen Prina's songs (which I did not get at all, but I liked it anyway); there is the silent and uncanny Edward Hopper-like paintings of Robert Bechtle; there is the doing away with both form and object in Jedediah Caesar's resin blocks filled with random junk and then sliced up, since they simply create matter or material more than anything else; there is the irresistibly intimate video of Javier Téllez, where six blind New Yorkers get to meet an elephant. It is almost as if Téllez's work *Letter on the Blind For the Use of Those Who See* seems to be everybody's favorite piece. The six people in the video sit on chairs (in the museum there are six chairs in front of the video) and rise up to approach the elephant one by one. The video is shot outdoors, and it is a sunny day in a de Chirico-like place: an abandoned Brooklyn swimming facility. Drawing on an Indian parable, the close footage of people not seeing the camera and not seeing the elephant—but being totally absorbed by the texture of its skin, its smell, the vibration of the huge body, the sounds the elephant make—makes the viewer sharpen all of her senses in a fascinating way.

Of the two extreme curatorial possibilities I mentioned above—recycling successful gallery shows or picking whoever fits your own agenda—the Whitney Biennial does neither, and I think that is the strength of the biennial. Some people have said that it is too loose, too general, that it lacked a firm curatorial grip. I think that is a somewhat unfair critique: the whole point, or at least, one of the most charming aspects of the Whitney Biennial, is its impossible claims or pretensions. It is the very impossible ambition of characterizing contemporary American art that makes you want to go there. It is a bit similar to the yearly Swedish exhibition *Vårsalongen*, the almost century-old institution called the Spring Salon, where the works are selected anonymously, implying that it would be "objective" in some mysterious, interesting way. Everybody detests it, and it is a huge disappointment each year, but everybody goes there, and in some way everybody seems to like it, no matter what they see. Similarly, the Whitney Biennial is a pretty "impossible" exhibition, but I think we all know that and we actually like it. Maybe we can even acknowledge the fact that exhibitions of this kind, with huge, somewhat totalizing claims actually play an important role of renewing, recategorizing and redefining the features of the contemporary international art.

The Whitney is moving freely from painting to abstract sculpture, video and installations, and they had an extensive performance program at the Park Avenue Armory for a couple of weeks in March. Some other interesting inclusions are yet to be mentioned: one of non-American artists, one of older and more established artists and one of documentary films. The first one is pretty unspectacular, and the same thing was done at the biennial of 2006: naturally, contemporary American art is not only made by people with American passports. On show are, for example, Fia Backström in a work inviting the curators to participate, Walead Beshty exhibiting x-rayed photographs of an abandoned Iraqi Diplomatic Mission house in Berlin, and Mika Rottenberg's amazing video installation *Cheese*. Rottenberg has constructed something like a an open barn made of raw plank. You have to enter it, and can sort of move around between the different flat screens, all displaying different parts of a fairy tale about six extremely longhaired sisters. The six women are dressed in old, white nightgowns, making elixir with their hair, trying to tend to sneezing rabbits using their hair, with a fantastic rhythmic sound from dripping water and goat's milk falling into metal pitchers, chicken and roosters. The viewer is visually surrounded by cheese, rural details, a rose, and a plank construction similar to the one in which the work is displayed. It constructs an absurd, but very sharp, feminist critique of the notion of the female body as being closer to nature, where hair and nightgowns becomes signs of the desirable, being both culture and nature at once. The film seems to portray the ultimate domestication of women, having them running around bare armed and dressed in white, totally absorbed by their not very important tasks and yet endowed with a certain magic. At the same time the atmosphere seems joyful, and almost filled with strength in a thrilling, paradoxical way.

The second inclusion is that of highly acknowledged artists, like John Baldessari for example. Even though I am not overwhelmed by his ultra-modernist mixture of painting, sculpture and photography on show at the Whitney (at least not in comparison with other works of his), I think this kind of inclusion is a rather interesting historiographical act, a sort of demonstration of what frame of reference is used.

The third inclusion takes place on the top floor, in a dark video room. There are three films showing: *Al Otro Lado* by Natalia Almada, Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke* on Hurricane Katrina, and William E. Jones' *Tea Room*. This might not apply to the latter—whose readymade film I unfortunately did not see—but the other two films are made by documentary filmmakers who are usually not characterized as artists. I do not object. They are both interesting films, especially *Al Otro Lado* about the American-Mexican border. The documentary shows both interviews with Mexican corrido-singers celebrating the hard, everyday and heroic life of traffickers, and follows immigrants and the repulsive "American Minuteman Civil Defense Corps" patrolling the border to detect and report illegal immigrants. The traditional documentary form is not new to the art context, but the gesture of inviting "regular" documentary filmmakers is. Whether this gesture comes out of an idea about a common origin for the documentary and video art—like Vertov's *The Man with the Movie Camera*—or an institutional and curatorial appropriation of non-art, or something else, I still do not object. I like it, and wonder in silent confusion.

There is something problematic, though, with screening three documentaries on the same schedule and in the same room, with one of them playing for more than four hours. I was there twice and I got to see two of them. It feels like the wrong combination between cinema and museum. This is also the case with the other film room, even if those works are shorter.

Finally, concerning the New York Times review and its view on art and economics: if the 2002 Biennial was "pop" and the 2006 "sexy and punky", whereas this year's version is diagnosed as political, asking questions but not giving answers and dealing with truths that are not written in stone, then let us pray for recession 2010. •

...making us really afraid he would actually do it. Then he brought her cat down and said that was that. I held K's hand and didn't even want to look at him, but then it was like one percent of my brain took over, and I told him to give back the hammer. I thought he would start yelling, or even hit me, but he just left, with the hammer of course. I felt bad for a while, but now I don't care. It was crazy. It was like the Wild West, il Selvaggio West.

Best regards,
Karl Lydén

Unmonumental, December 1, 2007–April 9, 2008, The New Museum
Archive Fever, January 18–May 4, 2008, International Center of Photography
Whitney Biennial 2008, March 6–June 1, 2008, Whitney Museum of American Art

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