

WHO*
IF NOT
WE ... ?

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



A15016859694

WHO
IF NOT
WE
SHOULD
AT LEAST
TRY TO
IMAGINE
THE
FUTURE
OF ALL
THIS?



Who if not we should at least try
to imagine the future of all this?
7 episodes on (ex)changing Europe

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documentation of an event during which
passers-by on a crowded street have
been subjected to amplified sentimental
Czech folk songs performed by a street
busker, conducting a fragment of the city
and transforming it into something like
a film scene.

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* **thinkingforward**



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The impetus for this project came from the historic moment of the enlargement of the European Union by ten countries: the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the Dutch presidency of the EU, which is historically the first full-term presidency in the twenty-five member union. *Who if not we should at least try to imagine the future of all this? 7 episodes on (ex)changing Europe* was developed as the visual arts component within the framework of the *Thinking Forward* cultural programme, an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and commissioned by the Fund for Amateur Art and Performing Arts and the Mondriaan Foundation on this occasion.

In this context, the question *Who if not we...?* points to our primary motivation: to interpret this political assignment as an opportunity to modestly appeal to 'we' – European artists, thinkers and others to take an active part in creating a new reality through artistic and knowledge production. If it is true that what we presently experience as a time of confusion and rapid change is actually a 'difficult transition from our existing world-system to another one or ones', of which 'the outcome is uncertain',¹ the task then might be to get actively involved in the process of negotiating this unknown future. If not we, then others will, and we run the risk that such a future would not necessarily be shaped around our own hopes and dreams. Who if not we should at least try to imagine the future of all this?

1. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Utopistics: Or Historical Choices of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: New Press, 1998), p. 65.

2. Étienne Balibar's most recent book is entitled *We, the People of Europe?: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Perhaps we could borrow Étienne Balibar's phrase, 'we, the people of Europe?',² to provisionally specify the 'we' as a European transnational political subject. Let us not miss that Balibar writes a question mark behind this collective agent. The meaning the question mark conveys undoubtedly reflects the sense of ambiguity that resides at the core of every attempt to define contemporary Europe. Europe as a political project is situated, as Balibar puts it, in-between possibilities and dangers. What for some is a progressive promise of distancing from the concepts of borders and nationhood is for others a threat to national sovereignty and autonomy. One can approach issues of a complex nature through the immediate urgency contained in the form of a question. The dynamics that the act of posing questions ensures might well aid in narrowing the distance between opposing opinions or conflicting political positions. Particularly with regard to pressing topics of the present, which need to be resolved in the very midst of a number of ongoing processes, asking questions can open up potentialities that could otherwise remain unseen, unspoken or omitted. The question also contains an element of 'constructive doubt',

3. Július Koller in an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist in *Július Koller: Univerzálna Futurologické Operácie*, Kathrin Rhomberg, ed. (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein & Walther König, 2003), p. 145.

as Július Koller, a vital figure of conceptual art in Slovakia, puts it. '...But not in a pessimistic sense, in a realistic sense', he adds. 'Questions and asking questions are aimed against illusions, against lies and ignorance; they help us to see and know things and implications realistically.'³ The project *Who if not we...?* strives toward similar tentative exploration through making multiple inquires into the contemporary.

There are a myriad of issues of pressing importance on the European political agenda, in art no less than in politics. In aesthetic practices, nevertheless, the politicians' *should* is persistently challenged with propositions involving the much subtler language of *could* when discussing credible historical alternatives. In my opinion, not treating *a future* as something that will simply one day emerge, but actively engaging in negotiating with others what is to come is an important ethical stance. But we need to keep in mind – informed through unfortunate detours into communism or right-wing populism in the recent history of Europe – that a belief in the future must be directed against absolutism of any kind, against grand prophetic narratives and oriented toward a future that is unknown, presenting us with multiple perspectives and contingencies.

Who if not we...? is a multifaceted project embedded in this tentative sketch of thoughts about the responsibilities and challenges of our time. It has been proposed to a number of contemporary art curators and artists as an understructure from which to develop further elaborations. The curators Leontine Coelewij and Geurt Imanse of the Stedelijk Museum CS in Amsterdam, Catherine David of Witte de With – Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, Kestutis Kuizinas of the Centre for Contemporary Art (CAC) in Vilnius, Joanna Mytkowska and Andrzej Przywara of Foksal Gallery Foundation in Warsaw, independent curator Livia Páldi collaborating with the Ludwig Museum Budapest – Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Zabel of Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana and Gerardo Mosquera working with myself at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst in Utrecht have joined the project and contributed their profound knowledge and interest in these issues. Through numerous discussions and in-depth research of art scenes and their cultural contexts in the new member states of the EU and the Netherlands, seven new exhibitions have been developed. The subtitle *7 episodes on (ex)changing Europe* is how we refer to what has evolved as a series of interrelated exhibits and provided an impetus for a number of additional projects to develop around them. But most importantly, this phrase alludes to what has been a process of exchanging knowledge in search of new ways of thinking in this critical moment of changing Europe.

Within the framework of *Who if not we...?* the curators identified works of art and themes that reflect both on the current developments of aesthetic practices in Europe and the topics of major political consequence for the future. The exhibitions and the activities associated with them revolve around issues such as: migration and hospitality, social regulation and individual liberty, the question of border crossing and many others. The 7 episodes of *Who if not we...?: Surfacing, Time and Again, Cordially Invited, Out of the Shadows, Safety and Peace! Order and Freedom!, Olandu biuras – Vilnius* and *Edward Krasiński's Studio*, take place in different contexts throughout Europe parallelly, establishing a tangible web of meanings and positions.

This book can be seen as a vehicle that articulates the connections among the exhibitions and other projects in *Who if not we...?*, and places them side by side as a comprehensive entity. The book is principally divided in two main parts. The main body of this publication reflects on what *will become* the exhibitions. It functions as a preview of the 7 episodes, presenting their visual and curatorial premises. In the second part of the book – the reader – we have included a number of texts discussing urgent issues related to contemporary art and its immediate (mainly) European cultural and political contexts. Four of the texts have been written for this particular occasion and critically examine significant debates in Europe. The anthology section presents key texts from last five years that in our view characterize the intellectual momentum established by a shift in discussions about, and awareness of, the newly emerging European reality, challenging settled stereotypes in our understanding of the post-Cold War divide. In view of the fact that eight out of ten new EU member states belong to what we usually call 'Eastern Europe', it quickly becomes apparent that a significant part of the project provides a platform for these subjects to surface, and hopefully to trigger further discussions.

I would like to thank the many people with whom I discussed the foundations of this project, and mainly those professionals with whom the talks organically evolved into productive collaborations, as well as the many institutions which have lent us their support and extended their hospitality. My thanks goes to the team of *Thinking Forward*: Henk Scholten, Bregje Deben and particularly Han Bakker, the indendant of the programme. Special thanks goes to Gitta Luiten, the director of the Mondriaan Foundation, as well as her team, for their generous support and encouragement. I would also like to thank the Board of the Foundation for Visual Arts in Utrecht and my colleagues at BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, who generously supported me in taking up this challenge of

WHO IF NOT WE ...?

SURFACING

EPISODE 1

LUDWIG MUSEUM BUDAPEST –
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY
ART, BUDAPEST

17 SEPTEMBER –
24 OCTOBER 2004

CURATOR: LÍVIA PÁLDI

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS: YAEL
BARTANA, RINEKE DIJKSTRA,
GERARD HOLTHUIS, ROB
JOHANNESMA, JOHAN VAN
DER KEUKEN, SEBASTIAN DIAZ
MORALES, AERNOUT MIK,
JEROEN DE RIJKE/WILLEM
DE ROOIJ, JOKE ROBAARD
AND BARBARA VISSER

Yael Bartana, *When Adar Enters*, 2003, video, 7 min., video still, courtesy of Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

Yael Bartana, *Ad De'lo Yoda*, 2003, video, 3 min. loop, video still, courtesy of Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

» Gerard Holthuis, *Hong Kong (HKG)*, 1999, 35mm b/w film with sound, 13 min., film still, courtesy of the artist

I remember when watching Johan van der Keuken's highly acclaimed second film on blind children¹ for the first time how strange it felt to hear his overtly simple voice-over in the end: 'Everything in a film is a form. Herman is a form. See you later, friendly form'.² The still images, which followed the slowly withdrawing figure of the protagonist, Herman Slobbe, and smoothly led the viewer out of his story, were already referring to Keuken's next film opening new vistas inside a careful construction. What was made visible were not only the two levels of reality Ron Burnett saw Keuken operating in: the one 'trying to depict and show and the other is a level of discourse trying to comment upon and politicize the way reality is understood',³ but also how the process of filmic observation, recording, the subjective perspective on the event and its psycho-

logical dimensions were represented by stylistic/formal means. The distance was created as something necessary for the audience to more fully understand the kind of fiction that is at the heart of all forms of discourse, to be made aware of their viewing position and to recognize 'the play between the aesthetic and between the history of the conventions of the documentary, and a play between what is being represented and the history of representations'.⁴

Without claiming to be an overall analysis, this brief introduction highlights only certain issues the exhibition *Surfacing* revolves around. It investigates the connection between the application of an objective, almost technical vocabulary and structuring, and the instinctive emotional pleasure of observation and recording in distinct media

1. Johan van der Keuken, *Herman Slobbe/Blind Child 2* (1966).

2. Ibid.

3. Ron Burnett, 'Reinventing the documentary cinema. A Discussion with Johan van der Keuken', available online at <www.ecidad.bc.acz/~rburnett/Johaninterview.html>.

4. Ibid.









Rob Johannesma, *Untitled*, 2001, digital video on DVD, 6:08 min., video still, courtesy of Galerie Zürcher, Paris

and genres – from video installation and (staged) photography to filmic essay and documentary’ – in selected works by Yael Bartana, Rineke Dijkstra, Gerard Holthuis, Rob Johannesma, Johan van der Keuken, Sebastian Diaz Morales, Aernout Mik, Jeroen de Rijke/Willem de Rooij, Joke Robaard and Barbara Visser. Through tracing the relationship of different kinds of (re)presentation, a complex set of overlapping contexts, subjective viewpoints and constructions, *Surfacing* exposes different projections of reality and the often-conflicting situation of positioning oneself within contemporary image culture. By blending different dimensions such as slowness and speed, or stillness and movement, the viewer is navigated through an atmospheric spatial continuum, which

may create a less concrete, more instinctual but also readable meaning of the works.

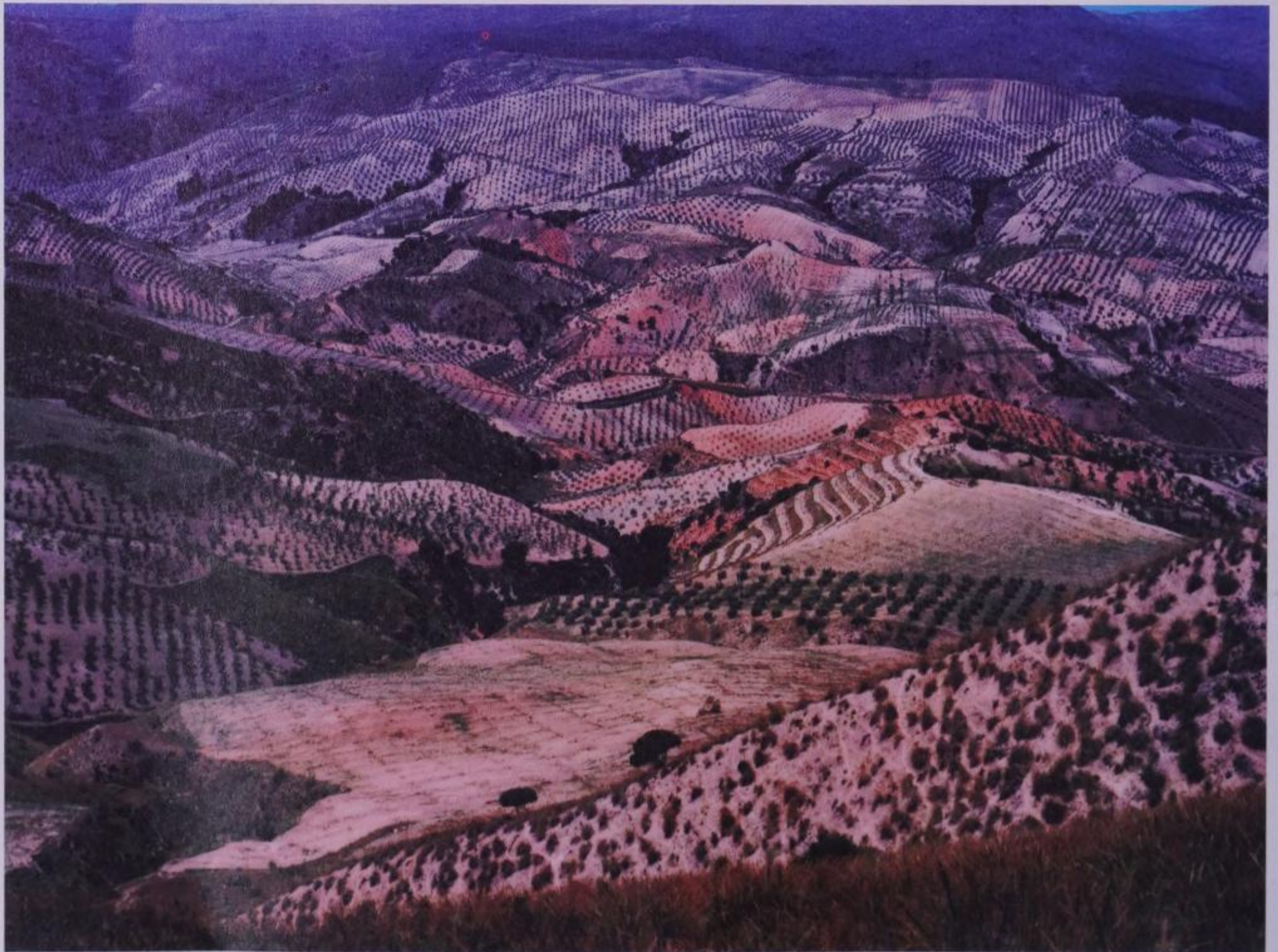
Surfacing has partly developed out of the experiences of one of my previous projects,⁵ in which the gallery is defined as an intersection of the white cube and the black box, where the physical and the absolute, the constructed and the ephemeral, fiction and documentary became interchangeable, and the boundaries of the stylized and the direct narratives and situations merged. The works selected for *Surfacing* also emphasize a more subtle, nuanced, analytic and/or poetic or even controversial representation of the recording and the viewing experience, suspending what has become the ‘natural’ condition: the unconditional and unreflecting surrender to the flow of the vision.

5. <<green box>>, Trafo Gallery, Budapest (13 May–13 June 2004), with works by Johanna Billing, Esra Ersen, Aydan Mürtezaoğlu, Ioana Nemes, Anri Sala and Ene-Liis Semper.

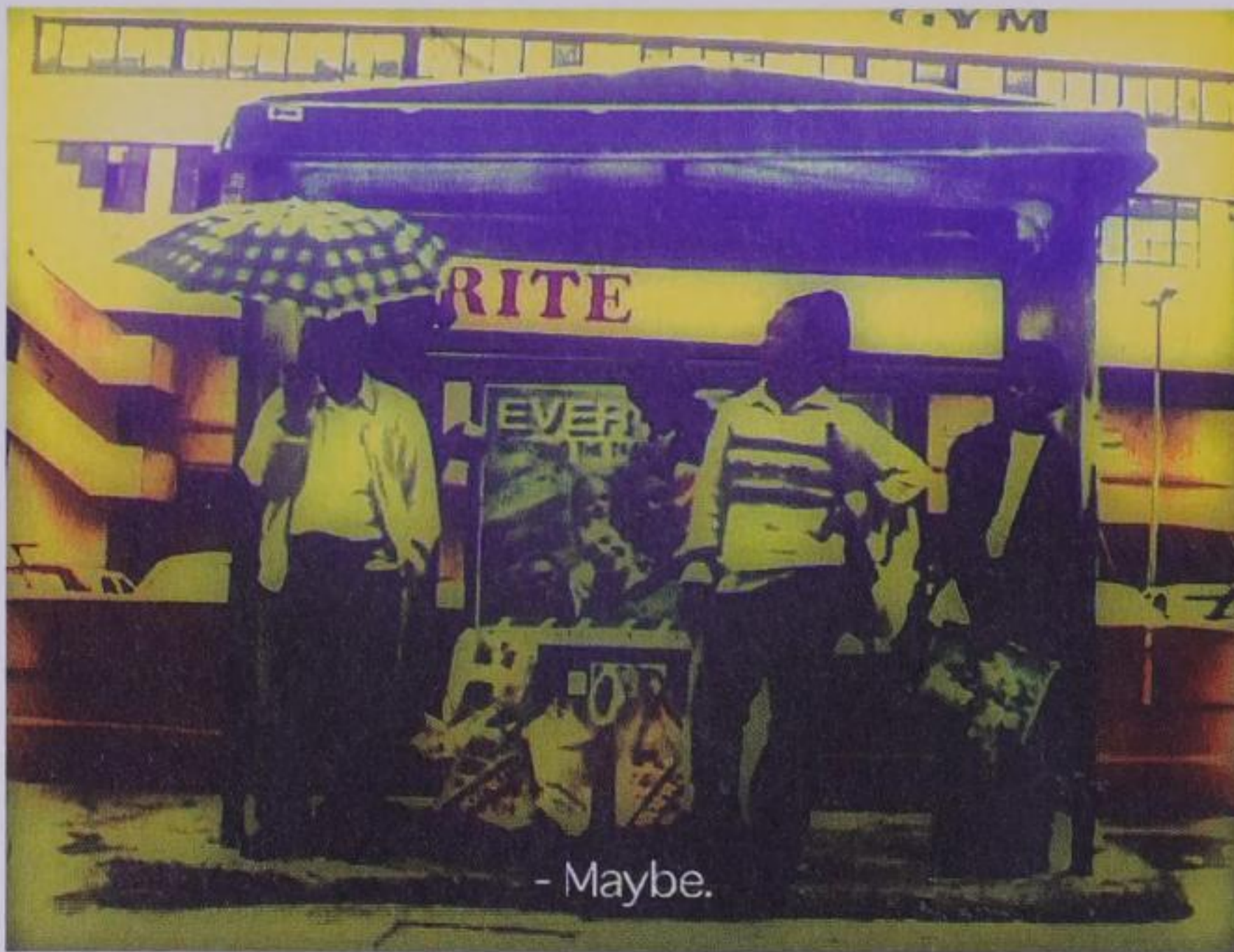


Aernout Mik, *Middlemen*, 2001, digital video on DVD, video installation, video stills, courtesy of carlier/gebauer, Berlin

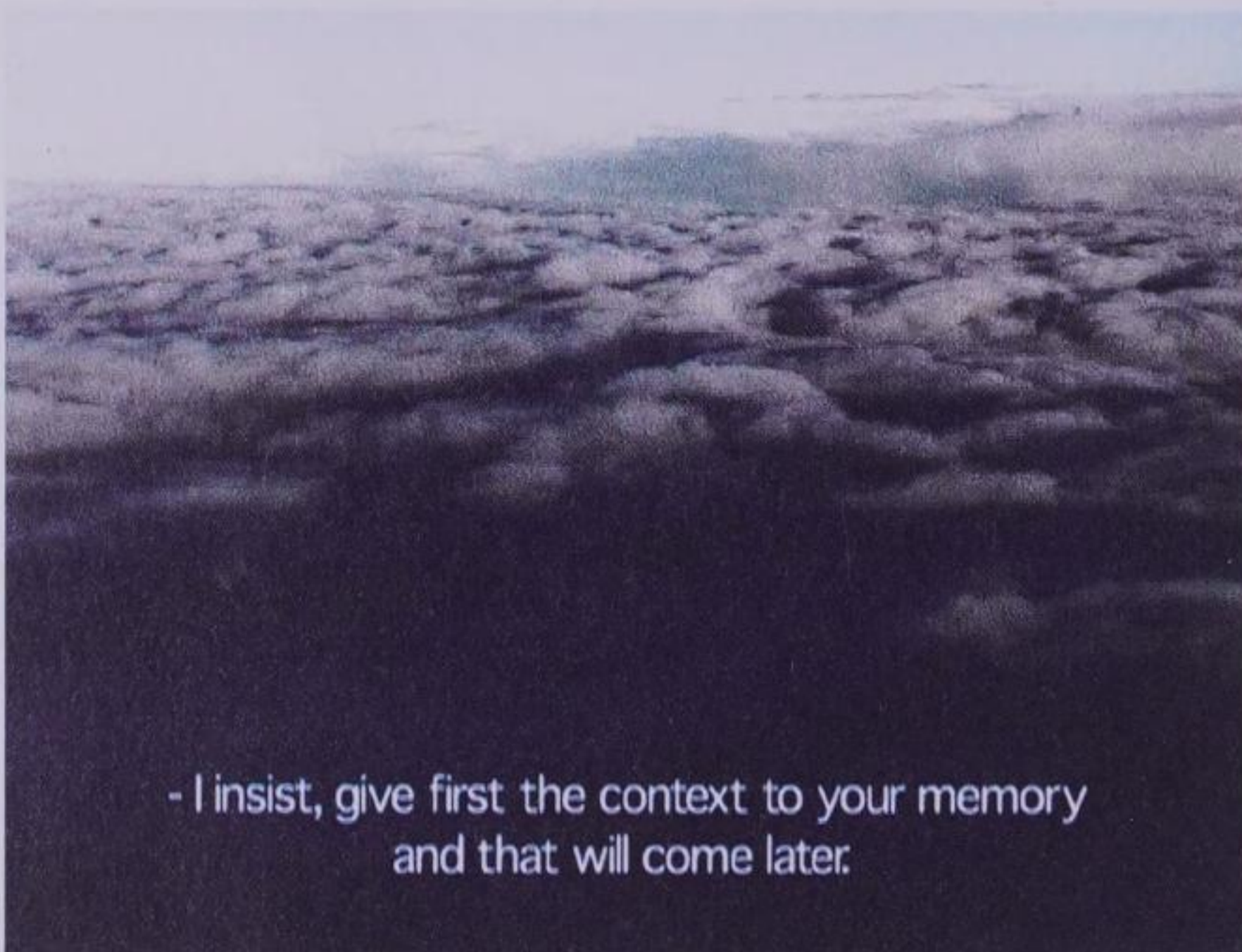
» Johan van der Keuken, *Spanish Spring*, 2000, 24-part photo work, C-print, detail, courtesy of Paul Andriess Gallery, Amsterdam



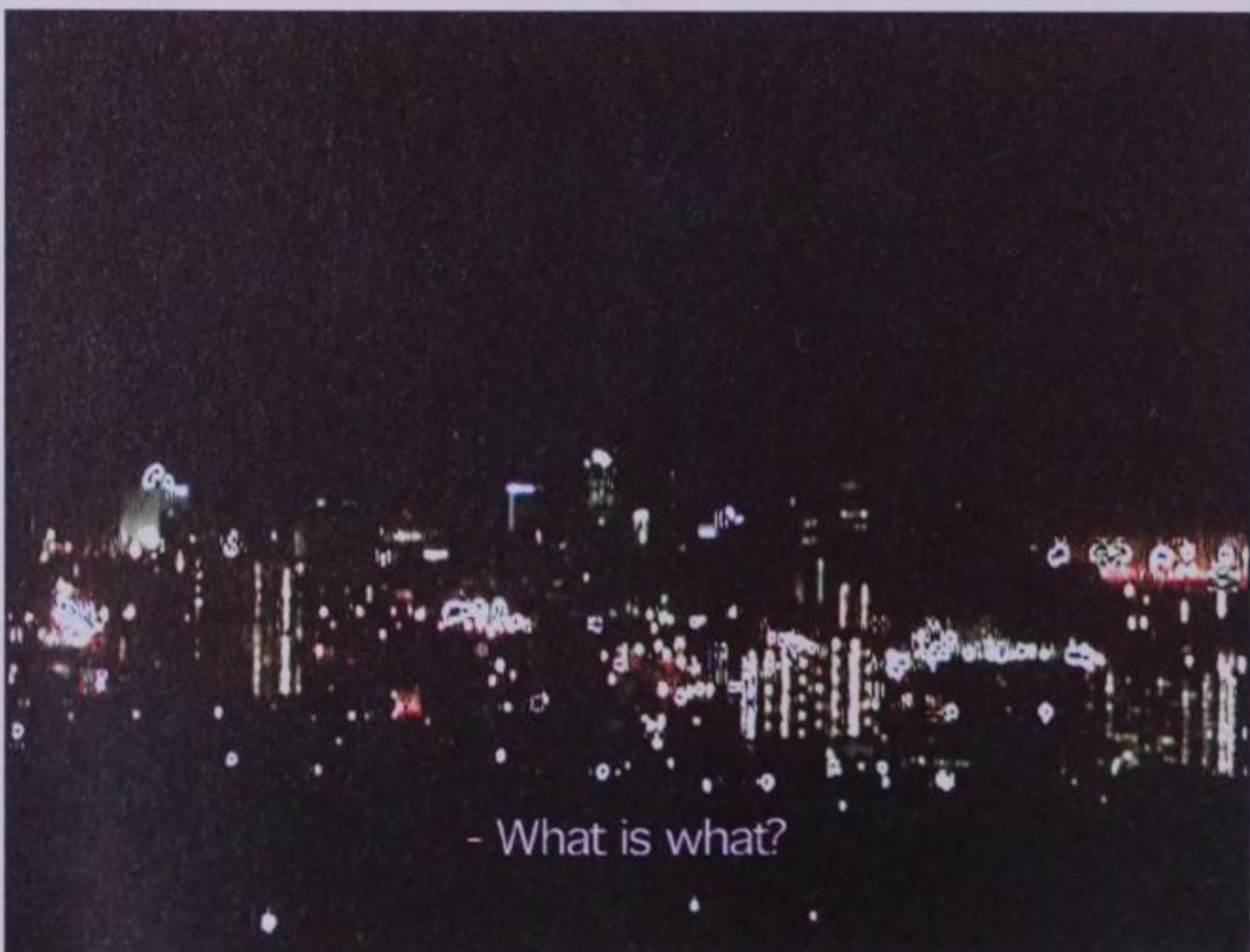




- Maybe.



- I insist, give first the context to your memory
and that will come later.



- What is what?

The shifts between the specific time frames and presentation expose various aspects of the viewing process and relations between the works as well as between the artists and the surrounding realities. The attitudes of the participating artists towards observation, recording and structuring not only raise important questions about the social status of art and the issue of the audience, but also involve a reflective view on what status the museum, both as a concrete physical and a cultural location, can have these days as a viewing space.

In an interview, Nicolaus Schafhausen asked Jeroen de Rijke and Willem de Rooij about their rather demanding attitude towards the viewer, which he found contradicted the

prevailing art practice of the 1990s, where the viewer is expected to make a more personal contribution to be free to interpret. He felt that, 'only those who have continually wrestled with the conflict between "what should I see" – "what do I actually see" are able to understand the mechanism of representation and conditioned perception'.⁶

Many of the selected works in *Surfacing* focus on this issue and are rather compatible with the 'classical' concept of the museum/art institution: a quiet place for contemplative detachment though it may accord 'too perfectly with the viewing habits that are taken for granted inside art spaces'.⁷ The artists, even those working with film, very much operate with this notion and some

6. Nicolaus Schafhausen in an interview with De Rijke/De Rooij, 'If Only All Rooms Would so Clearly Fulfill Their Purpose', in *Jeroen de Rijke/Willem de Rooij: After the Hunt* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2000), p. 9.

7. A concern Sven Lütticken expressed in his essay when discussing the 'slow-paced, "painterly" character' of the works of De Rijke/De Rooij. See Sven Lütticken, 'The Fictions of De Rijke/De Rooij', in *Ten Years of SMBA, We Show Art* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, 2003).



Joke Robaard, *Stand-In Session 2*,
2003, digital print mounted on foam,
1,50 x 1,90 m, courtesy of the artist

Joke Robaard, *Stand-In Session 4*,
2003, digital print mounted on foam,
1,50 x 1,90 m, courtesy of the artist

> Jeroen de Rijke/Willem de Rooij, *The
Point of Departure*, 2002, 35mm color
film with optical sound, 26 min., film still,
courtesy of Galerie Buchholz, Cologne



even play on the self-enclosed inaccessibility of the white cube space as if it wanted 'to protect images from over-exposure'.⁸

After last decade's strong focus on the social context and participatory practices, the interactive and instrumental potential for grasping the 'real' as well as the wider engagement with different social strata, what followed were the re-contextualization of aesthetics and the rethinking of the issues of accessibility. To overcome the often-negative judging of contemplation (with the tinge of passivity and also anonymity) is to think about the museum as a place which should function not only as a place for audience-involved knowledge production and a distribution centre but as a test field for reflecting on viewing habits and the conditions of perception (and also how conditioned our perception is).



Barbara Visser, *Philippa*, 1998, digital video on DVD, 14:50 min. loop, video stills, courtesy of Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

Yael Bartana, born 1970, lives and works in Amsterdam and Israel. Recent exhibitions (selection): Büro Friedrich, Berlin, 2004; *Wherever I am*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, 2004; Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam, 2004; *TimeZones: Recent film and video*, Tate Modern, London, 2004; *Lonely Planet*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower Mito, Mito, 2004; *Territories*, Witte De With, Rotterdam, 2003.

Rineke Dijkstra, born 1959, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *The Buzzclub*, Liverpool, UK/Mysteryworld, Zaandam, NL, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, 2003; *Die Realität der Bilder-Zeitgenössische Kunst aus den Niederlanden*, Stadtgalerie Kiel, Kiel, 2003; *Portraits*, ICA, Boston, 2001; *The French Foreign Legion and The Tiergarten Series*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, 2001; Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, 2001.

Gerard Holthuis, born 1952, lives and works in The Hague. Recent exhibitions (selection): International Filmfestival, Brussels, 2000; MediaWave, Győr, 2000; Diagonale/Forum des Österreichischen Films, Graz, 2000; Seoul Short Filmfestival, Seoul, 2000; São Paulo Short Filmfestival, São Paulo, 2000; 44th London Film Festival, London, 2000; Festival tous courts, Aix-en-Provence, 2000.

Rob Johannesma, born 1970, lives and works in Amsterdam and Berlin. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Post-Nature*, Institute Tomie Ohtake, San Paulo, 2003; Flatland Gallery, Utrecht, 2002; *Constellation/Nuit Blanche*, Galerie Zürcher, Paris, 2002; Kamm Galerie, Berlin, 2002; Kunstbunker, Nürnberg, 2002, *Early Works De Ateliers 1998-2002*, De Ateliers, Amsterdam.

Johan van der Keuken, 1938-2001, lived and worked in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): Art Unlimited, Art Basel, Basel, 2001; *L'Oeil lucide*, FNAC Forum les Halles, Paris, 2001; Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 2001; *Johan van der Keuken, photographie*, Galerie Agathe Gaillard, Paris, 2001; *One Eye at the Camera, the Other on the World*: Photographs and films, Berkeley Art Museum and Robert Koch Gallery, San Francisco, 1999.

Sebastian Diaz Morales, born 1975, lives and works in the Netherlands and Argentina. Recent exhibitions (selection): *The enigmatic Visitor and The Man with the Bag*, Kunst Werke, Berlin, 2004; *15000000 Parachutes*, Tate Modern, London, 2004; Biennale Shanghai, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, 2004; *Emotion Eins*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, 2004; *In a not so Distant Future*, SMBA, Amsterdam, 2003.

Aernout Mik, born 1962, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2004; *Dispersionen*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2004; CaixaForum, Fundacion La Caixa, Barcelona, 2003; Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul, 2003; *Ce Qui Arrive*, Fondation Cartier, Paris, 2002.

Jeroen de Rijke, born 1970 and Willem de Rooij, born 1969, live and work in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Time Zones: Recent film and video*, Tate Modern, London, 2004; Busan Biennale, Seoul, 2004; Sydney Biennale, Sydney, 2004; *De Rijke/De Rooij*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, 2003; The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 2003; *Studio*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2003; *Prosessi*, Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA, Helsinki, 2003; *The Point of Departure*, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne, 2002; ICA, London, 2002.

Joke Robaard, born 1953, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Situaties*, Museum De Paviljoens, Almere, 2004; Galerie Paul Andriessse, Amsterdam, 2004; Secession, Vienna, 2003; *STOCK*, Casco, Utrecht, 2003; Photo Biennale, Rotterdam, 2000; *Publi©domain*, Photo Triennale, Graz, 1999.

Barbara Visser, born 1966, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Migrating Identity/Transmission-Reconstruction*, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, 2004; *Barbara Visser: New Work*, Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam, 2003-2004; *Vernieuwde collectie presentatie V*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Muhka, Antwerp, 2003; *Retrospective View: Landschapsfoto's uit de collectie*, De Hallen, Haarlem, 2003.

TIME AND AGAIN

EPISODE 2
STEDELIJK MUSEUM CS,
AMSTERDAM
23 OCTOBER 2004–
30 JANUARY 2005

CURATORS: LEONTINE COELEWIJ
AND GEURT IMANSE
PARTICIPATING ARTISTS: LITTLE
WARSAW (BÁLINT HAVAS AND
ANDRÁS GÁLIK), JÁN MANČUŠKA,
DEIMANTAS NARKEVIČIUS,
PAULINA OŁOWSKA, ROMAN
ONDÁK, TADEJ POGAČAR AND
WILHELM SASNAL

'History is subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now (*Jetztzeit*).'¹

Walter Benjamin

During my visit to Warsaw I sat in a cafe one afternoon with Paulina Ołowska.² I asked her how she remembered the political changes of the end of the 1980s–early 1990s, when she was growing up in Gdansk. She told me of an incident in that period. She was not older than about fifteen and in secondary school. One morning the head of the school walked into her class. He picked up a history book from the lectern, a textbook that had been used for years and that was thoroughly shaped according to Soviet communist ideology. 'From today we no longer use this

book', he said, 'but this...', and with his other hand held up a Bible.

It goes without saying that the rapid and often radical political changes that have taken place in the last fifteen years in Central and Eastern Europe have had an enormous influence on daily life.³ State socialism has been exchanged for a new system, that of a democratic, free market economy and consumerism. Many turned their gaze to the West; for some, participation in the Western lifestyle could not come soon enough. At the same time, it was a period of new uncertainties. Traditional values and old sentiments reared their heads again, ranging from orthodox Catholicism to nationalism and anti-Semitism.

1. Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 252–253.

2. Paulina Ołowska in conversation with the author, Warsaw, 12 March 2004.

3. In his article '7 Cent per dag is ons nog teveel voor de eenwording van Europa', *NRC Handelsblad*, 28–29 February 2004, p. 15, Peter Michielse writes of the way in which Eastern Europe has visibly liberated itself, and how a whole generation (primarily those in their

forties or older) have been tossed overboard – 'after the euphoria of liberation it developed into a hard-as-nails, unfamiliar merciless world' – and the 'debate over the unification of Europe that has sunk to a jejune level'.



Paulina Ołowska, *XZ and Calder*, 2004, installation view, courtesy of Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam

It is both impossible and absurd to attempt to find one label that will cover all the dynamic developments in the lands that previously in Western eyes formed the Eastern bloc. The local differences are too great for that – certainly with regard to the cultural/historical circumstances in the countries that recently joined the European Union. To be sure, the artists who are now working in the new member states take part in an international discourse and show in museums and galleries all across Europe (and on other continents); but in their work they often refer to a specific local context. In his essay for the catalogue *Arteast 2000+*, Igor Zabel wrote that in the second half of the twentieth century the supposedly universal visual language of modern, abstract art played a different role in Central and Eastern Europe than it did in the West. Thus in certain periods it can be understood as a critical response to Socialist Realist art. At other moments, on the contrary, the liberal

factions of the Communist Party used abstract art to polish up their own image. 'In such cases', writes Zabel, 'the formalist and apolitical character of abstract art could serve the legitimization of the system. Even the use of the most universal and autonomous visual languages obtained very specific meanings in specific contexts, and such works simply cannot be properly understood without taking into account these circumstances'.⁴

The exhibition *Time and Again* illuminates the particularities of specific moments from the recent past in places that since the expansion of the European Union now seem to lie closer within reach. References to local situations and local history are an important component of the work with which a younger generation of artists have profiled themselves in recent years. For example, in her exhibition *In Lubelia* (2003) Paulina Ołowska (born 1976, Gdansk) refers to

4. Zabel's essay is anthologized in this book.





Paulina Ołowska and Lucy McKenzie, *Nova Popularna*, 2003, multiple views, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

» Paulina Ołowska, *In Lubelia*, 2003, installation view, courtesy of Cabinet Gallery, London

the intellectual elite of Poland in the late nineteenth century who gathered in the chic provincial town of Lubelia. In the course of the twentieth century the salon of the intelligentsia came under ever-greater pressure and withdrew more and more underground, while Lubelia became a resort for pleasure-seekers. In the installation the artist resurrects the glory years of the Polish bohemians.⁵

Ołowska, Jan Mančuška, Tadej Pogačar, Deimantas Narkevičius, Roman Ondák, Wilhelm Sasnal and the collective Little Warsaw (Bálint Havas and András Gálik) are artists whose work shows evidence of a specific way of looking at history, one which stands at the intersection of personal memories, collective historical consciousness and the inexorable course of events. However, what these artists are concerned with is not a nostalgic longing for a bygone

era, but the moments from the past that are essential for a better understanding of our present times.

It should go without saying that this fascination is not specifically Eastern European. It is also to be found, for instance, in the work of Jeremy Deller, Sean Snyder and Florian Pumhösl. Certain artists of the younger generation are interested in re-thinking the historical narratives of the past century, a period that was characterized by modernist utopias and the tragedies of their 'dark' sides. These artists do not see the processes of history as linear, as a highway going from point A to point B, but rather as non-linear – a mixture of diverging and converging points, chaotic paths marked with unexpected changes in direction. In these artists' work, we find references to the hidden codes of both high and low art; to the 'universal' language of modernist

5. Catherine Wood, 'Paulina Ołowska', *Art Monthly*, no. 265 (April 2003), p. 33.



*Four o'clock late afternoon
Who does not recognize the*

Lub

society.



time of Lubelia.

the language that it refers to means now.

Cabinet Apartment 6, 49-59 Old Street.



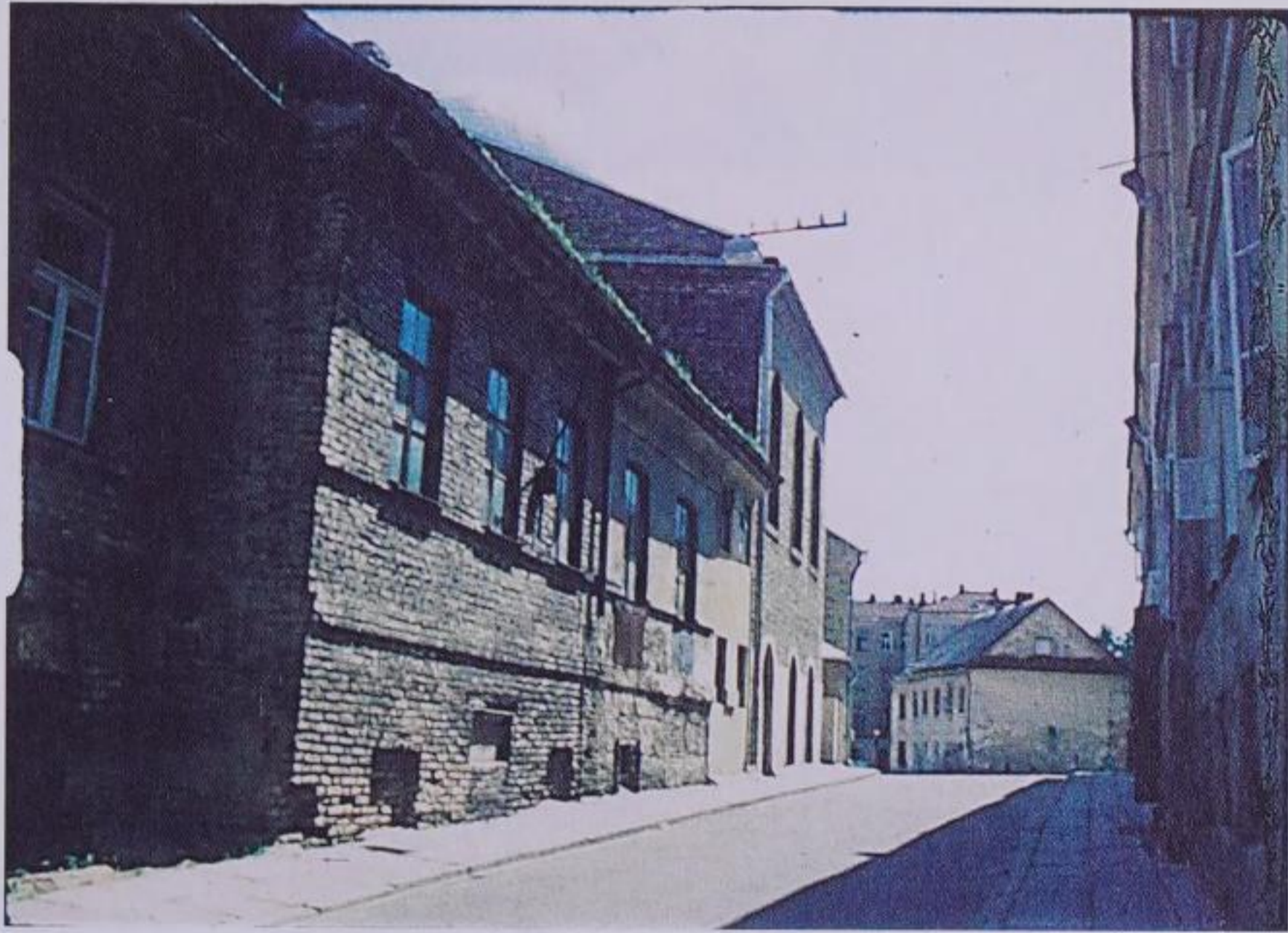
architecture and film (Pumhösl) and design (Ołowska). Some artists point to past methods of working, found footage or 'pastiche' (Narkevičius). Others research the cultural codes of American television (Snyder) or re-enact heroic but forgotten moments from the past (Deller's *Battle of Orgrave*). Thus we can observe a renewal of young artists' interest in European cultural history. This is certainly visible in the work by artists from Central and Eastern Europe, whose particular experience of rapid political and social change makes questions of time, history, memory and transformation particularly urgent.

In the post-communist countries the period between 1939–1989 includes the horrors of

the Second World War and repression by the Soviet regime. During that period, memories of these events were often banished from active memory as being too traumatic, too complex and too much tied up with questions of guilt and penance, perpetrator and victim. Now, it is precisely in the art of the younger generation that these knotty questions are posed. The interest in, and research into, the recent political past arises from the ambition to no longer define history in terms of stereotypes, but rather to emphasize precisely its personal dimensions, the nuances and incongruities.⁶ Deimantas Narkevičius (born 1964, Utena) explains this background as follows: 'I started my work as an artist in a period of dynamic change for my society. The stress and neurosis caused by

6. 'One of the core issues for each ruling party is the evaluation of the historical heritage. Due to the lack of professional evaluations by historians – and the exaggerated distrust of history as a discipline inherited from the Soviet era – the heritage is usually crammed into

a set of stereotypes. History becomes one of the most effective tools of contemporary political manipulation'. See Jonas Valatkevicius, 'Fragments of a Glossary', in *Deimantas Narkevičius. Lithuanian Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia* (Vilnius: CAC, 2001), p. 59.





Deimantas Narkevičius, *Energy Lithuania*, 2000, super 8mm film on video, color, sound, 17 min., film still, courtesy of Galerie Jan Mot, Brussels

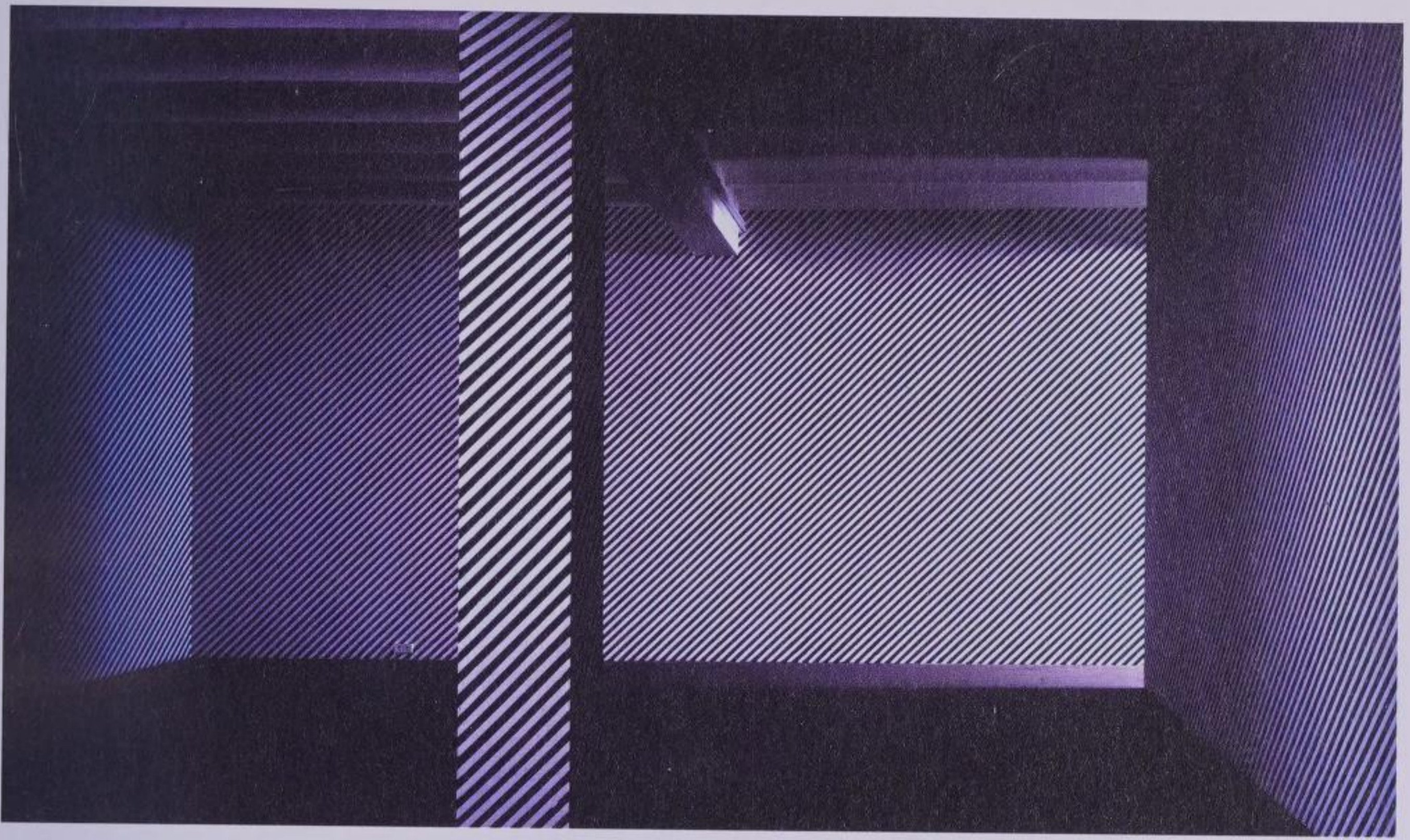
> Wilhelm Sasnal, *Bunker (nach Art Spiegelmann)*, 2004, acrylic wall painting, multiple views, courtesy of Gallery Johnen & Schöttle, Cologne

all this dynamism diverted this society from both historical reflection and future concerns. The ideological "orientation" that dominated for decades was – among other things – an attempt at creating a society above and beyond history. The new political situation re-inserted us into the rotating circuit of history, which inevitably requires a *vision*. But as we started working on such a vision for ourselves, things re-emerged from the past; phenomena that had been hidden under the surfaces of ideology. They led us into uncharged, unwanted, unpleasant territory, muddling our vision of the future'.⁷

In their work Deimantas Narkevičius and Wilhelm Sasnal (born 1972, Tarnow) regularly refer to the Second World War and the Holocaust, which in the countries where they were born – Lithuania and Poland, respectively – are surrounded with taboos. Regarding these open nerves in historical consciousness Sasnal commented,

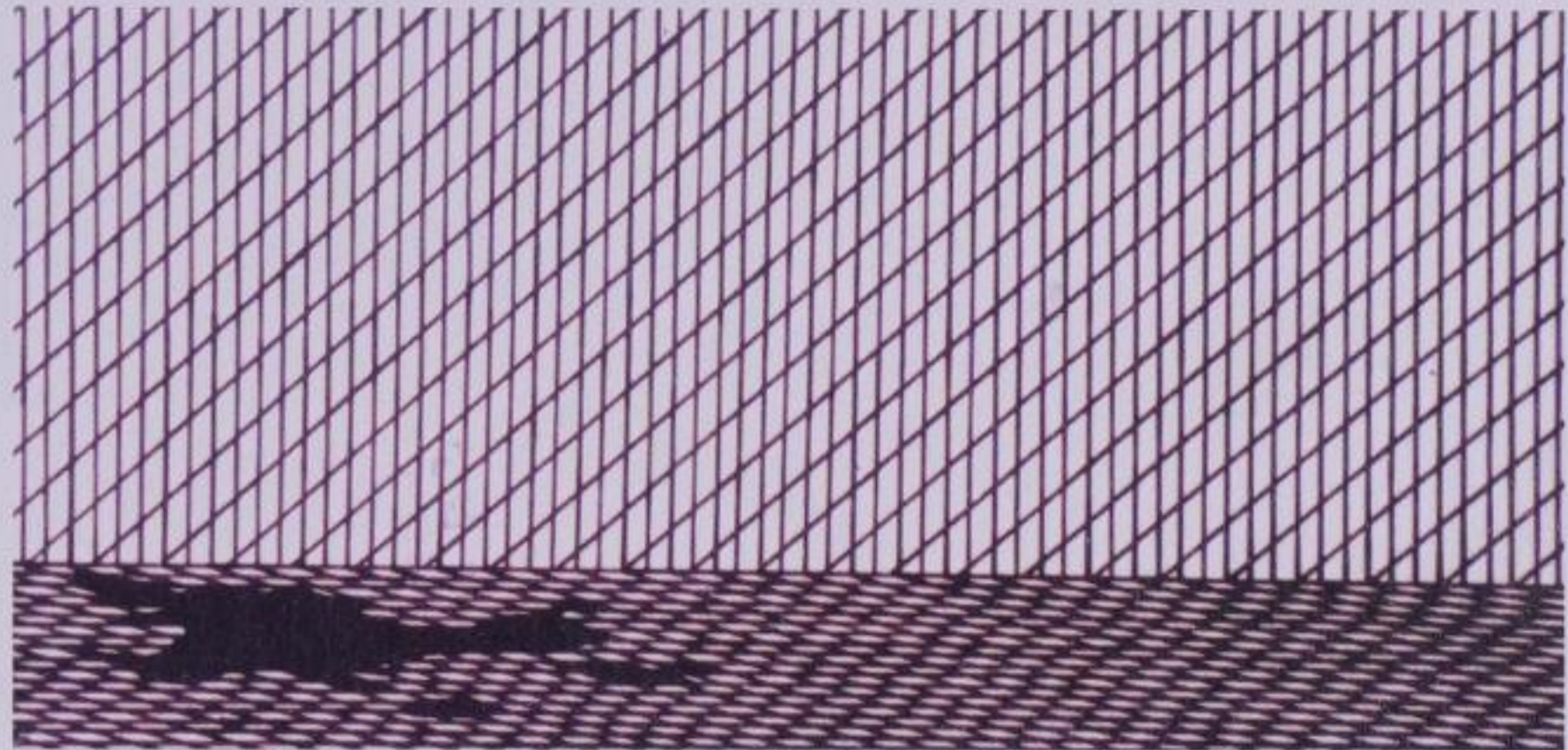
'I constantly get the feeling that we are not living in the post-1989 generation, but in the post-1945 period'. The painter approaches the Holocaust in Poland in an indirect manner, for instance through the images from Claude Lanzman's film *Shoah* (transformed by Sasnal into the almost abstract *Untitled (Forest)* (2003)) or the gruesome drawings of Art Spiegelman's comic strip *Maus*. Sasnal transforms, stylizes and abstracts the images of the concentration camps into powerful, graphic paintings in black-and-white. In the film *Legend Coming True* (1999) Narkevičius permits an old woman named Fania to tell her own story. She has lived in Vilnius since 1927, and is one of the few survivors of the pogroms that cost the lives of about 20,000 Lithuanian Jews. She speaks of daily life in the ghetto and recalls memories of the resistance movement in which she participated. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, in many countries of what had previously been

7. Ibid., pp. 16–18, Deimantas Narkevičius in conversation with Jonas Valatkevicius.





Wilhelm Sasnal, *Untitled (zawa srod)*,
2004, oil on canvas, 85 x 100 cm,
courtesy of Gallery Johnen & Schöttle,
Cologne



the Eastern bloc the question of national identity became acute. One of the most critical cases was Poland, which in the past centuries had been under Swedish, Prussian and Russian rule. As preparation for a new film project, Sasnal delved into the history of the coal mines of Silesia, a part of Poland that in the course of history has alternated between Polish and German control. For years these mines were a symbol of national pride. Propaganda films from the 1960s pictured the mine workers as heroes, icons of love for the Fatherland.⁸

The historic moments which fascinate Paulina Ołowska are characterized by utopian optimism. Not only are the avant-garde movements from the early years of the twentieth century which wished to blur the boundaries between art and life (such as the Bauhaus and Constructivism) an important point of reference for her; the same is true

of the Polish women's magazine *Ty I Ja* (You and I) from the 1960s, which was free-thinking and innovative. With regard to it, Ołowska says, 'It had much higher aspirations than other women's magazines – the desire to be educational and illuminating in the times of discomfort'.⁹ Ołowska focuses on those moments 'in which ambitions were too high to find a place in reality'. It is not the failure of a utopia, but the attempt to realize it in practice that fascinates her. For a couple of weeks in 2003, together with Lucy McKenzie, she ran the bar *Nova Popularna* in Warsaw. She designed the furniture, poured the self-distilled vodka and received friends who provided the music every evening.

In the early nineties Tadej Pogačar (born 1960, Ljubljana) established his own (fictional) museum; the P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E Museum of Contemporary Art. Pogačar presents himself as a 'parasitic institution

8. Wilhelm Sasnal in conversation with the author, 30 May 2004.

9. Paulina Ołowska and Lucy McKenzie, 'Enigmatic Girls', *Untitled* (Summer 2001), p. 17.

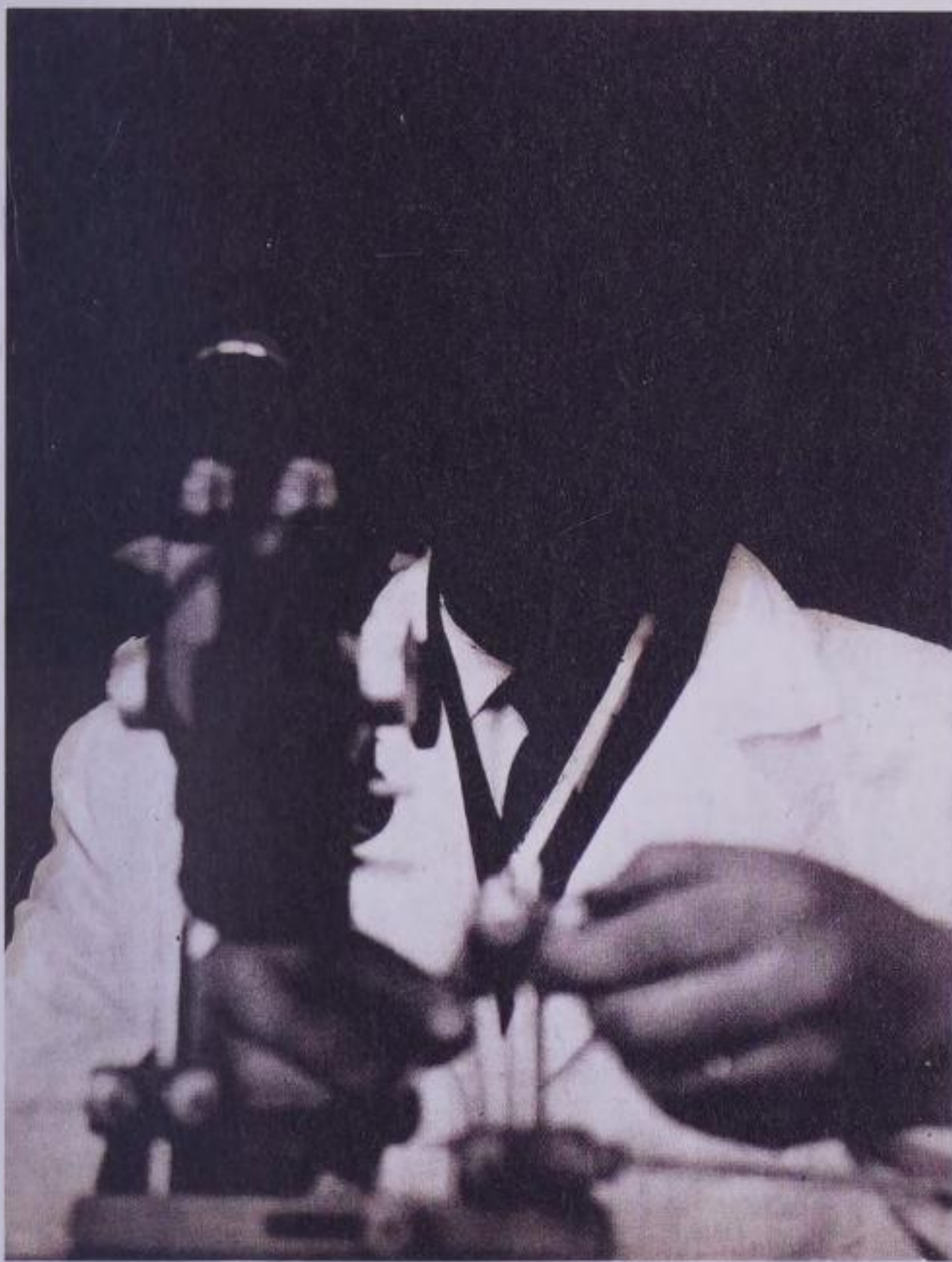


Wilhelm Sasnal, *Untitled (dunaj)*, 2003, oil on canvas, 140 x 150 cm, courtesy of Gallery Johnen & Schöttle, Cologne

within the institutions of society, culture and art'. *Tales of Two Cities* (2000) is a research project which deals with the topography and ecology of everyday life. Despite their proximity, life is completely different in the two cities of Ravne na Koroskem and Slovenj Gradec. Pogačar documents these differences in terms of local relations, history, urban planning, economy and culture. Bálint Havas (born 1971, Budapest) and András Gálik (born 1970, Budapest) of the collective Little Warsaw prefer to focus on controversial locations that betray something of the relation between architecture and collective memory. Their recent investigation deals with one of the most bizarre building projects of the last few years, the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. Very few buildings reflect the succession of ideologies in Russian history as sharply as this. The original cathedral took forty-four years to

build and opened in 1883, an imposing structure with bronze doors, marble floors and richly decorated with sculptural ornamentation. The Bolsheviks levelled it in 1931; the new elite condemned it as 'exceptionally detrimental for socialist architecture'.¹⁰ It was to be replaced by a palace for the workers and farmers, the House of the Soviets. A competition was announced for the design of this new headquarters of the World Revolution; in addition to various Soviet architects the Swiss Le Corbusier was also invited. The plans were megalomaniac: the palace had to be taller than the Empire State Building. The project was suspended with the outbreak of the Second World War, and in its place Moscow's first public open air swimming pool was built on the banks of the Moskva river. In the 1990s the mayor of Moscow decided to rebuild the pompous Cathedral. Thus, the socialist doctrine of collective

10. Bart Lanting, 'De nieuwe Toren van Babel', *de Volkskrant*, 5 August 1995.



Wilhelm Sasnal, *Untitled (1)*, 2003, oil on canvas on paper, 31 x 24 cm, courtesy of Gallery Johnen & Schöttle, Cologne

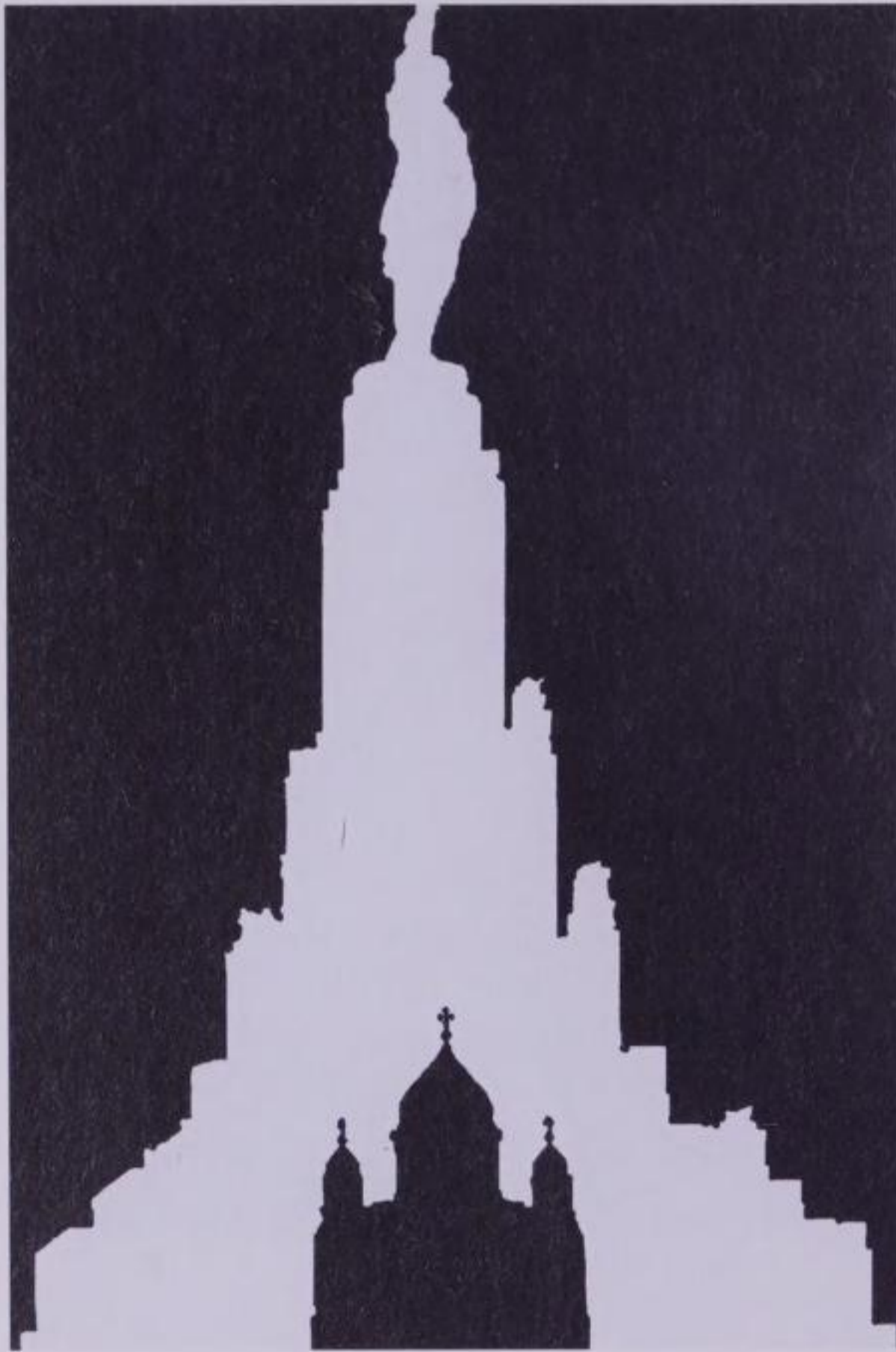
welfare has been replaced by patriotism and religious sentiment.

In the work of the Slovak artist Roman Ondák (born 1966, Žilina) delays, repetition and stagnation manipulate the experience of the passage of time. Ondák creates situations that sometimes have the character of a film in slow motion. *Good feelings in good times* (2003) is a performative work for the Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne. A queue of people stationed themselves in front of the entrance to the exhibition space, apparently waiting until they would be admitted. The work functions as a static, almost sculptural presence that calls up memories of an ambivalent experience from a not-so-distant past.¹¹ In the 1960s and 1970s in Czechoslovakia, where Ondák was born, a queue of waiting people meant that there was something to buy in the shop, but in such small amounts that one had to patiently wait

one's turn. The work *Announcement* (2002) is also staged, consisting of a spoken instruction to radio listeners. Here Ondák refers to the role of the Slovak National Radio in the communist era. The listener is instructed: 'As a sign of solidarity with recent world events, for the next minute do not interrupt the activity you are doing at this moment'. To be sure, the artist uses phrases that are reminiscent of the collective aspirations of socialism ('solidarity with recent world events'), but the anticlimax in the second part of the sentence has more in common with the Fluxus art of George Maciunas and Willem de Ridder.

In the centre of Warsaw stands the Palace for Culture and Science, a gift of the Soviet Union to the Polish people in the 1950s. Many Poles see this hulking structure that dominates the city scene as a symbol of Russian domination, and would therefore

11. Roman Ondák in conversation with the author, 5 February 2004.



gladly see it demolished. Artists like Ołowska and Sasnal see it through other eyes. As iconographers of vanished ideologies, they point out not only the absurdity of the building's scale, but also the remarkable parallels between socialist ornamentation and the sixteenth-century architectural style that dominates Cracow's much-loved market square. Against the background of accelerated change in the political/economic and social/cultural terrain and the creeping loss of memory that accompanies the radical consequences of modernization and globalization, the critical reflection of the present generation of artists on their own history is to be understood as an exhortation to advance, to meet the future with a self-awareness that comes from a strong historical consciousness.

LEONTINE COELEWIJ
Translated from the Dutch
by Donald Mader

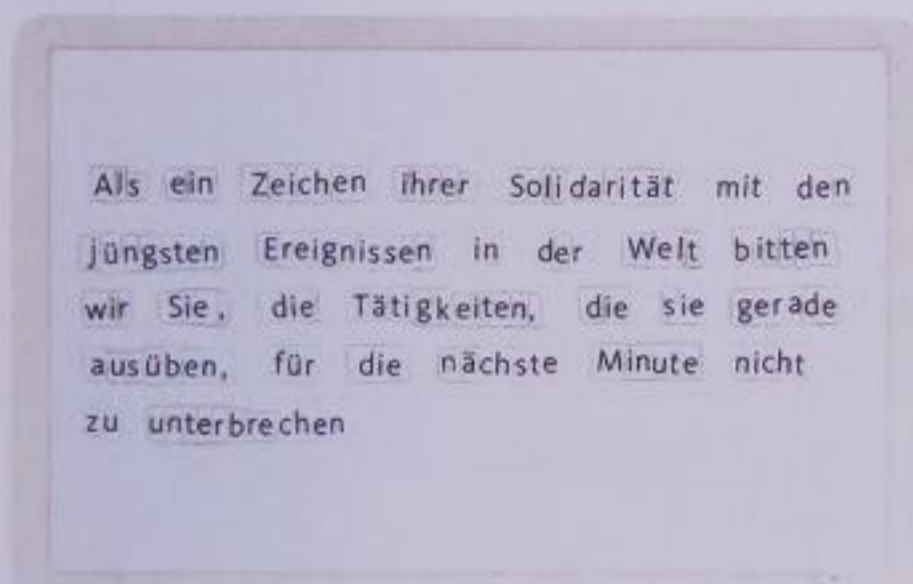
FUCK EUROPE...!?

Today, 13 June 2004, most of the European Union member states are voting for their representatives to the new parliament of the EU – a Union that since 1 May has expanded by ten countries, eight of which are from Central or Eastern Europe. That these eight countries, formerly part of the Eastern bloc, are now part of the EU is a fact that we here in Western Europe still attribute primarily to the policies – already at that time experienced as enlightened – of the former Russian president Mikhail Gorbachov. The fall of the Berlin Wall was an historic moment that we definitely did not attribute to the role of the – oh, the ironies of history! – recently deceased and soon to be buried former president of the United States, Ronald Reagan, although the Americans would like to think that was the case.

The fall of the Wall in November 1989, the step-by-step liberation of most Central and Eastern European countries from the Soviet

> Roman Ondák, *Announcement*, 2002, radio set, radio broadcast on CD, this announcement made every 4'30": 'As a sign of solidarity with recent world events, for the next minute do not interrupt the activity you are doing at this moment', collection Museum Ludwig, Cologne

√ Roman Ondák, *Announcement*, 2002/2003, print on the back of a membership card ('As a sign of solidarity with recent world events, for the next minute do not interrupt the activity you are doing at this moment'), 5x8 cm, edition 2000, courtesy of Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne



>> Roman Ondák, *Awaiting Enacted*, 2003, 2 of a set of 20 newspaper collages, courtesy of the artist



bloc which followed, and the ultimate dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, were the result of Gorbachov's position, although it should be clear that this result was not what he intended when he opened the Pandora's box of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the contents of which could not be controlled. The euphoria which this created for someone like myself, who had never known anything other than the hard reality of the Iron Curtain, who as a nine-year-old primary school pupil had been made sharply aware of the disasters which could have resulted from the Cuban Missile Crisis, and, somewhat older, had seen the news reports of Jan Palach's gruesome self-immolation in Prague in 1968, is impossible to put into words. At that time, the obvious thing to do was to try to put that euphoria into action – to develop more contacts and projects, see more studios, meet more people and use the new situation to do things that had been difficult or impossible for so many years.

It was undoubtedly from the same enthusiasm that the then-director of Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, Wim Beeren, decided to bring together artists from Western Europe with those from Central and Eastern Europe in the late summer of 1991 for a collective project in the Stedelijk Museum. *Wanderlieder* was the title of this exhibition, a utopian vision, perhaps fed by the euphoria I just mentioned, of what the future of Europe might bring, in this case visually telling the stories from various European lands with a deliberate reference to German literature from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

It was not entirely what Beeren had imagined. The artists from Central and Eastern Europe who had been tracked down on trips by the museum's curators indeed came to Amsterdam to carry out or complete their works on the spot in the Stedelijk Museum: Martin Mainer from Prague, Oleg Tistol from Kiev, Zofia Kulik from the immediate vicinity of Warsaw, Milan Kunc

Na nových sociálnych dávkach zarobia tí, čo zneužívajú systém

Ich príjem sa môže zvýšiť až o 1 580 korún v porovnaní s momentálne platným zákonom

Martin Čambalik
Bratislava

Platný systém sociálnej pomoci rozdeľuje ľudí do dvoch skupín: na tých, ktorí si zavini hmotnú núdzu sami, a tých, ktorí sa do nej dostali bez vlastnej viny, napríklad ak dostali výpoveď od zamestnávateľa. Nový systém však od budúceho roka práve túto kategóriu ľudí znevýhodní.

Teraz totiž dostávajú vyššiu sociálnu dávku 2 900 korún. Ak poslanci schvália vládny návrh zákona o sociálnej pomoci, podľa nového systému budú mať nárok len na 1 450 korún. Ak budú chcieť získať viac, budú si tieto peniaze musieť „odrobiť“. V konečnom dôsledku si tak oproti súčasnému stavu budú môcť príjmiť len o 130 korún. „Je to pre nich demotivujúce, no motiváciu by som videl v ich záujme rýchlejšie sa zo sociálnej siete dostať. Sú to totiž ľudia, ktorí majú väčší

predpoklad zamestnať sa,“ hovorí Viliam Páleník z Ústavu slovenskej a svetovej ekonomiky. Títo občania pritom dnes dostávajú vyššiu dávku práve preto, že v minulosti pracovali.

Možnosti sa, naopak, zlepšia tým, ktorí sa pod status poberaateľov sociálnych dávok dostali vlastnou vinou. Tak ako v platnom, aj v novom systéme totiž dostanú dávku vo výške 1 450 korún. Zvýšiť si ju však budú môcť až o 1 580 korún, ak prejavia záujem o prácu pre obec, rekvalifikáciu alebo vzdelávanie. Početnou skupinou sú tu pritom ľudia, ktorí systém zneužívajú a pracovať sa im nechce.

ČO SA ZMENÍ

Príjem osoby v hmotnej núdzi tak oproti platnému stavu môže byť nižší, ale aj vyšší. Výška sociálnej dávky totiž bude závisieť od toho, či bude nezamestnaný človek aktívny. V prípade, že nebude robiť nič, dostane len základnú dávku

1 450 korún. Ak však prejaví záujem pracovať v obci, o rekvalifikáciu alebo štúdium, štát mu príplatí k dávke 800 korún. Príspevky za jednotlivé aktivity nebude možné kumulovať.

Pripočítat však bude možné príspevok na bývanie. Po predložení zaplatených účtov za bývanie alebo zmluvy o dlhu tak každý dostane ešte 780 korún. Najviac tak štát bezdetnému jednotlivcovi vyplatí 3 030 korún.

PRE KOHO BUDE SYSTÉM VÝHODNÝ

Vo všetkých skupinách obyvateľstva bude pri konečnej výške sociálnej dávky rozhodujúcou aktivita sociálne odkázaneho. Kým teraz dostane bezdetný manželský pár na dávkach v priemere 3 281 korún, v novom budú môcť poberať až 5 460 korún. Ak však neprejaví záujem o jeden z aktivačných príspevkov, budú sa mať horšie, pretože štát im vyplatí len 2 530 korún.

NEPRACOVAŤ SA NEOPLATÍ

Nový systém sociálnej pomoci

ci bude výhodnejší najmä pre rodiny, kde niekto pracuje. Pri skúmaní toho, či sa človek nachádza v hmotnej núdzi, sa totiž nebude brať do úvahy celý príjem zarábajúceho manžela, ktorý sa posudzuje spoločne, ale len 75 % z čistého príjmu zo zamestnania. Zvyšných 25 % si tak môžu nechať. Pri príjme jedného z manželov vo výške 5 570 korún bude môcť manželský pár dostať na dávkach 480 korún, kým inak by nedostal nič.

EXTERNÍ ŠTUDENTI

Zlepšenie môžu očakávať od nového systému diaľkovi študenti, ktorí sú nezamestnaní. Podľa platných zákonov sa totiž v súčasnosti nemôžu zaregistrovať na úradoch práce, preto majú nárok len na sociálnu dávku vo výške 1 450 korún. Keďže nový zákon bude odmeňovať tých, ktorí budú pracovať pre obec, rekvalifikovať sa alebo študovať, dostanú navyše 800 korún. Dĺžka poberať aktivačného príplatku však bude časovo obmedzená a externista ho môže dostávať najdlhšie 2 roky.

KTO BUDE V HMOTNEJ NÚDZI

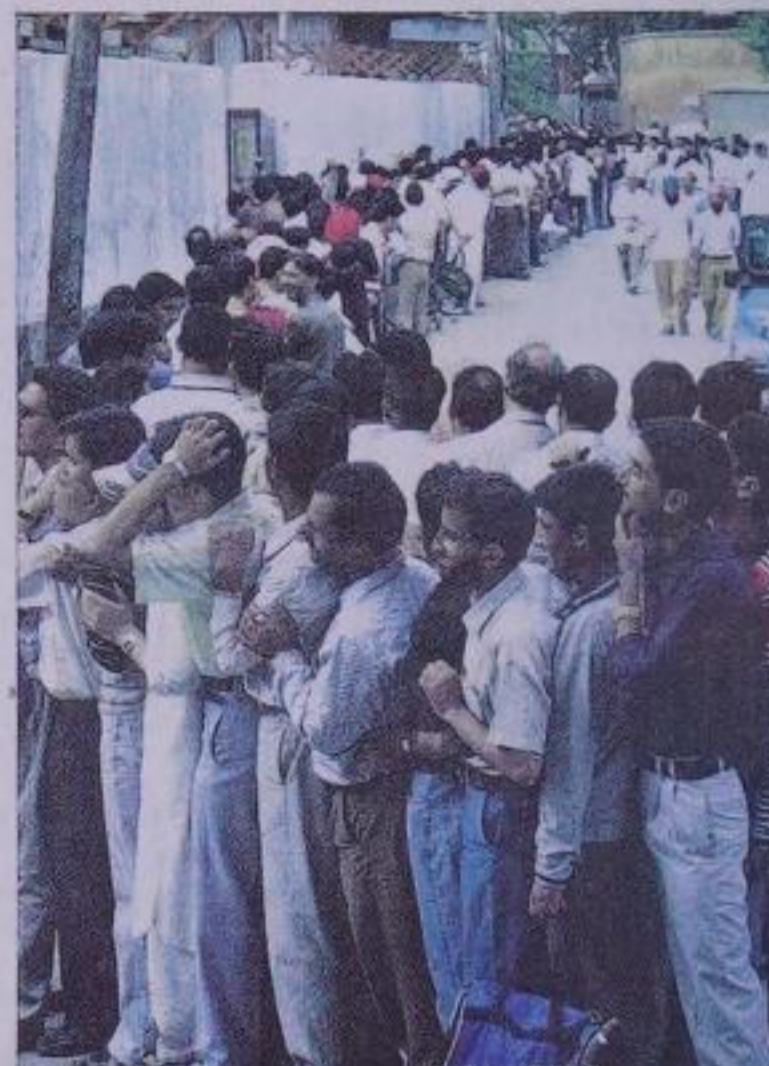
Zivotné minimum na jednu osobu	4 210 Sk
Každá ďalšia osoba	2 940 Sk
Zaopatrené neploleté dieťa	
nezaopatrené dieťa	1 910 Sk

(Účinné od 1. júla 2003, minimá sa sčítavajú)

NÁROK NA DÁVKU

	do 31. 12. 2003	od 1. 1. 2004
jednotlivec (bezdetný)	1 974 Sk	od 1 450 do 3 030 Sk
s 1 dieťaťom	3 171 Sk	od 2 660 do 4 790 Sk
s 2 deťmi	4 218 Sk	od 3 160 do 5 290 Sk
s 3 deťmi	5 583 Sk	od 3 660 do 5 790 Sk
dvojica (bezdetná)	3 281 Sk	od 2 530 do 5 460 Sk
1 dieťa	4 382 Sk	od 3 710 do 6 640 Sk
2 deti	5 782 Sk	od 4 210 do 7 140 Sk

(Zdroj: MPSVaR, priemerné výšky spolu s prídatkami na deti)



VÝŠKA SOCIÁLNYCH DÁVKOV OD 1. 1. 2004

● jednotlivec	1 450 Sk
● rodič najviac so 4 deťmi	2 160 Sk
● rodič s viac ako 4 deťmi	3 160 Sk
● bezdetná dvojica	2 530 Sk
● pre rodičov najviac so 4 deťmi	3 210 Sk
● rodičia s viac ako 4 deťmi	4 210 Sk

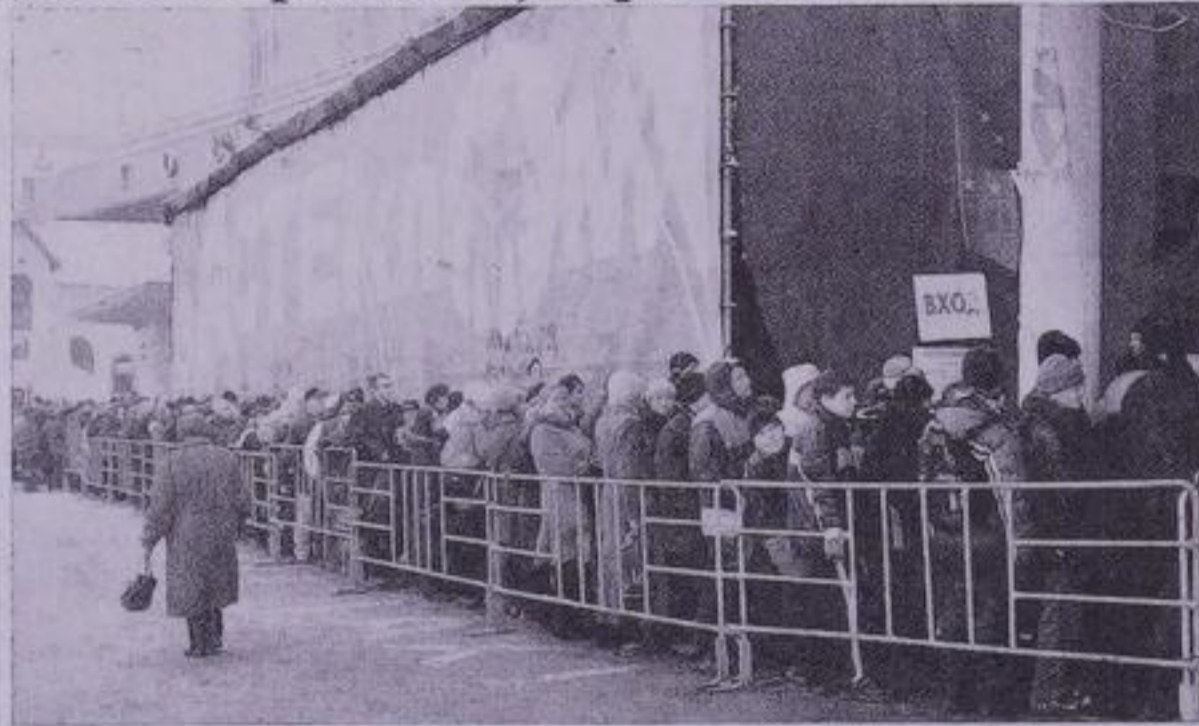
Kána odvolali z funkcie predsedu, Lipšic žiada tvrdší trest

Súdcu Krajského súdu v Košiciach Dušana Kánu včera uznal disciplinárny senát zodpovedným za procesnú chybu, kvôli ktorej sa vlni v septembri dostali z vyšetrovacej väzby siedmi údajní príslušníci košického podsvetia. Preto ho odvolal z funkcie predsedu senátu.

Disciplinárny senát tak čiasto-

Albánsko zrušilo vízovú povinnosť

Slovenskí občania môžu od 1. júna cestovať do Albánskej republiky bez víz. Rozhodla o tom albánska vláda. Vizová povinnosť je zrušená pre všetky druhy cestovných dokladov. TASR o tom včera informoval tlačový odbor Ministerstva zahraničných vecí SR. (TASR, Bratislava)



Lekári zdôrazňujú dôležitosť tekutín

Záchranná služba zatiaľ nezaznamenala zvýšený počet kolapsov z horúčav

Petra Fiačanová
Ivan Bača
Bratislava, Banská Bystrica

Vysoké teploty, ktoré na Slovensku sú už niekoľko dní, majú obrovský vplyv na organizmus človeka. Napriek tomu, že teplotné rekordy ešte nepadli, včera ortuť teplomera vystúpila napríklad v Hurbanove až na 32,6 °C. A to sa ešte astronomické leto ešte ani nezačalo.

Nadnes meteorológovia predpovedajú 28 až 30 °C. Veľké problémy v takomto tepla majú predovšetkým starší ľudia, pacienti s chorobami srdca a s vysokým tlakom. Kolapsové stavy sa však nevyhýbajú ani

mladým ľuďom. I keď v letných mesiacoch evidujú nemocnice o niečo viac pacientov ako inokedy, záchranná služba v Bratislave zatiaľ nezaznamenala zvýšený počet prípadov kolapsov z horúčav. V prípade kolapsu museli zasahovať len u jednej staršej dámy, ktorá sa v najväčšom teple vybrala na nákup.

Včerajší deň bol zatiaľ najteplejší od začiatku týždňa aj na strednom Slovensku a niektorí ľudia mali zdravotné problémy, ale v Rooseveltovej nemocnici (RN) v Banskej Bystrici nezaznamenali zvýšenú frekvenciu volaní o pomoc. „Od rána do odpolednia sme

mali jediný výjazd, ale ten sa netýkal zdravotných problémov spôsobených vysokými teplotami,“ povedal Dalibor Kolesko, službukonajúci lekár oddelenia RZP. Podobná situácia bola aj v Žiari nad Hronom, Šahách, Lučenci a v ďalších nemocniciach na strednom Slovensku.

Ľudia sa na takéto teploty musia zvyknúť. Lekári však varujú - nevoľnosť a problémy väčšinou vypuknú po dvoch dňoch vysokých teplôt. Odborníci radia piť veľa tekutín a vyhýbať sa priamemu slnku v čase od desiatej do tretej hodiny.

„Veľmi dôležitý je dodržiavať pitný režim a vypíť takmer dva

litre tekutín denne. Najlepšie je ich strieďať, minerálku, čaj, džús... nemali by však byť ani príliš studené, ani príliš sladké,“ povedal pre Národnú obrodu vedúci Záchranného a operačného systému záchrannej služby v Bratislave.

Vyhýbať by sme sa mali predovšetkým alkoholom a zvýšenej fyzickej aktivite.

Na slnku by nemali byť dokonca ani malé, aj keď zdravé deti. Minulý rok zhruba o takomto čase malo totiž problémy deväť detí z materskej škôlky, ktoré po návrate z prechádzky zvracali. Dôvodom bolo prehriatie organizmu.

Ďalší policajti odvolaní pre alkohol

Dychová skúška, ktorá vo štvrtok dopoludnia potvrdila prítomnosť alkoholu počas kontroly na pracovisku, bude stáť zástupcu riaditeľa Okresného riaditeľstva Policajného zboru v Michalovciach M.P. služobné miesto.

Podľa hovorca michalovskej polície Róberta Ujhelyiho sa v súčasnosti spracúva návrh na

jeho prepustenie do civilu. Ujhelyi potvrdil, že v uplynulých týždňoch okrem uvedeného zástupcu neprešli dychovou skúškou ešte ďalší dvaja policajti. „Stalo sa to však ešte pred prijatím prísnejších opatrení a obidvaja policajti boli disciplinárne potrestaní,“ doplnil hovorca. (TASR, Bratislava)

Nákup čerešní za vyše 17-tisíc

Obyvateľku Dolného Kubína stál nákup čerešní v tamojšej tržnici vyše 17-tisíc korún. Pri výbere ovocia si na pult vyložila peňaženku, ktorú jej počas chvíľkovej nepozornosti niekto zobral. Zákazníčka mala v nej aj platobnú kartu, ktorú neznámy páchatel hneď využil. Z jej účtu cez bankomat vybral 17-tisíc korún.

Neskôr sa pokúsil vybrať z bankomatu v Žiline takmer rovnakú hotovosť. To sa mu už nepodarilo, lebo účet majiteľka stačila zablokovať.

Okradnutá žena sama pomohla zlodějovi, lebo v peňaženke okrem 300 Sk našiel aj PIN kód platobnej karty. (TASR, Bratislava)

Povedali v tomto týždni



„Do istej miery je to šok, možno rovnaký, ako keď ma dali do väzby bez akýchkoľvek dôkazov pred pol rokom. Vtedy som išiel na základe predvolania na výsluch a bol som z toho pol roka v šoku.“

Ivan Lexa na otázku Nového dňa, ako sa cíti po prvých krokoch na slobode.

„Ak budeme hovoriť o tom, že tri lietadlá z hľadiska bezpečnosti môžu lietať v mieri, to neznamená, že v prípade potreby nevzlietnu všetky okrem tých, ktoré sú v oprave vo fabrike.“

Zástupca náčelníka Generálneho štábu OZ Jozef Blizman na výrok prezidenta Rudolfa Schustera, že Slovensko má len tri bojaschopné stíhačky.

„Nemám problém zaplatiť nejakú pokutu. S tým sme rátili, máme pripravené peniaze.“

Prezident Konfederácie odborových zväzov Ivan Saktor počas štrajku na diaľniciach, keď policajti vyberali od odborárov pokuty za spomaľovanie premávky. (kgm, Bratislava)

Osud škôlky ešte nie je spečatený

VRÚTKY - O záchrane Materskej školy na Ulici Cyrila a Metoda vo Vrútkach budú dnes rokovať zástupcovia Závodu služieb železníc (ZSŽ) a mesta Vrútky. Hrozí totiž, že ZSŽ z finančných dôvodov 1. marca škôlku zatvorí.

„Verím, že obe strany spravia ústretové kroky a materská škola bude ďalej fungovať,“ povedal riaditeľ ZSŽ Peter Výboštok. V rovnakom zmysle sa vyjadril aj primátor Vrútok Lubomír Bernát. Mali by si vyjasniť názory na riešenie problému, predovšetkým na financovanie fungovania škôlky.

ZSŽ odôvodnil prerušenie prevádzky so 60 deťmi tým, že sa nedohodli na

spolufinancovaní škôlky s tamojším okresným a mestským úradom. V prípade, že by škôlka, ktorú železnice financujú už dvadsať rokov, prešla pod správu mesta, požadovali by nájom za priestory. Ročná prevádzka ich stojí 2,2 milióna Sk. Z návštevníkov škôlky je pritom len desať percent detí zamestnancov železníc.

(er, foto Filip Stopka)



Kolotočiar: Jar znamená výdavky

LEVICE - Život kolotočiarov je ťažký. Hoci sa usilujú prežiť, mnohí krachujú. Aj levickú rodinu Sajkovcov, druhý najstarší kolotočiar sky klan u nás i v Česku, tlačí nedostatok peňazí.

Prichádzajúca jar pre nich znamená kopy výdavkov. Na údržbu atrakcií, traktorov, maringotiek či strelnice vydajú do 200-tisíc korún. „Len farby stoja okolo 30-tisíc. Štát nás nepodporí ani korunou,“ hovorí František Sajka

(54). Jeho rodina brázdí Slovensko s kolotočmi osem mesiacov v roku. „Hoci zlyhá aj najdokonalejšia technika, my si riziko nesmieme dovoliť! Kolotoče musia byť stopercentne bezpečné. Preto pedantne vymieňame každú zastaranú skrutku. Výdavky sa nám však nevracajú, ľudia majú čoraz menej peňazí. Poplatky za priestranstvo platíme vopred. No keď cez hody prší, ledva sa nám vrátia peniaze za naftu,“ hovorí F. Sajka.

Najhoršie je to v obciach, kde je vysoká nezamestnanosť. Kým v dedine so 800 obyvateľmi sa prišlo pred 15 rokmi denne na kolotočoch pozrieť päťsto ľudí, dnes ich je maximálne sto. „Vlani pri kolotoči postávali dvaja súrodenci. Plakali, lebo nemali peniaze. Nešťastná mama mi vysvetlila, že sú radi, keď sa poriadne najedia. Čo som mal s nimi robiť? Vzal som ich zadarmo. Tá vďačnosť však stála za to,“ dodáva F. Sajka. (min, foto autor)



SME - LUBOŠ PÍLČ

Zákazníci napadli čašníkov

DONOVALLY - Nechceli ich obslužiť, tak použili násilie. Polícia preveruje udalosti z utorkového rána v hoteli Vesel na Donovaloch. Okolo 23. hodiny prišli do hotela dvaja muži - päťdesiatnici. Posilnení alkoholom sa domáhali obsluhy. Keď ich požiadavky barman odmietol, muži hotel opustili. Po polnoci sa však do zaria-

denia vrátili. Barman i čašník sa im snažili opäť vysvetliť, že obslužení nebudú. Ohrdnutým hosťom sa to nepáčilo, preto zamestnancov hotela napadli. Barmana, ktorého zranili na hlave, museli ošetriť v nemocnici. Bitka päťdesiatnikom asi nestačila, do sklenej vitríny ešte hodili kvetináč.

(pav, foto autor)

Kradol knihy, ale nečítal ich

PRIEVIDZA - Kradol knihy, nie však preto, aby sa vzdelával, ale aby ich predal. 31-ročný Miroslav z Banskej Bystrice v hypermarkete v Prievidzi od novembra minulého roku vzal tovar za 10-tisíc korún. Najviac sa mu páčili veľké

obrázkové encyklopédie. Nepohrdol ani Guinnessovou knihou rekordov. Policajti ho zadržali v utorok. Priznal sa, že nie je žiadny intelektuál, študovať preto nechcel. Mal za lubom, že nakradnutú literatúru výhodne predá. (hc)



Roman Ondák, *Good Feelings in Good Times*, 2003, queue formed artificially every day in front of the main entrance to Kölnischer Kunstverein, courtesy of Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, photo: Boris Becker

Roman Ondák, *Tomorrows*, 2002 (one poster from a series of 6), offset print on paper, each 41 x 58,5 cm (edition of 100)

from Prague/Cologne, Ion Grigorescu from Bucharest, the IRWIN group from Ljubljana and Ilya Kabakov from Moscow/New York. Most of the 'Western' artists, on the contrary, just sent their work, or instructions on how it was to be realized (Francesco Clemente, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Combas), sometimes accompanied by an assistant (in the case of Gilbert & George). The Belgian Jan Fabre and the Dutchman Ger van Elk were the usual exceptions that proved the rule. Seen in retrospect, the (to put it mildly) arrogant conduct of these Western artists can perhaps be considered as omen for the future, a future that by now to a great extent has been realized.

Who could have described my surprise, or rather bewilderment, when at the beginning of this year, with the accession of the ten 'new' EU countries only several months away, the Dutch print media began to report on the concerns our government officials had about what the arrival of the 'new' EU countries might mean in terms of our economy. I don't

believe that anyone was all that upset about a flood of cheap labour from Malta or Cyprus, two of the 'new' EU lands, but primarily about that coming from Central and Eastern Europe. It brought a blush of shame to my cheeks.

By that time I was also pretty well cured of the euphoria about a re-united Europe, in view of the still overwhelmingly conservative (and sometimes downright nationalistic) tinge of the governments that were ultimately running the show in the countries of the former Eastern bloc, but I seemed to remember how the Netherlands had by special regulations over the past few years gratefully made use of Polish and other Eastern European asparagus pickers, flower-bulb peelers and nurses. To put it simply, there were generally no Dutch people on the unemployment lists of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment who would do the work that they did. What sort of welcome was this for our new European compatriots?



Roman Ondák, *Teaching to Walk*, 2002, performance repeated daily in a gallery for half an hour, courtesy of Václav Špála Gallery, Prague, photo: Martin Polák

Add to that the grandiose plan – from 2003, if I remember rightly – of the French president Jacques Chirac in expectation of the expansion of the EU, to create a two-speed Europe, that is to say a ‘breakaway’ of the original EU lands, and at a distance behind them the *peloton*, to which the new member states from Central and Eastern Europe could belong, and we can say, once again, ‘Welcome, brothers!’.

It should be clear by now that the euphoria I felt in the early 1990s has gradually turned to pessimism. It is almost impossible to resist this feeling. So I am still sceptical of the idea behind ‘cultural exchanges’ between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ European Union countries, even if it is part of projects that I am involved in. I struggle between euphoria (and hope) and pessimism continually, and I felt it acutely at the end of February, precisely at the time of those cheery news reports on the welcome that our new EU compatriots were to receive, when I travelled to Budapest to seek out Hungarian participants for the *Time and*

Again exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum. There in Budapest, I couldn’t bring myself to mention the clichés about a ‘united Europe’ as an explanation of the theme of the project. When asked what the theme of the exhibition was, I found myself responding angrily, ‘Fuck Europe. That really about covers it’.

GEURT IMANSE
Translated from the Dutch
by Donald Mader

Little Warsaw, artists' collective: András Gálik, born 1970 and Bálint Havas, born 1971, live and work in Budapest. Recent exhibitions (selection): Sculpture Quadrennial Riga, Riga, 2004; *Deserted Memorial*, The Hague Sculpture, The Hague, 2004; 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003; 2nd Berlin Biennale, Berlin, 2001.

Ján Mančuška, born 1972, lives and works in Prague. Recent exhibitions (selection): Marx Fox Gallery, Los Angeles, 2004; *Read it*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, 2004; *The Ten Commandments*, Deutsches Hygiene Museum, Dresden, 2004; *Centre of Attraction: 8th Baltic Triennial of International Art*, CAC, Vilnius, 2004; Manifesta 4, Frankfurt, 2002.

Deimantas Narkevičius, born 1964, lives and works in Vilnius. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Either True or Fictitious*, FRAC des Pays de la Loire, Nantes, 2003; *Now What? Dreaming a better world in six parts*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2003; Galerie Jan Mot, Brussels, 2003 and 2001; gb agency, Paris, 2002; Lithuanian Pavilion, 49th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2001; Manifesta 2, Luxembourg, 1998.

Paulina Ołowska, born 1976, lives and works in Warsaw. Recent exhibitions (selection): *She had to reject the idea of a house as a metaphor*, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig, 2004; *XZ Arriviste*, Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam, 2004; 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003; *In Lubelia*, Cabinet Gallery, London, 2003; *Nova Popularna* (with Lucy McKenzie), Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, 2003.

Roman Ondák, born 1966, lives and works in Bratislava. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Spirit and Opportunity*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2004; *Unbalanced Allocation of Space*, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, 2004; *Socle du Monde 04*, Herning Kunstmuseum, Herning, 2004; *ev+a 2004 'Imagine Limerick'*, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Limerick, 2004; *Densité ±0*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 2004; *That bodies speak has been known for a long time*, Generali Foundation, Vienna, 2004; *Utopia Station*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003.

Tadej Pogačar, born 1960, lives and works in Ljubljana. Recent exhibitions (selection): Forum Stadtpark, Graz, 2003; *CODE:RED*, Gallery Nova, Zagreb, 2003; *Olympia from Moderna Galerija*, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, 2002; *CODE:RED*, 49th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2001; *Tales of Two Cities*, Art Galleries of Slovenj Gradec and Ravne na Korokem, 2000; Manifesta 1, Rotterdam, 1996.

Wilhelm Sasnal, born 1972, lives and works in Tarnow. Recent exhibitions (selection): Galerie Johnen + Schöttle, Cologne, 2004; South London Gallery, London, 2004; Anton Kern Gallery, New York, 2003; Sadie Coles HQ, London, 2003; *Day and Night*, Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, 2003; *Painting on the Move*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, 2002.

CORDIALLY INVITED

EPISODE 3

BAK, BASIS VOOR ACTUELE KUNST,
UTRECHT

31 OCTOBER-

31 DECEMBER 2004

CURATORS: MARIA HLAVAJOVA

AND GERARDO MOSQUERA

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS: ACADEMIC

TRAINING GROUP, FRANCIS ALÿS,

JOŽE BARŠI, OTTO BERCHEM,

MONICA BONVICINI, MONA HATOUM,

JÚLIUS KOLLER, JIŘÍ KOVANDA,

DENISA LEHOCKÁ, MAPPING

WORLDS, NOMADS & RESIDENTS

AND BIK VAN DER POL, ROMAN

ONDÁK, BORIS ONDREIČKA,

AMALIA PICA, WILFRIEDO PRIETO

GARCÍA, MARKO RAAT, MINDAUGAS

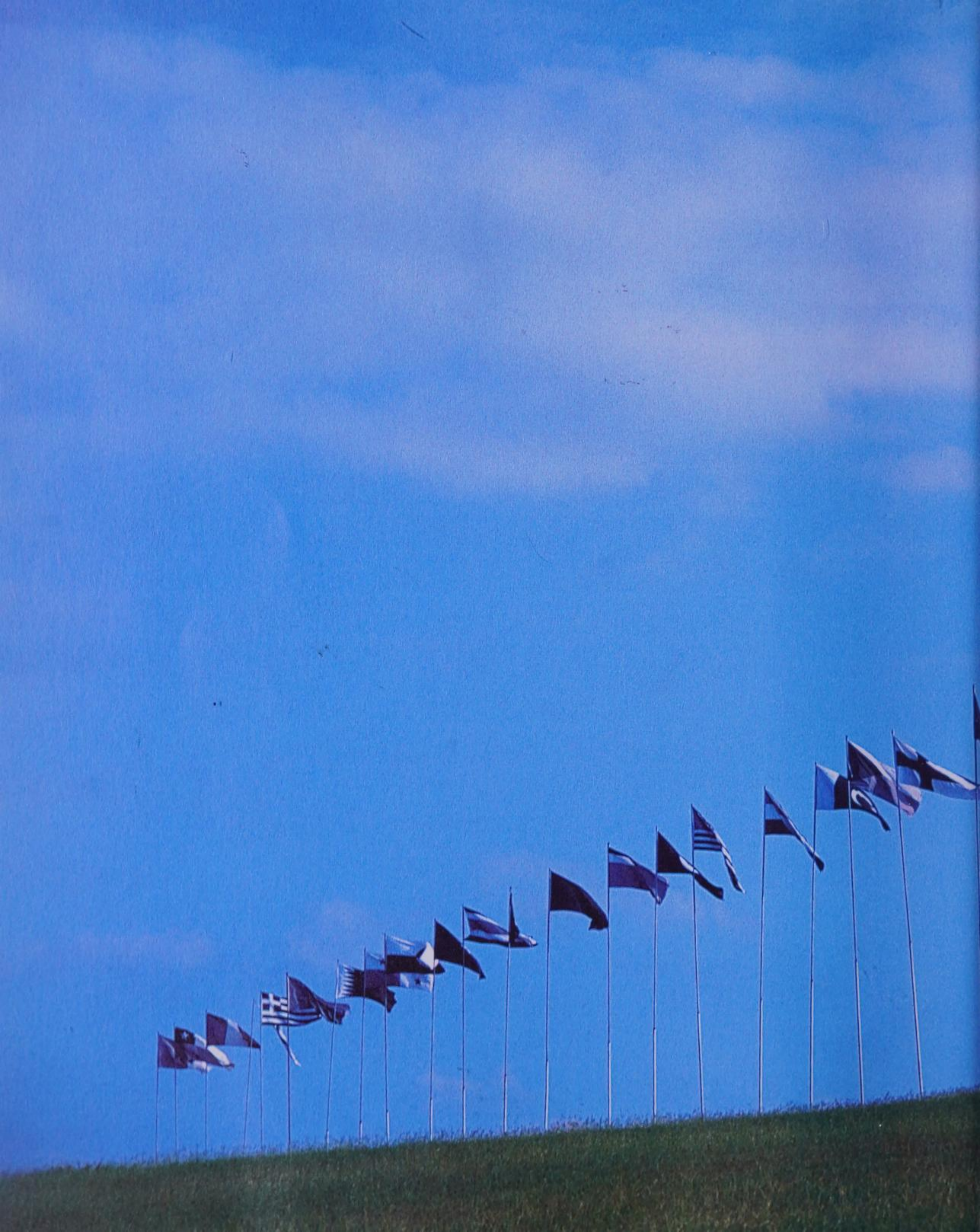
RATAVICIUS/GIEDRIUS KUMETAITIS,

JEROEN DE RIJKE/WILLEM DE

ROOIJ, ENE-LIIS SEMPER,

MONIKA SOSNOWSKA AND

FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES







'Let us say yes to *who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female.'¹ When Derrida writes these words calling for practising unqualified acceptance, he simultaneously articulates its inherent paradox: the contradictory imperative of conditional hospitality counterbalancing the notion of absolute welcoming. Thus, hospitality is given place within concrete politics and ethics through the constant negotiation between the unconditional and the conditional.

Perhaps it is this double, antithetical logic embedded in the notion of hospitality that one can find in Ene-Liis Semper's video *Door* (2003). The work is a subtle visual metaphor for the faculty of possibility, however unfulfilled. The door depicted in the short black-and-white film opens slightly, and then a little more. One senses the movement behind it, but before anything is revealed to the viewer, the door closes again. If there is a concrete space of hospitality, Semper seems to say, then it is that of one's home, over which he or she retains authority. Indeed, 'for hospitality to exist there has to be a door... This implies that someone has the key to the door and thus controls the condition of hospitality'.² *Door* symbolically reminds us of the conflict between extending a gesture of hospitality and the limits of implementing it into social reality. In its poetics we read the

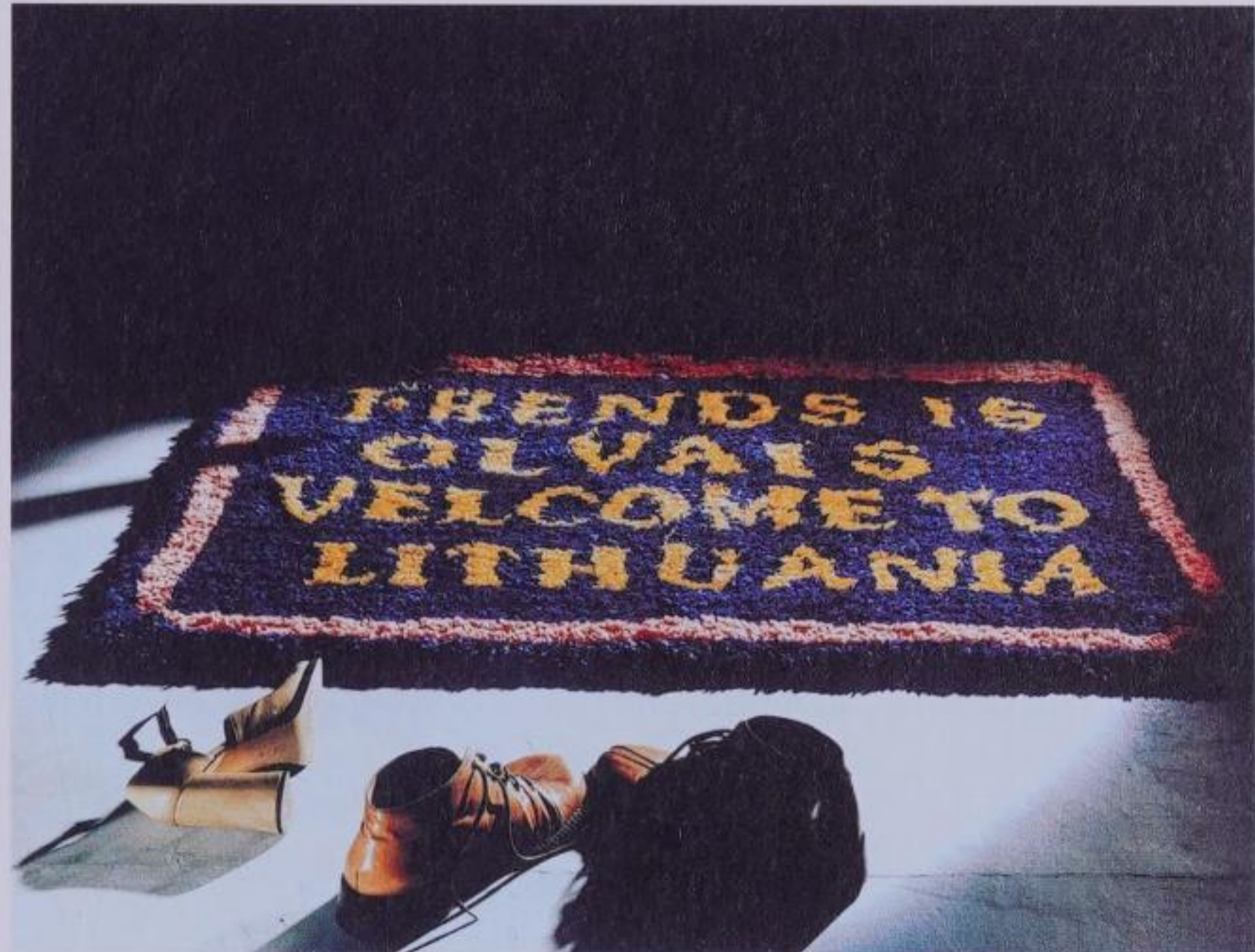
1. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 77.

2. Meyda Yegenoglu, 'Liberal Multiculturalism and the Ethics of Hospitality in the Age of Globalization', in *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2003).

<< Wilfredo Prieto García, *Apolitical*, 2001, grey, black and white flags (official design, official dimension and official fabric), courtesy of the artist and Daros-Latinamerica Collection, Zürich, photo: Wilfredo Prieto García

< Ene-Liis Semper, *Door*, 2002, video, 4 min., video still

> Mindaugas Ratavicius and Giedrius Kumetaitis, *Welcome*, 1997, object, textile, 90 x 120 cm, photo: Mindaugas Ratavicius



gap between an offer and its fulfilment, and the asymmetry in the relationship between the one who invites and the invitee. But again, first of all the work creates a space – no matter how restricted – for a brief occasion to encounter a promise of the possible, of future potential. It performs an invitation in a cordial manner: sincerely but conditionally.

If we relocate this interplay of contradictions intrinsic to hospitality from the realm of the symbolic into the immediate reality around us, we encounter troubled Europe. Two topics of major moral and political consequence today – migration and asylum – order the day and divide opinion (it seems) between opposing positions. 'No human is illegal!' and 'The Netherlands is full!' are two statements that may well define the outer points between which the debate in the Netherlands oscillates as a *pars pro toto* of the Western European dilemma. Not only does this concern the relationship of the European Union to the rest of the world, but also relations within it. At the moment of the

EU's historic enlargement by ten countries, eight of which belong to what we know as 'Eastern Europe', the very philosophical foundations of the European project are called into question. Promised political and economic inclusion is for the new member states further regulated or delayed by endless 'provisory' restrictions. Already in 1997, halfway between two important milestones – the fall of the Berlin Wall and Lithuania's accession to the European Union – the artists Mindaugas Ratavicius and Giedrius Kumetaitis produced a work performing both hopes and concerns indirectly referring to the path towards European unification. '*Frends is olvais velcome to Lithuania*', reads the phrase spelled in incorrect English, woven in golden thread on a blue doormat. Along with reflecting the enthusiasm around the processes of receiving and being received with pleasure and hospitality, by placing these sincere, warm words of welcome on a doormat meant for wiping one's shoes, the work metaphorically exposed fears of



< Marko Raat, *For Aesthetic Reasons*, 1999, video, 28 min., video stills

> Roman Ondák, *Antinomads*, 2000, set of 12 postcards, postcard stand, endless reprint, each postcard 10,5 x 14,8 cm, overall 43 x 66,5 x 6 cm, courtesy of the artist and gb agency, Paris

potential domination or mistreatment.

As a result of EU enlargement the issue of hospitality vs. migration gains even more political urgency. 'Why can't people move around for beautiful reasons?', asks Andres Kurg, the main protagonist in the film *For Aesthetic Reasons* (1999), a performative documentary by Marko Raat. Estonian Andres Kurg is an architecture historian who admires Danish Modernism, about which he is extraordinarily knowledgeable. He decides to ask for asylum in Denmark for 'just' that: aesthetic reasons. It is obvious through situations he instigates when negotiating with the asylum and foreign police authorities, balancing between the comic and the tragic, that this is an impossible request. There is no procedure in place that could accommodate his reasons for refuge. Kurg is neither politically persecuted nor in a state of economic deprivation and he even openly admits he quite likes it in his native land. In the process of pursuing his request for asylum, however, he indirectly

makes a reciprocal offer. The negotiations about his citizenship status are superimposed in the film with scenes where he displays his profound erudition of modernist culture in the country of his application. In contrast to times when he is portrayed as a (humble) asylum seeker in search of a host, in the situations when Kurg presents his knowledge about architecture, he becomes a host himself; a host performing generous hospitality by sharing his expertise. The interchange between the two capacities – the one of a (temporary) guest and the other of a host – is presented in a continuous related action and a perpetual interplay between anxiety and firm determination. Kurg's request, obviously, remains unfulfilled: in reality he does not obtain a long-term residence permit for aesthetic reasons. But in my opinion, the real inquiry pursued in the work is whether the interchange between hosting and being a guest, however temporary, could actually disable the subordination intrinsic to hospitality. Such a thought reflects what the curator and writer



Charles Esche calls 'dynamic hospitality'. In dynamic hospitality the roles of the host and the guest constantly interchange. The one that offers hospitality receives it in return, and vice-versa. Such a model reverses the psychological condition of authority and subservience, and, according to Esche, equally distributes the responsibilities that accompany giving and taking.

A similar attitude is partially revealed in *Antinomads* (2000), a work by Roman Ondák. The artist visits people from various social and professional backgrounds in their own environments. These people have one thing in common: they rarely or never travel. Their anti-nomadism is rooted in various grounds. Often it is a matter of financial impossibility; in other cases the reasons lie in psychological resistance imbedded in a fear of the unknown, or simply in a refusal to be confronted with realities that represent 'everything' they were deprived of during the decades of forceful isolation from the rest of the world in the communist era. There is

a sense of disconnection but also of happiness the artist seems to be depicting when photographing these people in their homes or at work for a series of postcards. The artist who has been hosted once becomes a host himself, when bringing the portraits into the zone of art. The postcards, later located in the context of an art exhibition, are then used for sending messages through the mail by the visitors. It is the visitor who sends these people with no experience of travel on a symbolic journey that they may or may not have wanted. Throughout the lengthy process of producing and performing the work, the identities of host and guest alternate between the *antinomads*, the artist and the viewers.

Ondák's work poetically alludes to what is undoubtedly needed in enlarged Europe: a new redefinition of mobility and borders, the concept of nation states, citizenship and cosmopolitanism. But can we admit that in reality there is a large difference between the real migration 'problem' and the rhetoric



< Július Koller, *Art (U.F.O.)*, 1980, courtesy of Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne

> Július Koller, *Time/space Definition of the Psychophysical Activity of Matter 1 (Anti-Happening)*, 1968, courtesy of Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne

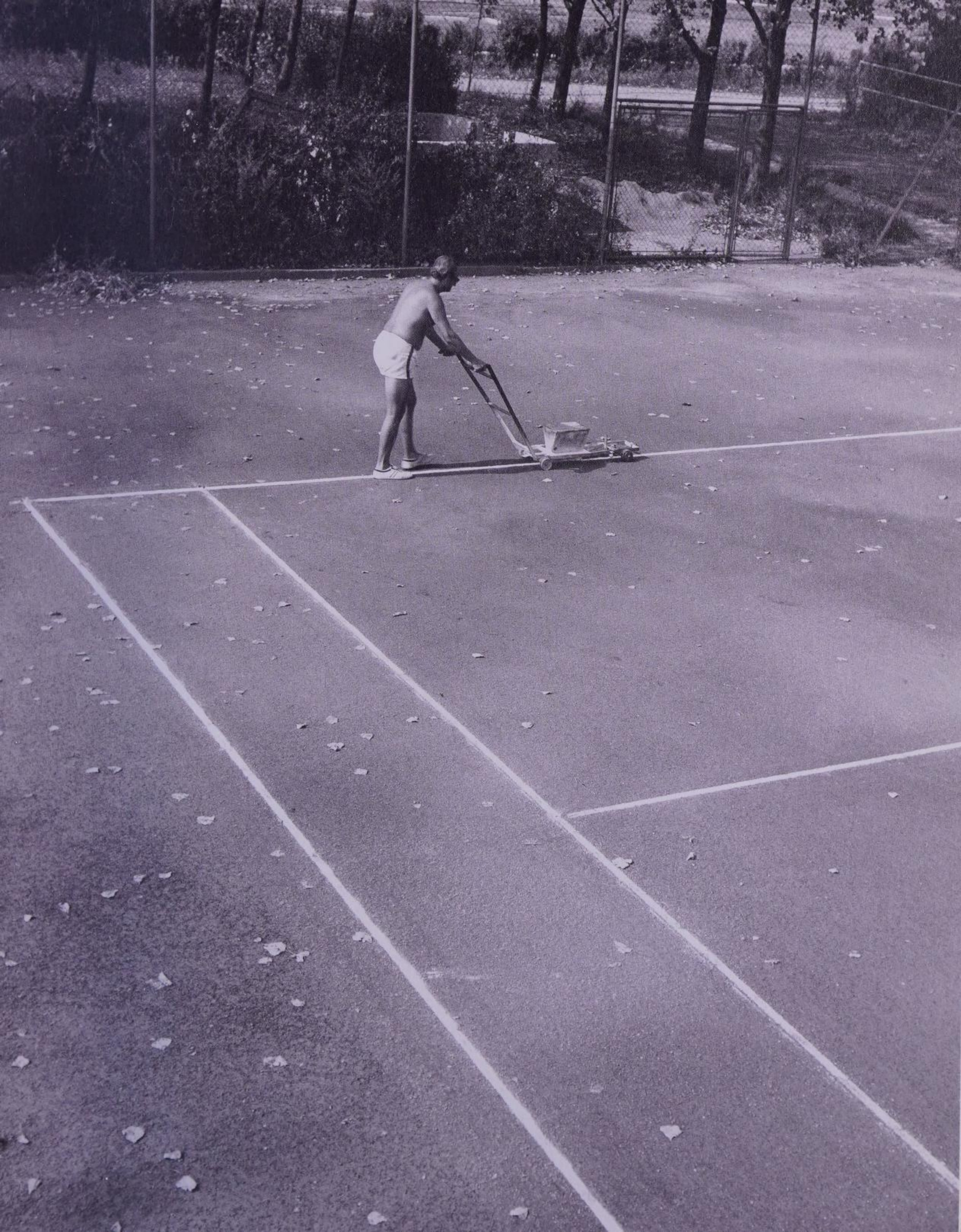
that surrounds it? And that the economic, social, cultural and political 'endangerment' migrants pose is a constructed fantasy of Western welfare communities themselves in crisis – a performance of their 'chronic immigration schizophrenia'?³ Fear is what underlines these issues, I believe, resulting in visceral defence mechanisms. 'Welcome to Europe. Now go home', is how the artist Otto Berchem commented on them. The cynicism contained in this statement – in itself a brisk summary of the prevailing attitude – seems understandable. But, could it be that a sense of legitimacy resides in such a sentiment? Perhaps the decades of collective fantasizing about these countries as dangerous and threatening cannot be overcome according to a single political agreement. And is it not true on top of that, that the general

understanding of the world as a whole is that we are in a transition after the collapse of what we 'knew' as safe, and that we generally lack a sense of a direction?

Július Koller presents us with the constructive option of surpassing this sentiment and the dominant political constructions through artistic interventions, borrowing from the vocabulary of sports. As he has several times since its first presentation in 1970, in *Cordially Invited* Koller installs a 'participation environment'⁴ in a room in which everybody can play table tennis – or rather 'ping-pong' – with the artist himself or anybody at hand. Koller does not see visitors to an art exhibit as 'observers', but rather as those playing an active part in a 'cultural situation'. In the particular case of the table

3. This is a term coined by Ferruccio Pastore of the Center for the Study of International Politics in Rome.

4. Hans Ulrich Obrist in an interview with Július Koller, in *Július Koller: Univerzálna Futurologické Operácie*, Kathrin Rhomberg, ed. (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein & Walther König, 2003), p. 145.



PAGE TWO

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Mona Hatoum, *Every Door a Wall*, 2003,
ink on fabric, 277 x 200 cm, courtesy of
Jay Jopling/White Cube, London and
Alexander and Bonin, New York

tennis game, he is enacting a situation, in which one can literally perform the act of crossing (the border) from one site to another, but also experience the power of taking part in determining the cause of events. Even in the most ideologically charged totalitarian regimes and eras, sports – unlike many other areas of life – retained the principle of ‘fair-play’, gentlemanly conduct and equitable conditions. To some degree, Koller installs a neutral playing space; however, he is well aware of the issues of power and exclusion inherent in it. If we know anything for sure about the times we live in, it is that they are times of complex transition, something we could call – paraphrasing the language of Július Koller – ‘a provisional cultural situation’. With this in mind, Koller ‘appropriates’ the entire body of the exhibition and marks it with red-and-white plastic tape. He sees the exhibition as well as the world as a temporary construction site, encouraging us to imagine the latter as a more hospitable place.

In her work, Mona Hatoum reminds us that the issues under discussion are of global and not just regional importance. *Every Door a Wall* (2003) revolves around the issues of exile and migration using the critical example of the border between Mexico and the United States. The work is a curtain that blocks the entrance to a room. Depending on how the creases of the fabric fall, the printed picture reveals parts of a newspaper clipping on illegal immigrants risking their lives to cross the border in search of a better world. Throughout her artistic practice Hatoum conveys an important message that it is routes rather than roots that define our contemporaneity. Her work is exact and acute, generating ‘a subtle violence’⁵ in the consciousness of these times.

Perhaps the subtle use of such poetic metaphors for concrete reality is where contemporary aesthetic practice can most

5. Paloma Porraz Fraser, *Mona Hatoum* (Mexico City: Conaculta/INBA/LAA, 2002), p. 66.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled*
(*Passport*), 1991, white paper (endless
copies), 10,16 cm at ideal height x 60 cm
x 60 cm, Marieluise Hessel Collection
on permanent loan to the Center for
Curatorial Studies, Bard College,
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York,
© The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation,
courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery,
New York, photo: Stephen White





Untitled, 2004

(hanging from a 15m high mast,
a knotted 4m x 7m European Community flag.)

constructively intervene with the world. The exhibition *Cordially Invited* 'speaks' in metaphors and symbolic gestures entangling the topical issues with major political urgency. Through the works in the exhibition we realize the dual nature of hospitality, which suggests that the problems of migration and asylum are far too complex to solely advocate just one of the opposing positions. We do admit that unconditional hospitality in general, and in this political and cultural context in particular, is an unattainable ideal that cannot be practically reached or implemented. But that knowledge should not erase the option of trying out the credible, historically possible alternatives. Through this exhibition, thus, we would like to propose art as a space that is capable of imagining – and actually producing – such alternative models of the relationship between host and guest, which society could possibly adopt. A *cordial invitation*, a warm and open request of a person's company, could then be seen as an instrument for negotiation in the relationship between the

one who invites and the one who accepts the invitation. But more importantly, it might also suggest the possibility of extending the invitation further to those not yet invited.

For his work in *Cordially Invited* Francis Alÿs made a project sketch featuring a flag with no distinctive colour or design (although the actual piece involves an EU flag, in the sketch it is impossible to identify the flag with any national or other allegiance) tied in a knot. The gesture of tying a flag has been made in the recent history of contemporary art by artists such as Hans Haacke or Ulay and Abramović in contexts of political endangerment or social crisis. Despite this being a poetic gesture in itself, its re-enactment by Alÿs seems to challenge Derrida's claim that 'an act of hospitality can only be poetic', and issues an urgent call for having artistic propositions of this kind in mind when making real moral and political choices.

BAK, BASIS VOOR ACTUELE KUNST, UTRECHT

Note: Parallel to the exhibition, the artists' collective Bik van der Pol and Nomads & Residents transform BAK, basis voor actuele kunst into a transit place for appointments, meetings, presentations and information by, from and about the participants and passers-by, focusing on exchange, the (in)ability to move around freely and the possibilities that today's Europe is, willingly or not, creating.

Academic Training Group, 1992–2001, artists' collective: Giedrius Kumetaitis, born 1969, Mindaugas Ratavicius, born 1970, and Simonas Tarvydas, born 1968, live and work in Vilnius. Recent exhibitions (selection): 6th Periferic Biennial, Iasi, 2003; *The Baltic Times*, Contemporary Art from Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia; Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, 2002; *Self-esteem*, Contemporary Art Center (CAC), Vilnius, 2001.

Francis Alÿs, born 1959, lives and works in Mexico City. Recent exhibitions (selection): Wolfsburg Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, 2004; Musée des Beaux Arts, Nantes, 2004; MACBA, Barcelona, 2004; Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, 2003; *Francis Alÿs*, Kunst Werke, Berlin (collaboration with Alejandro González Inárritu), 2002; *When faith can move mountains*, Lima Biennale, Lima, 2002; *The Modern Procession*, Museum of Modern Art Queens, New York, 2002.

Jože Barši, born 1955, lives and works in Ljubljana. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Super!*, DC Arts Center, Washington DC, 2003; *New Works, New Europe*, LIPA, Links for International Promotion of the Arts, Chicago, 2002; *Ausgeträumt...*, Secession, Vienna, 2001; *What, How and For Whom, Social Amnesia and Return of the Repressed*, House of Croatian Association of Artists, Zagreb, 2000.

Otto Berchem, born 1967, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Survivor*, Sleeper Gallery, Edinburgh, 2004; *Planet-B*, Magazin 4 and Bregenzer Kunstverein, Bregenz, 2004; *PR 04 (tribute to the messenger)*, M & M Pryectos, San Juan/Rincon, 2004; *The 16th Minute*, Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam, 2003.

Monica Bonvicini, born 1965, lives and works in Berlin. Recent exhibitions (selection): 3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2004; *Anxiety Attack*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, 2003; *Break it/Fix it*, with Sam Durant, Secession, Vienna, 2003; *Poetic Justice*, 8th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, 2003; *Add Elegance to your Poverty*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, 2002; *Monica Bonvicini*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2002; *Living Inside the Grid*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2002.

Mona Hatoum, born 1952, lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Mona Hatoum*, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 2004; *Made in Mexico*, ICA, Boston, 2004; *The Big Eat*, Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Bielefeld, 2004; *Sculpture*, Alexander and Bonin Gallery, New York, 2002–2003; Documenta XI, Kassel, 2002; *Mona Hatoum*, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, 2001; *The Entire World as a Foreign Land*, Tate Britain, London, 2000.

Július Koller, born 1939, lives and works in Bratislava. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003; *Now What? Dreaming a better world in six parts*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2003; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2003; *Teenagers*, Galerie Display, Prague, 2003; *Ausgeträumt...*, Secession, Vienna, 2001.

Jiří Kovanda, born 1953, lives and works in Prague. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Strategies of Desire*, Museum Kunsthau Baselland, Basel, 2004; *Entrance Free: Art from Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague and Vienna*, The BAWAG Foundation, Vienna, 2004; Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2003; *Parallel Actions*, Austrian Cultural Forum, New York, 2003.

Denisa Lehocká, 1971, lives and works in Bernolákovo and Bratislava. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Passage d'Europe*, Museum of Modern Art, Saint-Etienne, 2004; *Stadt In Sicht*, Künstlerhaus, Vienna, 2003; *Now What? Dreaming a better world in six parts*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2003; *Pass Me the Butterfly*, d.u.m.b.o. arts center, New York, 2002; *Event. Image. Clone*, Tallinn Art Hall, Tallin, 2001.

Mapping Worlds, established by Desmond Spruijt and Oene Bouma in 2004, based in Amsterdam. Mapping Worlds propose maps in which the size of a country is rendered by an indicator rather than by its geography. Recent projects (selection): maps for the Dutch Commission on International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO) on Millennium Development Goals, 2004; maps for Europa Express (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on EU-contribution, organic agriculture and asylum, 2004.

Nomads & Residents is an international forum for visitors in the arts making connections, supporting networks, setting up meetings. Recent projects (selection): *Nomads & Residents Traveling Magazine Table*, Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, 2003; *Art in General*, New York and MIT, Boston, 2004; *Nomads & Residents audio-artwork database, with Radioartemobile (RAM)*, Rome, 2004. Liesbeth Bik, born 1959 and Jos van der Pol, born 1961, live and work in Rotterdam, have been two of the initiators of this forum. Bik van der Pol, the artists' collective, work together since 1995. Recent projects (selection): *Sleep with me*, Rooseum Universal Studios, Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, 2003; *Married by Powers*, project with the collection of FRAC Nord Pas de Calais, Dunkerque,

2002; *TENT*, Rotterdam, 2002; *Catching some air: Library Drawings*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2002.

Roman Ondák, born 1966, lives and works in Bratislava. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Spirit and Opportunity*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2004; *Unbalanced Allocation of Space*, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, 2004; *Socle du Monde 04*, Herning Kunstmuseum, Herning, 2004; *ev+a 2004 'Imagine Limerick'*, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Limerick, 2004; *Densité ±0*, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 2004; *That bodies speak has been known for a long time*, Generali Foundation, Vienna, 2004; *Utopia Station*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003.

Boris Ondreička, 1969, lives and works in Bernolákovo and Bratislava. Recent exhibitions (selection): *One Second | Out of Time*, Magazin 4, Bregenz, AT & KJUBH, Cologne, 2004; *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated By An Artist*, www.e-flux.com, 2003–2004; *Now What? Dreaming a better world in six parts*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2003; *There Is Something You Should Know*, Österreichischen Galerie Oberes Belveder, Vienna, 2000.

Amalia Pica, born 1978, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Final Insomne*, installation, Inter/MEDIO – Artes Visuales, Cordoba, 2003; *Mi casa, tu casa*, Public Space Intervention, Cipolletti, Rio Negro, 2003; *Premio Phillips a juvenes talentos*, Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, 2003; *Fetiches Femeninos*, Arguibel Art, Buenos Aires, 2003.

Wilfriedo Prieto García, born 1978, lives and works in Havana and Valencia. Recent exhibitions (selection): Arco, Madrid, 2004; 8th Havana Biennial, Havana, 2003; *Stretch*, Power Plant, Toronto, 2003; *Double Seduction*, Injuve, Madrid, 2003; 7th Havana Biennial, Havana, 2000.

Marko Raat, born 1973, lives and works in Tallinn. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Trading Places*, Pump House Gallery, London, 2004; *Border Crossing*, Paraplufabriek, Nijmegen, 2004; *It is Hard to Touch the Real*, video festival, Kunstverein München, Munich, 2003; *Fundamentalisms of the New Order*, Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall, Copenhagen, 2002; *Baltic Babel*, Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö, 2002.

Jeroen de Rijke, born 1970 and Willem de Rooij, born 1969, live and work in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Time Zones: Recent film and video*, Tate Modern, London, 2004;

Busan Biennale, Busan, 2004; Sydney Biennale, Sydney, 2004; *De Rijke / De Rooij*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, 2003; The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 2003; *Studio*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2003; *Prosessi*, Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA, Helsinki, 2003; *The Point of Departure*, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne, 2002; ICA, London, 2002.

Ene-Liis Semper, born 1969, lives and works in Tallinn. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Faster than History: Contemporary Perspectives on the Future of Art in the Baltic Countries, Finland, and Russia*, Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA, Helsinki, 2004; *Filling Up/Spilling Out*, The Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art, Palm Beach, 2004; *Ene-Liis Semper: Four Works*, Liane and Danny Taran Gallery, Quebec, 2003; *The Baltic Times*, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, 2002.

Monika Sosnowska, born 1972, lives and works in Warsaw. Recent exhibitions (selection): The Modern Institute, Glasgow, 2004; *Poetic Justice*, 8th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, 2003; *Dreams and Conflicts: the Dictatorship of the Viewer*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003; *Architectures of Gender*, Sculpture Center, New York, 2003; *Manifesta 4*, Frankfurt/Main, 2002.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, 1957–1996, lived and worked in Guaimaro and Miami. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Here is Elsewhere*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2003–2004; *Open Ends*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2001; Museum moderner Kunst/Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, 1998; *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Untitled*, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York, 1997; *Gift and just a few hidden desires*, Miami Art Museum, Miami, 1997; *Projects 34: Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1992.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

EPISODE 4

WITTE DE WITH, CENTER FOR
CONTEMPORARY ART, ROTTERDAM

7 NOVEMBER 2004-

9 JANUARY 2005

A PROJECT BY PETER FRIEDL
CURATOR: CATHERINE DAVID



Ayia Napa, 2004



Gazimağusa, Dr. Fazil Küçük Gençlik Sitesi, 2004



Galata, 2004



Girne, Barış Parki, 2004



Güzelyurt, Ecevit Caddesi, 2004

In the context of *Who if not we should at least try to imagine the future of all this? 7 episodes on (ex)changing Europe*, Witte de With focuses on the two Mediterranean islands joining the 'new' European Union: Cyprus and Malta.

Peter Friedl was invited to respond to the project's framework and to conceptualize the basis for a much needed critique by the project's position towards the so-called guests: Who is welcoming whom and to what? When hearing that Cyprus is the new border of Europe, one would like to add: Cyprus is *divided* by the new border of Europe. The dead end to which the rejection of the Annan plan referendum on Cypriot unification lead has resulted in the transformation of the buffer zone separating the Greek-Cypriot south from the Turkish Cypriot north into an official EU frontier.

Peter Friedl's *Playgrounds (Cyprus)* is the result of documentary field research. The photographs document a very specific

historical situation; thus the captions – being part of the visual work itself – cite the (official) names of streets, parks, cities and villages at a moment when the island and its capital are still divided.

Within the next months, the project *Out of the Shadows* will be developed, including different media, ranging from documentary photography to film, discussions and Greek and Turkish shadow-theatre. The project aims at exploring the complex political and social-historical situations in contemporary Europe through the cultural practices they generate.

CATHERINE DAVID AND CHRISTOPHE CATSAROS



Kalkauli, 2004

AN IRONIC RESULT IN CYPRUS

BY REBECCA BRYANT

The 24 April 2004 referendum on a plan to reunite Cyprus marks a turning point in the island's history. While 65 percent of Turkish Cypriots voted in favour of the plan, Greek Cypriots rejected it by a resounding majority of 76 percent. European observers were shocked by the anti-democratic conduct of the campaign in the Greek Cypriot south. The negotiator in charge of the Republic of Cyprus' European Union accession went so far as to confess that he 'felt duped'. Greek Cypriots rallied around a leader known for his extreme nationalism and unwillingness to compromise. Turkish Cypriots, in contrast, cast aside their equally rejectionist leader and campaigned vocally in support of the plan. But while many observers were taken aback by this turn of events, it is in fact a sadly logical outcome of the ideologies and institutions that have shaped much of the island's recent history.

THE 'SATANIC' PLAN

Cyprus has been divided and trapped in a political stalemate for 30 years, ever since Turkish troops landed in the island in 1974 in response to a Greek-sponsored coup aimed at annexing the island to Greece. Only when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan laid a reunification plan on the negotiating table in November 2002 were hopes revived that the Cyprus problem would be resolved. Both European Union and UN officials wished to see a settlement before 1 May, when the Republic of Cyprus was set to join the EU. Despite the declaration in 1983 of a supposedly sovereign Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, only the Greek-governed Republic is internationally recognized, and it was to join the EU as the representative government of the entire island. Without a settlement, the Turkish troops now stationed in the north of Cyprus would become occupiers of EU soil.

The Annan Plan called for a loose federation under an umbrella government that would



Larnaka, Leoforos Grigori Afxentiou, 2004

have restricted powers over two constituent states generally defined along ethnic lines. The border would have followed the current ceasefire line, though the line would have been adjusted in order to give the Greek Cypriot constituent state certain territories that formerly had large Greek populations. The Turkish Cypriots currently living in those areas would have been relocated to newly built settlements in the Turkish constituent state. All property claims resulting from the division of the island would have been resolved, either through restitution or compensation. The state of uncertainty and isolation in which Turkish Cypriots have lived for 30 years would have been replaced by citizenship in an EU member state.

When Annan first presented his plan, many in Cyprus complained that the document contained too many blank pages – the areas to be worked out in negotiations. Since that time, diplomatic talks and behind-the-scenes wrangling between Turkish and Greek Cypriot bureaucrats resulted in the

completion of a 9,000-page document that went before the Cypriot people on April 24. All blanks were filled, down to the design of the new confederation's flag and the approval of a national anthem (without words, allowing the bureaucrats to avoid choosing Greek or Turkish lyrics). Many of the thousands of pages simply listed the rules and regulations that would govern the branches of the new government, the United Cyprus Republic. But for those who wished to undermine the plan, its very obesity became a stumbling block. Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos complained of the 'unworkability' of the plan, and few were sufficiently well-versed in its details to argue with him. Long-time Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş complained that no one could have the time to study a 9,000-page document before the referendum.

But even Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan commented that Denktaş's objections were disingenuous. Turkish Cypriots were in fact well-prepared to vote



Larnaka, Odos Adonidos, 2004

on the plan. Beginning with the 2002 announcement, Turkish Cypriots began a long, hard struggle to change their government, to gain the support of Turkey and to educate the electorate. For many voters, the referendum's passage would have meant displacement, as land where Turkish Cypriot refugees now live would have been given to the south. But even in those districts where thousands of Turkish Cypriots would have been relocated, the plan was approved with a resounding majority, for it would have meant a new state of certainty about the future.

In contrast, Greek Cypriots certain of their own future as the wealthiest of the new EU member states spent little time discussing the plan. Up until the day of the referendum, polls showed that almost 70 percent of Greek Cypriots felt that they did not understand it, especially the complicated procedures for the return of refugees and restitution of property. The plan was presented to them in bits of propaganda and in the diatribes of the

church, many of whose leaders condemned the plan as 'satanic' and threatened their flocks with damnation if they voted in favor. The broadcast media put a heavily negative spin on the plan, and leading EU diplomats complained that they had not been allowed to explain their own views on the plan. Since Papadopoulos owns 33 percent shares of the three largest private television stations in the south, the rough media treatment of the plan is not surprising.

In an exit poll, more than 70 percent of Greek Cypriots who rejected the plan said that their reason was 'security'. The security fear, repeatedly raised in the media, emerged over Turkey's right as a guarantor power to intervene to restore constitutional order in the event of a political collapse, a right that Greek Cypriots and much of the world agree Turkey abused when it stayed in the island after intervening in 1974. Turkey, along with Greece and Great Britain, gained that right in the 1960 Zurich Agreement that secured Cyprus' independence; it would have



Latsi, 2004

retained the right under the Annan Plan. But the Zurich Agreement was not sent to referendum, and the question of approving Turkey's guarantor status became a point of honour among Greek Cypriots prior to the referendum. As numerous Greek Cypriots put it, echoing their party leaders: 'In Zurich, they forced Turkey on us. Now they want us to put our signature on it?'

TABLES TURNED

Hence, it should not be surprising that the referendum results were lopsided. In response, the EU and US are contemplating ways to 'reward' the north for its cooperation. That reward has already included an easing of the embargo against the export of northern Cypriot goods, and it may soon mean direct flights into the north of the island, which could bring a dramatic increase in tourism. As a reward for the cooperation of the Turkish government in securing a Turkish Cypriot 'yes', the EU will not consider Turkey's troops to be in occupation of EU soil. Indeed, it seems that the ceasefire line that

divides the island will now mark the boundary of Europe.

This development was heralded as a triumph of Turkish diplomacy, and Denktash, along with his right-wing nationalist supporters in Turkey, breathed a sigh of relief. Before the referendum, Denktash had campaigned against the plan and promised that a 'yes' vote would mean his withdrawal from politics. But as soon as the outcome was announced, Denktash proclaimed it a victory, saying that he had wanted this result and that he would not resign. Although Turkish Cypriots who had campaigned in favour of the plan celebrated their 'victory' throughout the night, by the next morning the wariness had already set in. What was in store for them now? What would the Republic of Cyprus do after it joined the European Union on 1 May? Even more importantly, could there be any other efforts after this?

Turkish Cypriots are not only wary, but also weary. After a long campaign in which



Lefke, Lokman Sokeçi, 2004

politicians and civil society organizations canvassed villages and debated the plan in coffee shops, there is a general sense that there can be no more. This is in direct opposition to the proclamation by Greek Cypriot Communist leader Dimitris Christofyas that 'our no vote was intended to cement a yes'. While Greek Cypriots talked of the referendum as only one step toward reunification, for Turkish Cypriots and much of the international community the referendum was the final step that would determine the future of the island. The placard held by one of the flood of celebrants in the streets of north Nicosia expressed the sentiment concisely: '65 Percent Yes/Solution, 75 Percent No/Division'. Division, or *taksim* in Turkish, had long been Denktash's 'solution' to the Cyprus problem. It was no wonder, then, that crowds not only shouted 'Denktash resign', but also 'Denktash to the south'. Denktash was known for telling his critics that they should 'go to the south', where they would presumably find persons of like mind. Now, it seems, the tables are turned.

REIGN OF DENKTASHOPOULOS

In separate speeches preceding the election, both Denktash and Papadopoulos caused something of a stir with their tearful deliveries. Denktash cried before a meeting of nationalists in Bursa, Turkey; Papadopoulos cried asking the Greek Cypriot community to vote no. But in those last weeks, I saw many people cry. A friend who is a long-time Communist party member cried on the day before the referendum for what he feared would be the results. A Turkish Cypriot friend cried after she cast her vote in favour of the plan, wondering if she had done the right thing. The referendum was a period of high emotional anxiety, as average people felt torn between their desire to see a reunited island and their uncertainties.

Denktash and Papadopoulos were no doubt equally sincere in their own tears, but they cried for fear of what they might lose. Both leaders have been players of Cyprus' political games for more than 40 years. In late



Lefkoşa, 10 Yil Parkı, 2004

1963, Denktas crossed from Turkey in a small motor boat and landed in the northwest village of Kokkina/Erenkoy, bringing guns and the intention to lead the defence of the village enclave, which was then under attack by Greek Cypriot nationalists. An article published in the Politis newspaper during the recent negotiations showed a photograph of Papadopoulos early in 1963, inspecting machine guns that he received from Greece. Stories have long circulated in the island of exchanges of weapons, money and favours between the Greek and Turkish nationalist groups that were then in conflict. All this history helps to explain an ironic remark by a Turkish Cypriot NGO leader at a recent rally; those opposed to the plan, he said, had fallen for the strategy of 'Denktashopoulos'.

Denktash has recently been discredited both in the Turkish Cypriot community and in Turkey. When he walked away from negotiations over the Annan Plan in early 2003, he spurred tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots to pour into the streets in protest.

On April 23 of that year, Denktash responded to the protests by opening the ceasefire line that had divided the island for almost 30 years. Refugees returning to their old homes and those curious to see the long forbidden flooded across the line. The tenor of Cypriot politics completely changed. Even so, Denktash's party received a small portion of the vote in the December 2003 elections and returned only as part of a new coalition government. Denktash remains president, but his prime minister – his long-time opponent, Mehmet Ali Talat – is now the interlocutor for the EU, the US and the UN. Denktash's stubborn insistence on retaining power has caused him a crisis of legitimacy even in Turkey, where he was long regarded as a hero.

When Turkey's Justice and Development Party came to power in November 2002, it was clear that the fate of Cyprus would change. Party leaders dropped hints that Cyprus was a problem that needed to be solved, because their main goal was entry



Lefkoşa, Atatürk Kültür Parki, 2004

into the EU. The JDP approach contrasted deeply with the uncompromising stance of previous governments, which had earned the support of the Turkish military but the ire of Europe. In January 2004, Erdogan announced that the military was in agreement with his strategy to restart negotiations, even though an agreement would mean a gradual withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island. As was repeated again and again in the Turkish press, it would not be a good thing for Turkey to have to sit across the EU negotiating table from a Cyprus represented only by Greek Cypriots.

Heading into the referendum, Denktash and key leaders of the JDP, including Erdogan, commenced a battle of words. After Denktash delivered his tearful address in Bursa, Erdogan asked, 'Why do you come to Turkey and talk to some marginal groups? Go back and talk in Cyprus'. The implication was that Denktash had lost legitimacy among Turkish Cypriots and was attempting – as he had done so often in the past – to stir up

hardliners in Turkey. Leaders of ultra-right Turkish parties did in fact arrive in the island to campaign in the week before the referendum. Not coincidentally, at the same time Cypriot members of the Gray Wolves, a violently fascist-nationalist organization, called on Turkish members to come to the island, where they were responsible for violence and threats against supporters of the Annan Plan. In the island itself, these efforts were seen as the agonies of a dying regime. The hardliners did not dampen the enthusiasm of the thousands who turned out in the main squares of Nicosia to sing and shout in celebration of their 'victory' when a 'yes' vote became clear. Denktash, then, has become a marginalised leader who has lost even the support of the state that had for so long kept him in power.

DISINGENUOUS COMPLAINTS

Tassos Papadopoulos, on the other hand, is continuing his rise from the political ashes. Papadopoulos is a lawyer known for his past involvement in anti-Turkish activities, and,



Lefkoşa, Dr. Fazil Küçük Parki, 2004

more recently, for helping Slobodan Milosevic launder several billion dollars that fueled the war in Bosnia. In 2003, he was voted into power with the surprising support of the Communist party, AKEL. During the election campaign, Papadopoulos' stance on the Annan Plan was contradictory. He expressed support for it at the same time that he said he would never sign a plan that would not return Kyrenia, one of the disputed territories now in northern Cyprus. AKEL, which suffered at the hands of nationalists in the 1950s and 1960s, has long commanded a large following in the island, though not large enough to put them in power. By backing Papadopoulos, AKEL put itself into the government, but at the expense of values it has long supported: cooperation with Turkish Cypriots, reintegration and reconciliation. Even AKEL, the only party that can claim a bicomunal heritage, was forced to make its official stance a 'no' to the Annan Plan.

In his tearful speech, Papadopoulos stressed three main objections to the Annan Plan.

It gave in to Turkey's interests, he claimed, because it kept a symbolic number of troops in the island (650 Turkish and 900 Greek), and it retained Turkey's right as a guarantor power. It legitimated occupation and division because it allowed most of the Turkish settlers in the north to remain, did not allow the right of return to all refugees and reduced the Republic of Cyprus to a constituent state. The third point was a conclusion drawn from the first two objections: if the Republic is reduced to a constituent state, and Turkey still has troops in the island, then Greek Cypriots must trust Turkey to fulfil its promises. Instead, he argued, Greek Cypriots should hold out for the better plan that they would be able to negotiate after EU entry, and they should not believe the threats of foreign powers.

These three points were reiterated by Greek Cypriots justifying their own opposition. Supporters of the plan, including EU and UN negotiators, were frustrated by what they saw as the disingenuousness of



Lefkosia, Leoforos Athinas, 2004

Papadopoulos' complaints. For instance, it was always known and accepted that a federation would mean that Greek Cypriots would become part of a constituent state – why the objection now? Also, while not all refugees had the absolute right of return, all refugees did have the right to use of one third of their property, meaning that those who could not return could keep a summer house and spend weekends there. The two living former presidents of the Republic, Glafkos Clerides and George Vassiliou, both of whom had long negotiated within similar frameworks, came out in favour of the Annan Plan. But their efforts bore no fruit.

Indeed, much of the atmosphere in advance of the referendum was defiant. In an open letter to Papadopoulos on the eve of the third stage of the negotiations, the right-wing newspaper *Simerini* claimed that 'if they pressure you and if you submit, the judgment of history will be implacable.... Because you will be the first Greek who with your signature dissolves and surrenders your

homeland to our enemy, without a military defeat'. Such views of Greek honour ultimately triumphed.

The irony is that Greek Cypriot opposition to the plan appears to present the danger of realizing the goal of their long-time enemy, Rauf Denktash, who has for decades demanded that the international community accept the de facto partition of the island. For once, as the Turkish press delighted in pointing out, it is not Turkey but the Greek Cypriots who appear intransigent. A further irony is that despite oppression and censorship, Turkish Cypriots have created a lively debate around their own future and the future of the island, while the supposedly free and democratic Republic is now haunted by accusations of censorship and intimidation. How did things reach this point?

INSTITUTIONS OF IDEOLOGY

In Greek Cypriot rhetoric, the northern part of Cyprus is referred to as 'the occupied



Lefkosia, Leoforos Evgenias kai Antoniou Theodotou, 2004

WITTE DE WITH, CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, ROTTERDAM

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areas', while the south constitutes the 'free zone'. A Turkish Cypriot friend whose opposition to Denktash led her to move several years ago to the south has long worked for reconciliation and the reunification of the island. But even she, on the night of the referendum, joked that perhaps now she should move to the 'free zone', by which she meant the north. Her remark succinctly expressed the general sense that Turkish Cypriots have engaged in and won a political battle that their Greek Cypriot compatriots have yet to contemplate – a battle against the oppressive forces of their own regime.

For 30 years, the Republic of Cyprus has been the recognized government of the island, while the government of the north is always referred to as a 'pseudo-state' with 'so-called' ministers and a 'so-called' president. The Republic has maintained various state fantasies that shape popular views of the Cyprus problem. Refugees from the north vote in national elections as though

they still live in their former villages, and the parliament is made up of representatives who supposedly represent areas now under Turkish control. These same refugees vote into office mayors of their towns and villages. The mayors are viewed as the 'real' and the 'legitimate' mayors, despite the fact that they have no access to the municipalities and so do nothing besides crank out propaganda and organize outings for elderly refugees. In the meantime, the Turkish Cypriot mayors who actually manage the towns and villages are 'so-called' mayors who are part of the 'pseudo-state'.

In the meantime, Turkish Cypriots have been keenly aware of the tenuousness of their situation. Not only have they lived under an embargo, but they carry an unrecognized passport and so have been forced to obtain passports from either Turkey or the Republic, which still counts them among its citizens. With the Republic's acceptance to the EU, many Turkish Cypriots chose the latter option; now many wonder what will happen



Lefkosia, Leoforos Stasinou, 2004

to those passports if the Republic is no longer the sole government of the island. Many Turkish Cypriots were also resettled after 1974 in Greek Cypriot houses, often in areas that they knew might eventually be returned. In such areas, they were often reluctant to invest in the maintenance of houses and property, because they never knew when they might have to leave. As a friend commented, 'We lived a false life in a made-up state, and now we have to face the consequences'.

While Turkish Cypriots have lived the quotidian realities of a 'made-up state', Greek Cypriots have lived the quotidian fantasies of recognition. Moreover, Greek Cypriot politics has long been centralized and party-oriented, leading to a general malaise. At the start of the last round of negotiations, several thousand Turkish Cypriots gathered spontaneously in one of Nicosia's central squares to express their support of a settlement. Such meetings have become common in the north, an expression

of a newfound capacity for local democracy. Even at the time, they repeated the question, 'Why is nothing happening on the Greek side?' But Turkish Cypriots knew very well that nothing was happening because Greek Cypriots felt secure in their advantage of wealth, recognition and imminent entry into the EU.

The initial wave of enthusiasm after the opening of the ceasefire line in 2003 was followed by the onset of something worse than malaise: an unwillingness to converse, even when there was a chance. At a March meeting of almost 4,000 refugees from Kyrenia, organizers who vilified the plan claimed to want 'a just solution for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots', but had invited no Turkish Cypriots to the meeting. Bicomunal meetings or initiatives are sparsely attended by Greek Cypriots. While Turkish Cypriots arrive at meetings eager to discuss and negotiate the future of education in the island or health initiatives, Greek Cypriots have been more reticent. This



Lemesos, Leoforos Griva Digeni, 2004

willingness to leave politics to the politicians has meant a general wariness about a plan that depended on the good will of the people for its workability. Those who favoured the plan saw it as a start, something to be worked on and improved as Cypriots built mutual trust. But building that trust requires work, and work requires motivation. For many, it was not clear what their motivation might be.

It is no wonder, then, that Greek Cypriot politicians who claim, in a naively patronizing way, that they will negotiate a better solution 'for both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots' still have an audience in the south. For 30 years, Greek Cypriots have claimed to speak for their Turkish Cypriot compatriots, who lived in an unrecognized state and were portrayed in the media of the south as silent prisoners of an illegal regime. Such fantasies die hard, and only now are Greek Cypriots beginning to recognize that their Turkish compatriots have political voices of their own. It is only when those voices are heard in the south, and real dialogue emerges,

that there can be any hope of reconciliation in the island.

Rebecca Bryant was most recently visiting Assistant Professor of anthropology at Cornell University and is currently conducting research on place and memory in Cyprus. Her book, *Imagining the Modern: The Cultures of Nationalism in Cyprus* was published by I.B. Tauris Publishers in 2004. This article appeared in *Middle East Report Online (MERO)* on 12 May 2004 <<http://www.merip.org/mero/mero051204.html>> and appears here courtesy of the author and *Middle East Report*.



Lemesos, Playplanet, 2004

Peter Friedl, born 1960, lives and works *in situ*. Recent exhibitions and projects (selection): *Peter Friedl*, Sara Meltzer Gallery, New York, 2004; *Documentary 'Fictions'*, CaixaForum, Fundació la Caixa, Barcelona, 2004; 3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2004; *Four or Five Roses*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main, 2004; *Adorno*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main, 2003; *badly organized*, Galerie Hohenlohe & Kalb, Vienna, 2003; *The Squared Circle*, Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, 2003; *Formen der Organisation*, Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg, Lüneburg, 2003.



Pafos, Christou Galatopoulou, 2004



Troodos, Visitor Centre, 2004



Pile, 2004



Yeşilyurt, Şeker Sokak, 2004

**SAFETY
AND PEACE!
ORDER AND
FREEDOM!**

EPISODE 5

MODERNA GALERIJA (MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART), LJUBLJANA

8 NOVEMBER-

5 DECEMBER 2004

CURATOR: IGOR ZABEL

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS: ATELIER

VAN LIESHOUT, JOOST CONIJN,

JOB KOELEWIJN, JOHN KÖRMELING,

MARIA PASK AND EDWIN ZWAKMAN

Atelier Van Lieshout, *The Disciplinator (Dinner)*, 2003, watercolour on paper, courtesy of AVL, photo: AVL

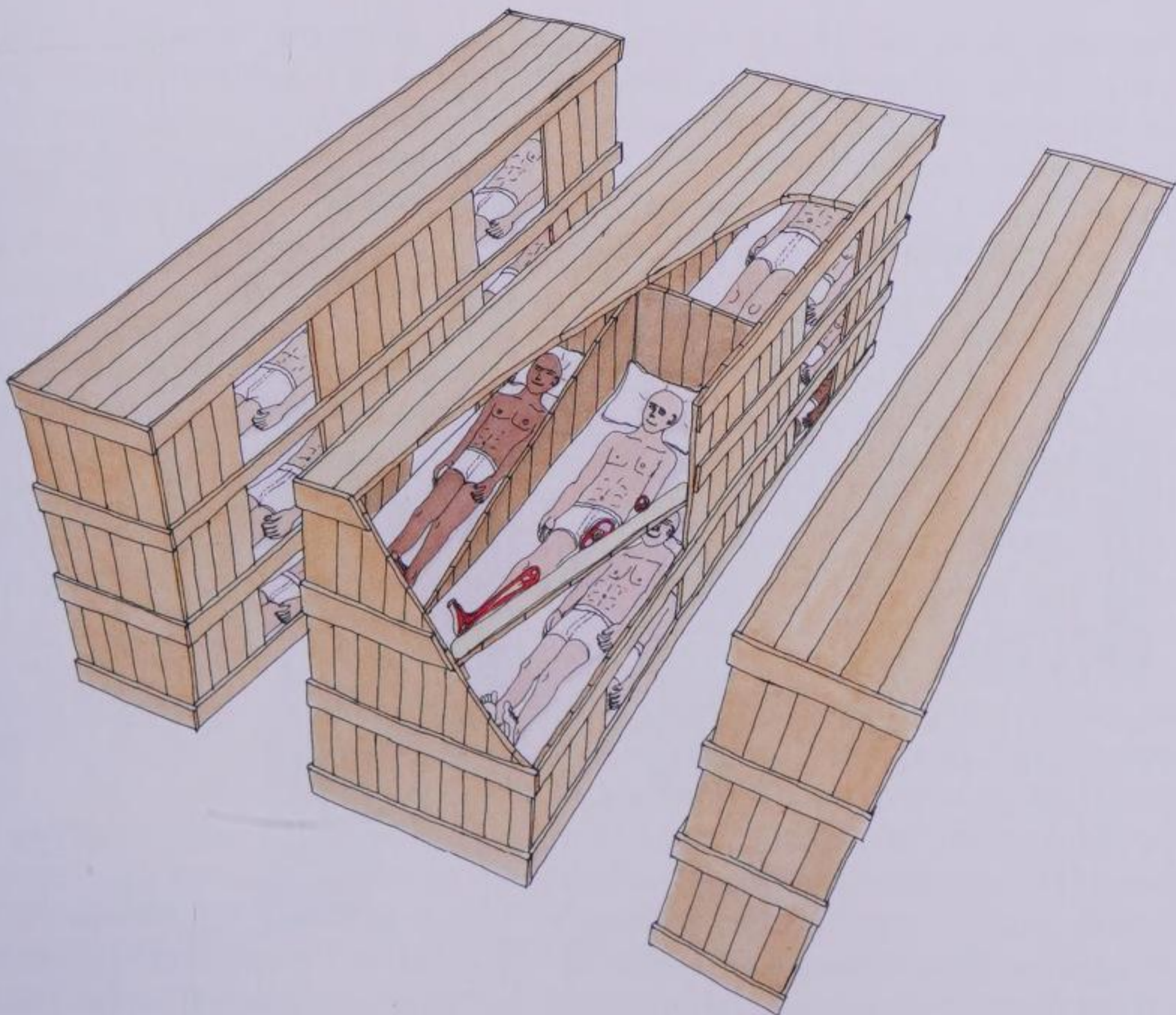
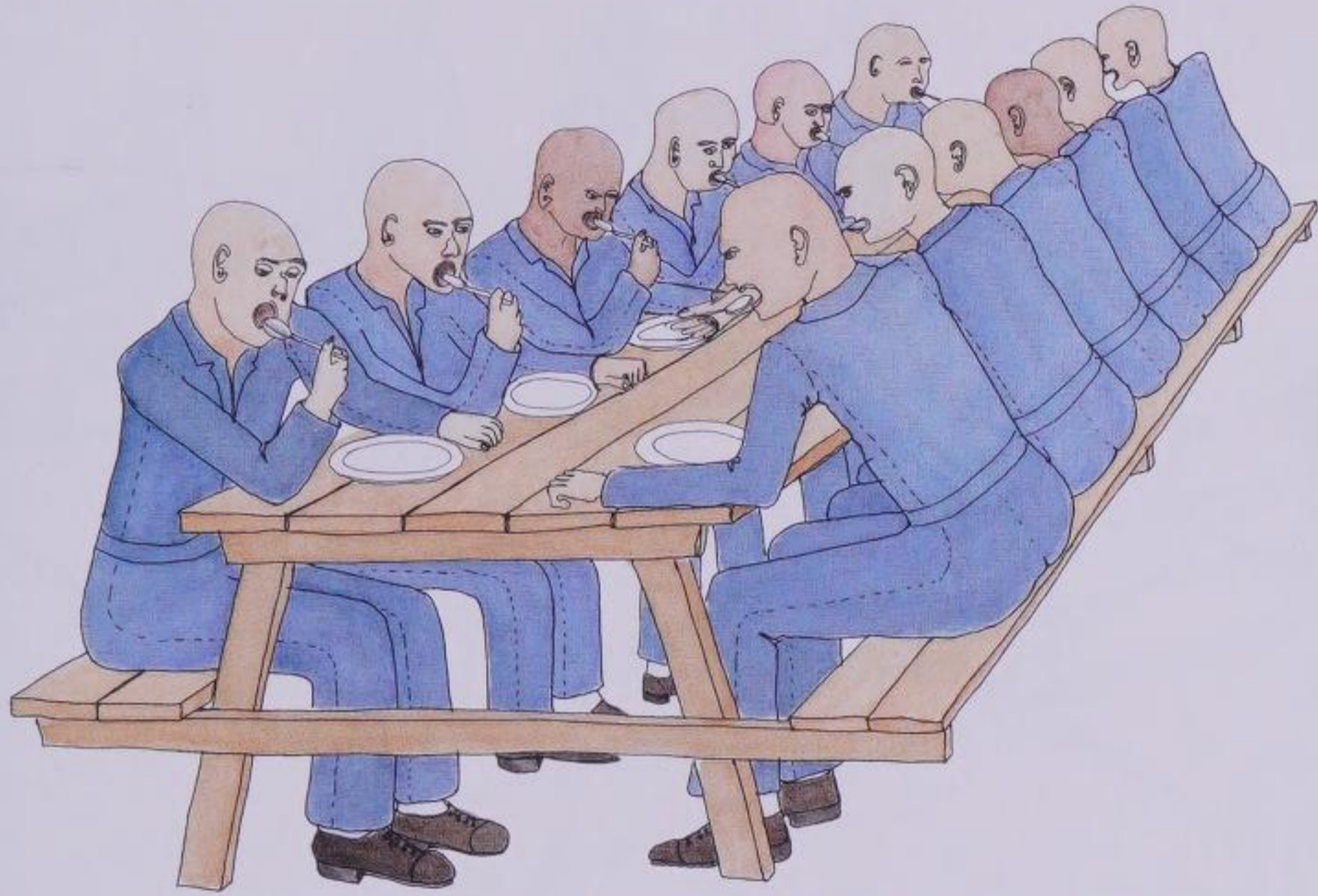
Atelier Van Lieshout, *The Disciplinator (Bunk Beds)*, 2003, watercolour on paper, courtesy of AVL, photo: AVL

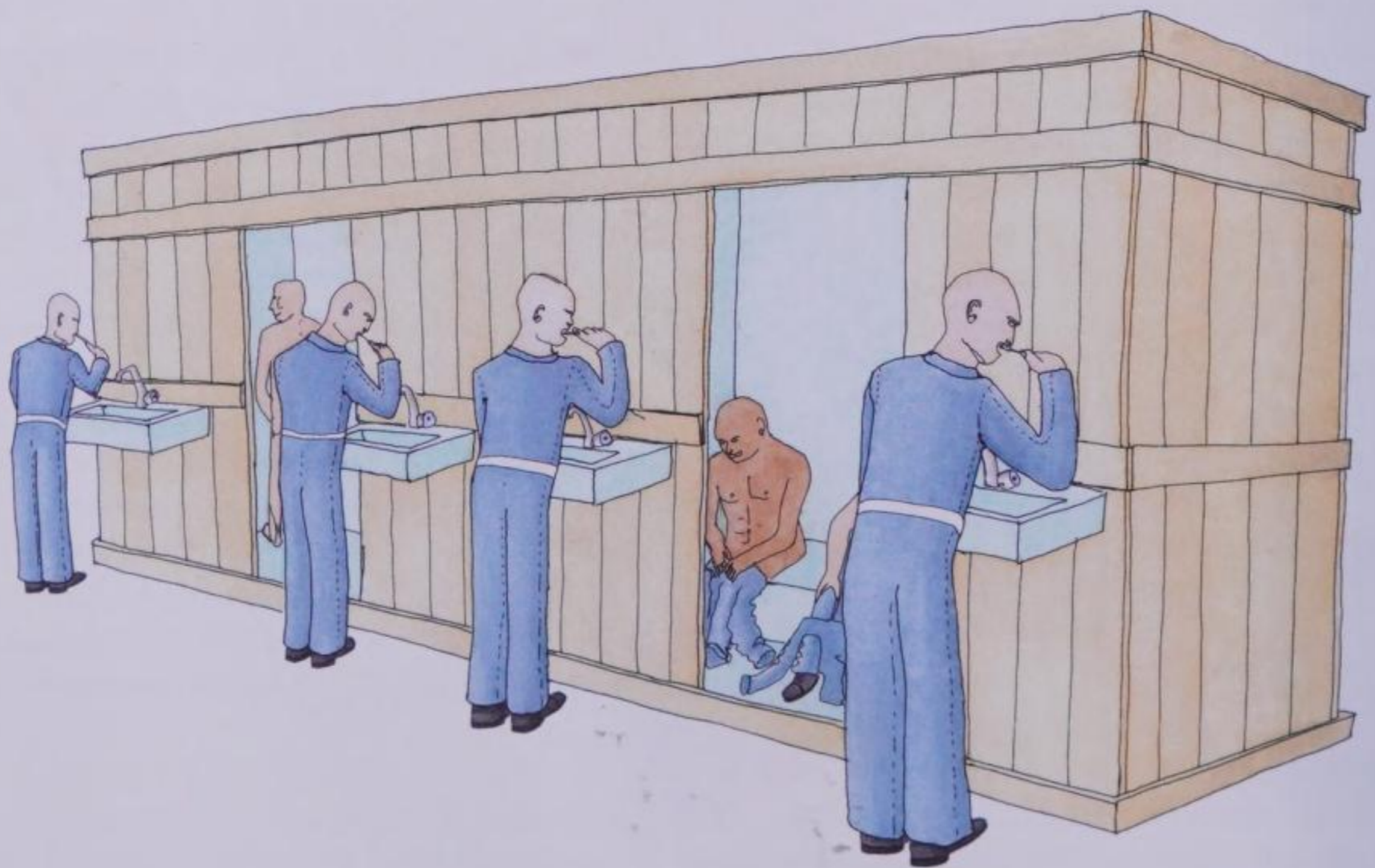
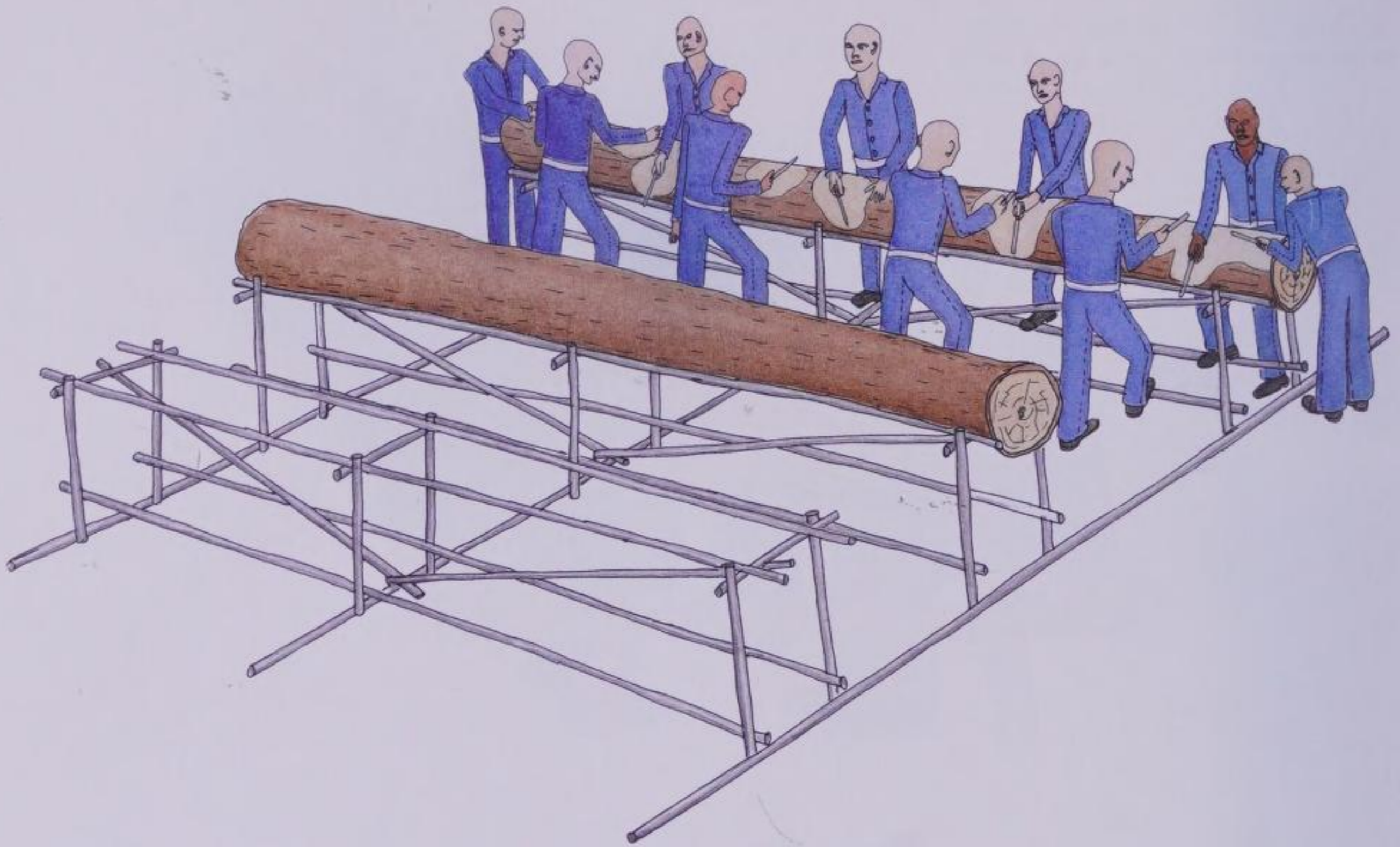
The exclamation 'Safety and peace! Order and freedom!' is taken from the first scene of Goethe's *Egmont*. The scene represents a public event where citizens and soldiers take part. It is constructed as a series of toasts and comments on them, thus giving the beholder insight into the historical and social condition in which the plot of the play will take place, and a description of some of its main protagonists. But the series of toasts comes to the conclusion with the 'citizens' toast' to which all present on the stage join in a sort of a chant, 'Safety and peace! Order and freedom!'. Immediately after that, the scene changes, introducing the Regent – Duchess of Parma – and Machiavel, and exposing plans and aims that will endanger severely the very ideals so wholeheartedly celebrated by the citizens.

Goethe's precise use of compositional means gave a particularly important position to the 'citizens' toast'. In it, he summarized the idea of a good society and ideals that guide the citizens as a collective historical subject –

opposed to such ideas as greed for power and wealth or religious intolerance. Nevertheless, we should also notice another aspect. While the citizens celebrate order, peace, safety and freedom, the actual situation seems rather uncertain. These values were violated severely not long ago, and it soon becomes clear that they will, most probably, be violated even more in the near future. The real background of the ideals of social (and thus personal) safety, peace, order and freedom is a constant presence (or, at the best, threat) of danger, violence, disorder and subordination. The celebration of the good society in the 'citizens' toast' is therefore essentially utopian, too.

Utopia as a literary genre involves the depiction of an ideal, well-ordered and just society (very often, social perfection and harmony is visually expressed in the beauty and perfect forms of the described cities and countries). And yet, such perfect societies do not exist in reality, as it is clear from the very





Atelier Van Lieshout, *The Disciplinator (Lumber)*, 2003, watercolour on paper, courtesy of AVL, photo: AVL

Atelier Van Lieshout, *The Disciplinator (Bathroom)*, 2003, watercolour on paper, courtesy of AVL, photo: AVL

word 'utopia' (i.e. 'non-place' or 'non-existing-place'). The other sides of the visions of these non-existent ideal societies are the existing, non-ideal ones with their intolerable conditions. Thus the citizens, in their toast, celebrate not the society they live in, but the ideal they would like to achieve. This does not mean that visions of a good society are just illusions and that the citizens in their celebration are merely dreaming. Such ideas can be actual, practical aims of social actions in and against circumstances that are intolerable; they can even be the basis for a radical transformation of the social order.

One could indeed say that the ideals of a well-organized, just, harmonious and free society that guarantees its members peace, order, safety and freedom is essential not only for modern ideas about society but for the very foundations of the modern spirit in general. Modernity is connected to the ideas of a rational, systematically ordered knowledge, of a well-planned and effective

production, of an effective management of space and resources, of a rationally organized and balanced social structure, and, eventually, of a balanced world offering to everyone possibilities for a good and meaningful life. It aims at the development of rational approaches and procedures that would guarantee the effective functioning of the society in all its aspects, such as politics, economy, knowledge, etc., as well as a (more or less) just distribution of the society's wealth. In actual historical development, we can follow a series of attempts to radically re-structure the social order and to introduce and develop such social structures. The events to which Goethe refers in his *Egmont* – leading to the uprising in the Netherlands and formation of a state that was essentially different, one could perhaps say, essentially more modern, from the former master state, the Spanish Kingdom – are an early and important case in this sequence. Just as the ideals, expressed in the 'citizens' toast', represented an essential driving force in these events, the revolutions in France,



America, Germany, Russia and elsewhere were essentially attempts to create modern, effective and just societies.

This, however, does not mean that the modern project is a harmonious, simple and constant progress towards the 'good society'. The attempts at social modernization, especially revolutions, can be highly ambiguous. While revolutions aim at constructing new, rational and total social systems, they often tend to become repressive and nihilistic towards the existing world in the name of the future perfect society. There is often only a step from a radical attempt to introduce an egalitarian and democratic society to a totalitarian system. An effective, well-managed and well-controlled society can severely limit the freedom of individuals or special groups, totally subordinating all citizens to the ideal social patterns (or to effective production and exploitation). And even in relatively free and socially effective societies, the harmonious visions often hide and repress the reality of

conflicts that are essential for modern world: antagonisms based on the class differences, (post)colonial power relations, gender differences, etc., and above all the difference between those in possession of power and wealth and those deprived of them. And yet, I believe that the realization of the contradictory nature of modernity should not lead one into forgetting and discarding the modernist idea of achieving a just and meaningful world.

The Netherlands is probably one of those few countries that came very close to the modern idea of a balanced society, enabling both a high level of social organization and care and a high level of personal freedom. It seems that the social ideals, celebrated (but not yet really enjoyed) by the sixteenth-century citizens in Goethe's play, became a social reality some centuries later. But, if we look at art in the Netherlands that deals in a more or less immediate way with society and individual's position in it, we see that such works often formulate doubts, conflicts and criticisms.



Utopian visions of the future perfect societies often predicted the role of art in such societies. While such societies would be, in their organization as well as in their visual appearance, works of art themselves, it comes as no surprise that art would also have the function of decoration, but also as a sign of the perfect structure of the society and a reminder of it. Here, however, artists express feelings such as uncanniness, fear, conflict and irony rather than any admiration for the social balance. They uncover the hidden contradictions and threats in the society rather than celebrate its perfection.

Keeping this in mind, we could perhaps notice an interesting and important aspect in the above-quoted 'citizens' toast'. At first glance, the ideals expressed in it seem to be harmonious and convergent; the balanced parallelisms used by the poet accentuate this harmony even more. And yet, if we think about the actual relations between these four social ideals we can see that they are not necessarily without contradictions. Each of

them could limit or cancel the others. Too much freedom would put in danger order, peace and safety; too much order or safety could mean no freedom or indeed no peace, etc.. I believe that the balance of the literary form expresses a belief in the actual social balance of these values that limit each other, preventing them from developing into dangerous extremes that would put in danger and eventually destroy the good society. Here, the social balance is understood as equilibrium between different tendencies that represent limitations to each other, connecting themselves in a complex, harmonious system of rights, prohibitions, obligations and responsibilities. In such a system, the citizens themselves are supposed to be balanced and harmonious personalities, developing their personal talents and abilities in favour of the society and themselves. Social balance was supposed to imply not only social stability, but also personal harmony of the citizens. 'Peace' is therefore not only absence of war and violent social conflicts, but also peace in the minds of the citizens.





Yet artists who do work in one of the few societies that could indeed be described as 'good' display anything but such a peaceful and calm attitude. A possible answer to this apparent paradox is that society, even if it is in fact quite balanced and effective, is not static. The balance in it is not achieved by any equilibrium of social principles and values, but is a result of constant conflicts and contradictions. Only a permanent process of negotiation, of actions and reactions, interventions and resistances, can keep such society in a relative balance. These dynamic processes do not develop only within the society and between the antagonistic groups in it; they also involve the relation of the society and its surroundings and contexts, from the geopolitical situation in a smaller region to the political and economic world systems. (To take a characteristic example: sometimes a society somehow 'exports' its antagonisms. A relatively egalitarian and just society is therefore sometimes made possible by the big differences between the world's rich and

poor.) The society, therefore, is experienced as a pulsation of conflicts and confrontations, as a permanent personal and public state of tension and contradiction, as something incomplete and fragmentary, or even as a series of crises.

What seems a basic contradiction in such a society is the dualism of social organization on one side and personal freedom on the other. Goethe's toast included freedom in an ordered pattern of social ideals, as if it was easily compatible with them. Contemporary artists, on the other hand, experience a fundamental conflict between the aim for freedom and a strong social structure. Society cannot aim to be just, it cannot take care of different, marginalised social groups of citizens and, above all, cannot make sure that the social wealth is distributed in a more or less just way without developing a firm system of institutions, services and regulations suitable for all. But this high level of regulation and organization of the society can be, on the other hand, experienced as a

Maria Pask, *Naturist Campsite*, 2001,
performance, courtesy of the artist



threat to the personal freedom and initiative of the individual. People who live in a well-organized and regulated society can feel that their lives are pre-determined and regulated in details and that they lack openness, freedom, possibilities to be really creative, but also possibilities to take important decisions and accept responsibilities for them.

To say that artists offer important insights into the structure and contradictions of modern society, in our case into the often hidden tensions at the core of a successful modern society, does not necessarily mean that they have become some kind of amateur social scientists. Rather, we could say that there is no generally valid method in artists' relations toward society. They can use approaches adopted from scientific research, but they can also enact their own dreams, desires, visions and obsessions. They can develop parallel communities, simulacra, models of resistance or alternative structures of production and social organization, etc..

They can be poetic, cynical, objective, systematic or playful. They can be directly political (i.e. pointing at social antagonisms or modes of exploitation and repression in a society) or almost hermetically personal (i.e. describing the incompatibility between their personalities and the world around them).

Nevertheless, there remains the question about why one should take artists' insights into society (or indeed curators' statements about them) into consideration at all. Artists are not social scientists, although some of them pretend to be something like that. They seem to have neither proper means nor correct methods to produce valid results. And besides, highly qualified professionals have already provided us with an endless number of detailed studies of societies and their different aspects. A possible answer, which I would like to indicate here very briefly, is that the knowledge provided by an artist belongs to a different kind than that provided by professionals with their specialized methods. An artist seems to be closer to



photo: Michiel Kluiters

Maria Pask, *Starhawk! the musical*,
2004, production stills from the project,
courtesy of the artist



<Job Koelewijn, *A Balancing Act*, 1998, C-print on dibond, 120 x 100 cm, courtesy of Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam

>Job Koelewijn, *The World is my Oyster*, 1996, installation view, courtesy of Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam



a *bricoleur* as it is described by Lévi-Strauss in his *Savage Mind*. A *bricoleur* is neither specifically trained nor equipped by specific tools. He is not a specialist or expert of any kind. And yet, by using tools collected (often randomly) from everywhere as well as his own inventiveness, he is capable of solving a number of very different tasks and problems – exactly because he is not specialized in any of them. Therefore, not only can artists adopt all kinds of different tools and approaches; they can also enter all kinds of different fields and solve different, often unpredicted problems.

The quality of their insights, too, seems to be different from that of the results of scientific research. First of all, these results are more complex, since they embody a number of different layers and elements and connections between them. They are less defined and clear, and demand active collaboration from the side of the spectator. In the process of reception and interpretation, a work of art addresses

several very different aspects of the beholder's personality at once. It can demand – often simultaneously – a rational analysis, emotional response, pleasure in its formal characteristics, etc.. Art is not a substitute for social science (even if it does use its methods and approaches), but it can be – among others – used in attempts to grasp the nature of society, modernity, inter-human relations, etc.. It enables us to see these and other issues in a new way and from unexpected viewpoints, and in such a way helps us to get an idea about our own position, personal and social, and perhaps to find ways and strategies to respond to that position.

Job Koelewijn's project *A Balancing Act* (1998) is certainly not a general statement about the structure of society and the position of the individual in it. It is rather a very personal work, a symbol of an artist's search for balance within himself and with the world around him. But exactly because of that it could also be used as



a metaphor for the constant search for balance between the personal and the social, the inside and the outside, order and freedom, etc.. If a balanced modern society can indeed be described as a constant process of negotiation of antagonisms, then such balance can only be just as fragile and temporary as the one achieved by Koelewijn in his act; and the task of achieving it is endless.

IGOR ZABEL

Edwin Zwakman, *Deur (Door)*, 2002, 180 x 275 cm, C-print on aluminium, from the series *Woning (Apartment)*, courtesy of Gallery Akinci, Amsterdam

>Edwin Zwakman, *Kast (Closet)*, 2002, 220 x 165 cm, C-print on aluminium, from the series *Woning (Apartment)*, courtesy of Gallery Akinci, Amsterdam





Edwin Zwakman, *Gang (Hall)*, 2002,
220 x 148 cm, C-print on aluminium,
from the series *Woning (Apartment)*,
courtesy of Gallery Akinci, Amsterdam

Atelier Van Lieshout, artists' collective
established 1995 in Rotterdam by
Joep van Lieshout, born 1963, lives
and works in Rotterdam. Recent
exhibitions (selection): Sprengel
Museum, Hannover, 2004; Museum für
Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, 2004; Gio
Marconi Gallery, Milan, 2004; *Utopia
Station*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice,
2003; Le Rectangle, Lyon, 2003; Camden
Arts Centre, London, 2002; Biennale of
São Paulo, São Paulo, 2002; *Sonsbeek 9*,
Arnhem, 2001, 49th Venice Biennale,
Venice, 2001.

Joost Conijn, born 1971, lives and works
in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions
(selection): Artissima, Turin, 2004;
International Film Festival Rotterdam,
Rotterdam, 2004; Van Abbemuseum,
Eindhoven, 2003; Ludwig Forum,
Aachen, 2003; Lisson Gallery, London,
2003; TENT, Rotterdam, 2003; Jan Hoet
Junior Gallery, Ghent, 2003.

Job Koelewijn, born 1962, lives and
works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions
(selection): Museum De Paviljoens,
Almere, 2004; *People Die of Exposure*,
SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, 2003;
Try and See it Your Way, Henry Moore
Foundation, Leeds, 2002; *Running
Shadow*, Stella Lohaus Galerie,
Antwerp, 2002; *The Beauty of Intimacy*,
Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden,
Baden-Baden, 2002.

SAFETY AND PEACE! ORDER AND FREEDOM! / EPISODE 5

John Körmeling, born 1951, lives and
works in Eindhoven. Recent exhibitions
(selection): *Mobile Fun*, The Power
Plant, Toronto, 2004; *The Art of
Listening*, Zerynthia, Rome, 2004;
Hot Spring, Echigo-Tsumari Art
Triennial 2003, Niigata Prefecture,
2003; *HI, HA Over wij/About We*,
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2003.

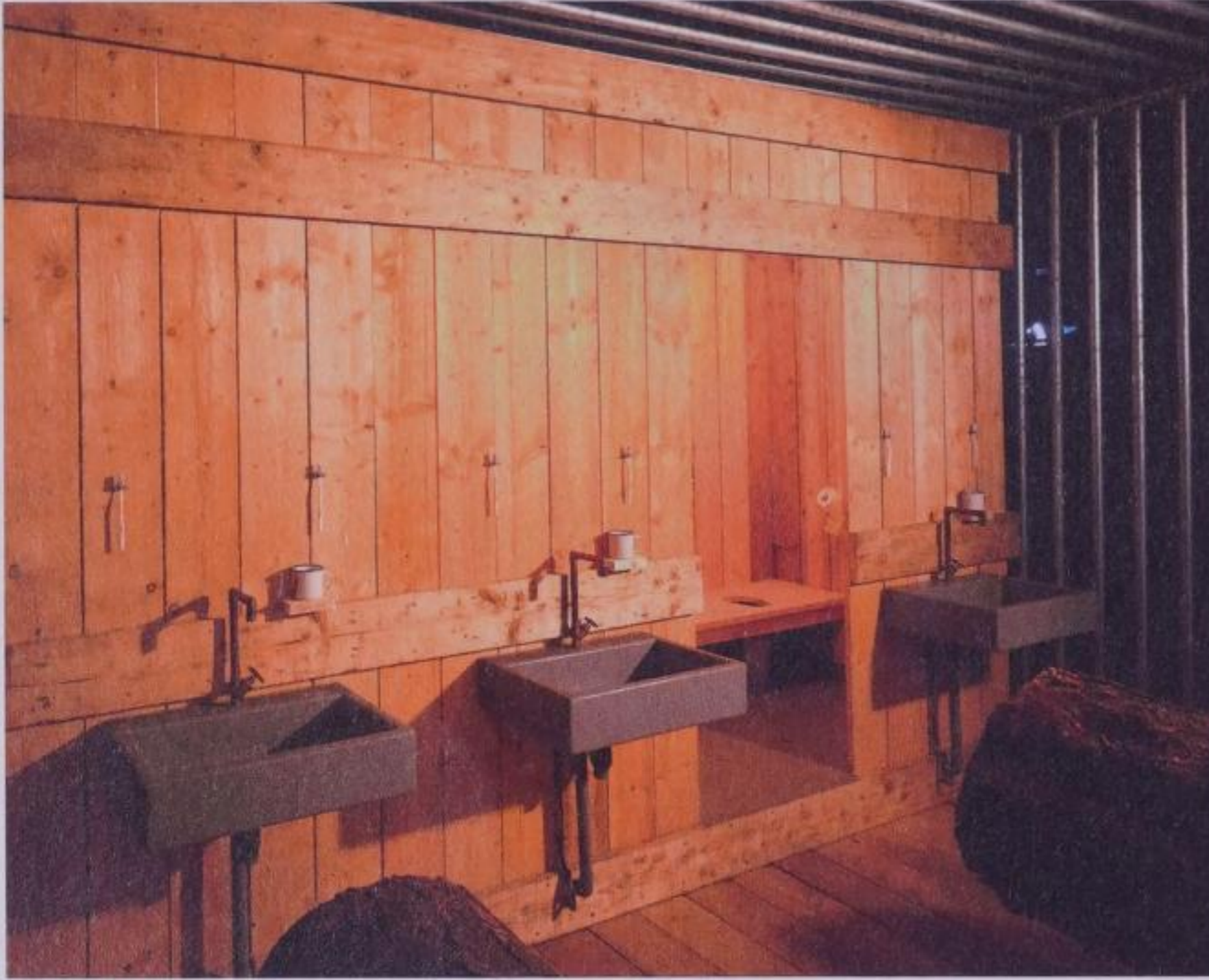
Maria Pask, born 1969, lives and works
in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions
(selection): *Starhawk! the musical*, BAK,
basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2004;
*Now What? Dreaming a better world in
six parts*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst,
Utrecht, 2003; De Appel, Amsterdam,
2002; Galeria Priester, Bratislava, 2002;
House of Arts, Brno, 2002.

Edwin Zwakman, born 1969, lives and
works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions
(selection): Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam,
2004; *Constructed Moments*, KW14,
Den Bosch, 2004; *Post-Nature*, Instituto
Tommy Othake, São Paulo, 2003;
Woning, Centraal Museum, Utrecht,
2002; Crown Gallery, Brussels, 2002;
Moving Landscapes, Sala Uno, Rome;
True Fictions, Schloss Arolsen, Munich
and Ludwig Forum, Aachen, 2002.

OLANDU BIURAS – VILNIUS

EPISODE 6
CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE
(CAC), VILNIUS
20 NOVEMBER 2004–
9 JANUARY 2005

CURATOR: KESTUTIS KUIZINAS
PARTICIPATING ARTISTS: ATELIER
VAN LIESHOUT, HENDRIK-JAN
HUNNEMAN, LUCAS LENGLET,
GABRIEL LESTER, JOB KOELEWIJN,
MARIA PASK, JENNIFER TEE, DRÉ
WAPENAAR AND EDWIN ZWAKMAN



Atelier Van Lieshout, *The Disciplinator*, 2003, interior, courtesy of AVL, photo: AVL

Olandu biuras – Vilnius is an exhibition exploring the culture of corporate co-operation. A particular kind of corporate advising – promoted by international consulting firms – has played a major role in the markets of the new member states during the last decade. The participating Dutch artists create a temporary office at the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) to give advice on the working practices and policies of CAC at the critical moment of Lithuania joining the European Union, exploring issues such as teamwork and individual creativity, local needs and global perspectives. The exhibition presents the proposals, works and collaborations which have been developed by the artists during a research/work period in Vilnius.

WHAT IS CAC TODAY?

CAC. Physical. A big house in the middle of nowhere. The largest venue for contemporary art in the Baltic countries. 'Centre of Attraction', 'Platform of Encounters', 'Innocent Life'... Didactic. Dynamic. Sometimes even oppressive. A new centre in the periphery. Ambitious programming. Young people like it. Neighbours come to visit it in organized groups. By bus from Latvia or Estonia. White cube architecture. Big spaces. A main hall like a soccer field. 24 x 41 square metres. High ceilings. Lots of daylight. Until 1992 it was called Vilnius Palace of Art Exhibitions.

History. We used to have a beautiful floor. A composition of marble and granite – a true example of Soviet-era chic. Then we painted it over. Our old identity. Just before the *Cool Places* exhibition in 1998.



Atelier Van Lieshout, *The Disciplinator*,
2003, interior, courtesy of AVL, photo: AVL



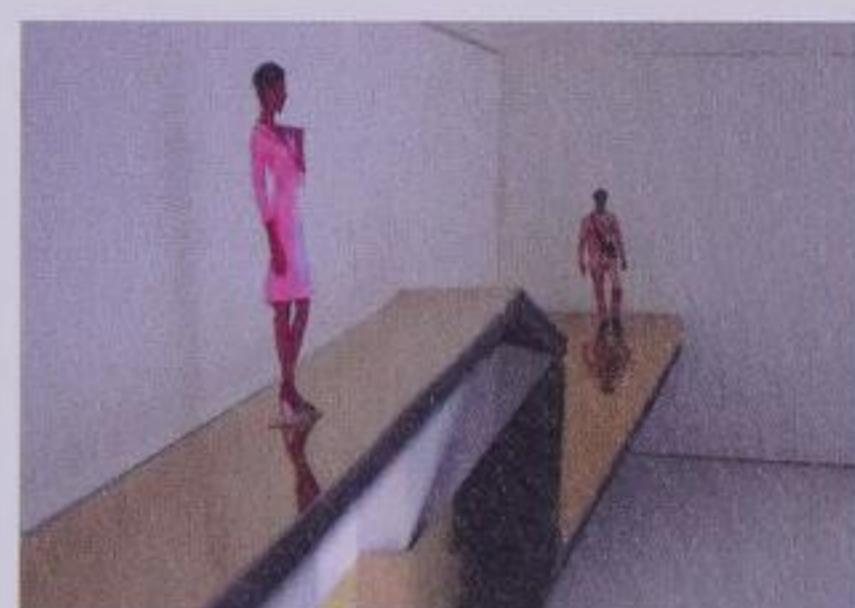
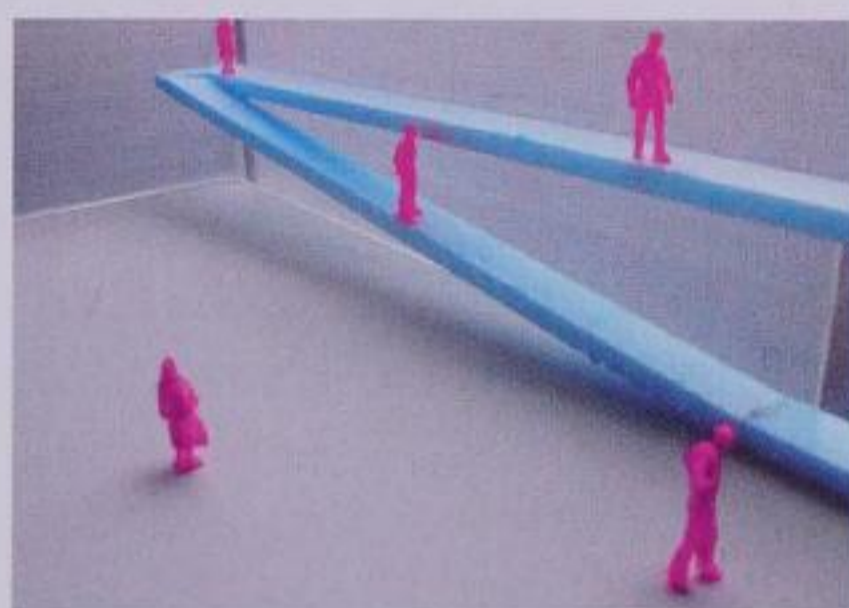
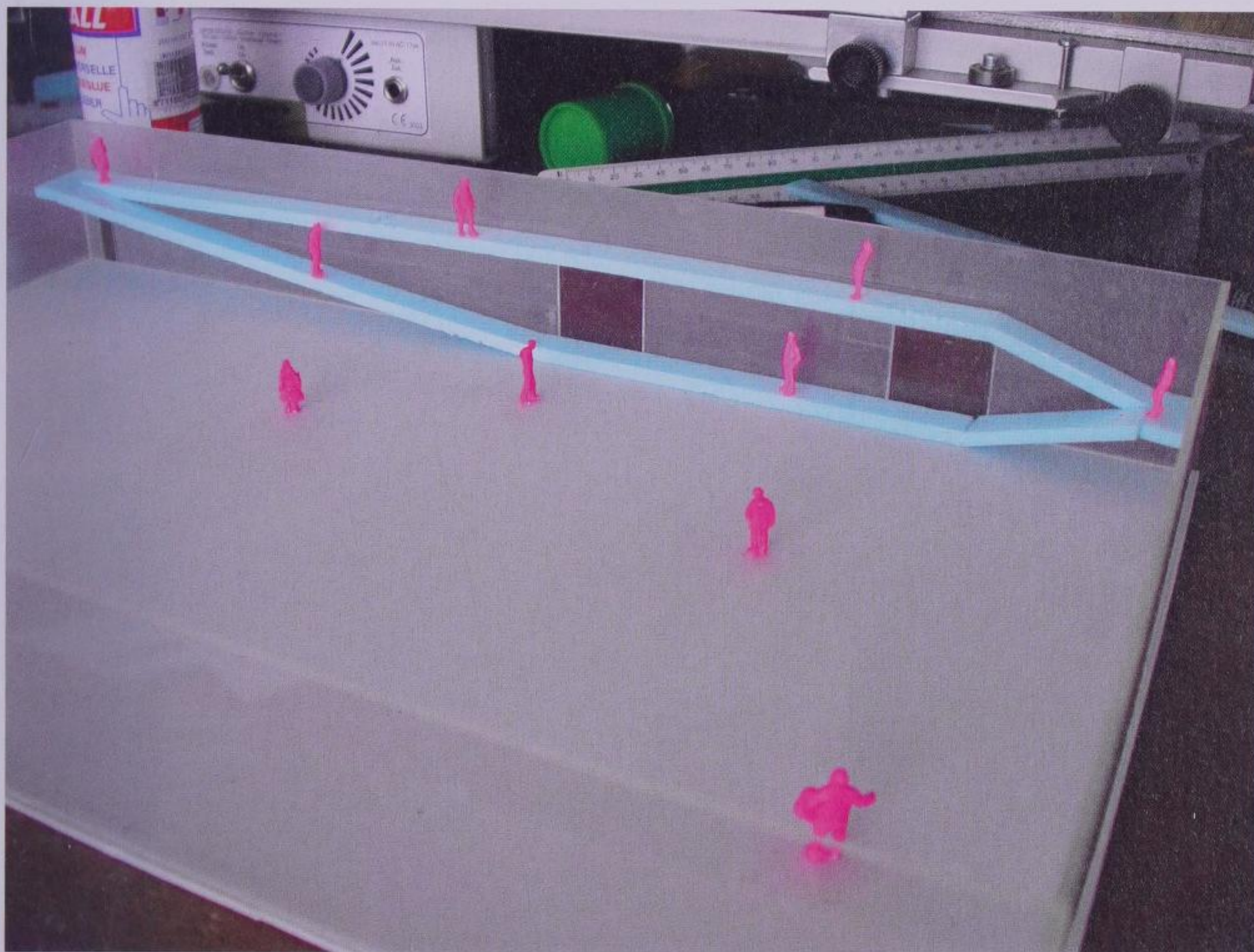
Directions. Still fighting on behalf of the new. Contemporary art space, different standards, fresh ideas, complicated links. Sometimes we gather and talk. Five curators including the director. (I started when I was 24.) A new shift after the famously male-dominated team dispersed. Most of the team are under 30. New and committed. They start when they are art history students. They like working here.

Infrastructure. There's no museum or gallery for contemporary art around. A power structure in a powerless context. No market, no competition, no willingness to support and no hard feelings about being misunderstood. Just do it.

Programme. Under attack. Balancing and ranging between Andy Warhol and Martin Creed. Sometimes we have long speeches at the opening, but mostly we just open the doors and have a drink. Parallel activities. A soft alternative within itself. Nobody takes it seriously. A fast succession of activities.

Sometimes too fast to catch up with what is going on. Dream Factory. The heating is not good enough – it escapes through the ceiling. We take travelling shows on board as well. The house is too big to fill it only with content of our own.

Political. Sometimes we have to slow down. We make compromises. The Artists Association hates us anyway. They think it has to be stopped one day. They say it is crap. Too much video and photography. Too international. Alien in the local culture. An arrogant director and very young people around him. Too young to grasp the essence of real art. They organize congresses and write letters. Letters of complaint to the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry is not very sure how to react. They think that perhaps this can go on for some more time... Then they forget the whole thing. Until next time. Until the new elections.



<Hendrik-Jan Hunneman, *In the future we can see from above*, construction covered with gold laminboard, 41 m x 3 m x 3 m, project proposal *Olandu biuras*, 2004

Hendrik-Jan Hunneman, *In the future we can see from above*, construction covered with gold laminboard, 41 m x 3 m x 3 m, project proposal *Olandu biuras*, 2004

Audience. A young crowd. It doesn't look solid enough to our sponsors. Some of them started together with the institution. More than ten years ago. They became established artists... Very few tourists.

CAC friends: Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, Pierre Bismuth, Luisa Lambri, John Peter Nilsson, Sean Snyder, Lolita Jablonskiene, OLO, Maria Lind, Pawel Althamer, Luca Cerizza, Joao Penalva, Knut Åsdam, N 55, Steve Rushton, Nicolas Bourriaud, Christian Jankowski, Anders Kreuger, Graham Gussin, George Maciunas, Josef Dabernig, Rene Block, Olafur Eliasson, Aernout Mik, Emmanuelle Antille, Mike Nelson, Jens Hoffmann, Tobias Berger, Aidas Bareikis, Jane and Louise Wilson, Maria Hlavajova, Elke Krystufek, Barbara Visser, Paul Ramirez Jonas, Jonas Mekas, Man Ray, Arvydas Saltenis, Arturas Raila, Taro Shinoda, Jerome Sans, Leonid Bazhanov, Katarzyna Kozyra, Rineke Dijkstra, Egle Rakauskaite, Ulrich Ruckriem, Tom Hunter, Marianne Lanavere, Vita Zaman, Evaldas Jansas,

Jakob Kolding, Nicolai Wallner, Peter Land, Jon Hendricks, Marcia Tucker, Sirje Helme, Anda Rottenberg, Franz Ackermann, Monica Bonvicini, Candice Breitz, Peter Robinson, Yuk King Tan, Salla Tykkä, Stephen Hepworth, Vladimir Tarasov, Tom Sandqvist, Kathrin Becker, Eran Schaerf, Eva Rothschild, Paula Toppila, Barbara Steiner, Charles Esche, Lars Grambye, David Elliott, Matt Marello, Nam June Paik, Jan Winkelmann, Bojana Pejić, Rhana Devenport, Isabel Carlos, Jonathan Monk, Mindaugas Navakas, Magnus Wallin, Antony Gormley, Simon Lamuniere, Jan Toomik and many many others.

DUTCH PROJECT (IN NOVEMBER 2004)

Concept. We propose to establish a temporary office at CAC. A kind of consultancy agency. It should help us to realize a high quality Dutch project in Vilnius. Invited artists are supposed to talk to each other. It is important that they get together long before the actual exhibition opens. They came to Vilnius for a week in April.

Re: sketches for preview book

----- Original Message -----

From: Job

To: Kestutis Kuizinas

Sent: Tuesday, July 06, 2004 10:24 AM

Subject: Re: sketches for preview book

dear kestutis

I hope Oyo doing fine

I spoke with Maria
and she told me that the deathline was this Friday

I am still considering the idea of the germ bank
, but to use only Dutch sperm that sounds very local

the original idea was

title
the mondial germ poem

in collaboration
with the Brooklyn hospital in Newyork
the hospital In Chicago
and the V U in the Netherlands
scientist worked several years what they called the mondial germ

in the words of doctor James W. Fox (he became a friend)
germ scientist in Newyork it is a breakthrough

6 years ago the artist Job Koelewijn wrote me a letter about the
mondial germ

apart from the intention from the artist we became also interested
in the idea if it was possible to create such a germ ,we could make it a
part of our program

for several years we collected germs from men each of them
represents a continent eventually .to say it popular we could mix the germs.
and create a new germ which included the other ones.

he next logical step would be to find a woman to implant the germs

(for more information please visit our web site)

dear kestutis Would say we make a presentation with al the
correspondences the letters

some photos of the scientists some man who donated there germs etc
etc

we could ask the hospital in Newyork if they are willing to send the
germs over
all though that might be expensive , but I think it is essential .

best regards

job koelewijn





Title. Means 'Dutch Bureau' in Lithuanian. Artists somehow didn't like it when it was in English. It reminded them of the Politbureau. But I didn't want to step back. I said it sounds good in our language. So we found a solution. Now we call it *Olandu biuras*.

Keywords. Some tricky words were passed around the meeting table. They were composed into one column. Like this:

individual ideas and team work,
thinking forward and rewind tools,
consultancy agency and gambling strategies,
mirror positions and global prospective,
good connections and wrong cuts,
critical outlook and exchange of roles,
context research and sobriety balance,
to pay the rent and get it done...

Curator. Pretends to be a technical adviser. A manager of the project only. Artists are free to choose their work. They were encouraged to think about one or another joint piece for this project as well. The only condition was

that all works should fit into one space – i.e. the main hall of CAC.

Sperm bank. 'Kestutis, do you have a sperm bank in Lithuania?' This came out late in the evening at the Georgian restaurant. Job stood up holding his finger up and announced that they had a proposal – to create a sperm bank for the show. 'But, what will be a visual side of the project? How do you present it in the exhibition?' I could not hide my confusion. 'There will be only some information with code numbers of the donors, somewhere on the wall.' They all seemed very excited about that idea, except, perhaps, two women artists in the group... The rumours spread after the Dutch people left Vilnius. Both in Holland and here. Maria told me about it. She seemed to be a little concerned.

Artists. Hendrik-Jan Hunneman, Lucas Lenglet, Gabriel Lester, Joep van Lieshout, Job Koelewijn, Maria Pask, Jennifer Tee, Dré Wapenaar and Edwin Zwakman. They had a good time in Lithuania.

Gabriel Lester presents

THE

COLA-YOGURTI

PROJECT

a film about patented innovations and obscure inventions of the post soviet era



premieres at the Olandu Biuras, CAC Vilnius, November 2004

Maria Pask. Project proposals.

1. Robert Owen – the museum.

The Robert Owen Museum is located in a quiet, small town in Wales called Newtown. There are hardly any visitors. In fact, very few people know it even exists. It has fallen into obscurity. However, Robert Owen has left his mark on history as one of the most prominent social reformers of the early 19th Century and was the pioneer of socialism and the co-operative and trade union movements.

He believed that the solution to society's problems lay in



the creation of model communities. If social responsibility, an 8-hour working day, religious tolerance, women's rights, good childcare, a free education system and a civic dramatic club were implemented profitable business would follow. Industry managers and the government of the time generally opposed these ideas.

The work of Robert Owen acts as a vivid reminder of the original ideals of socialism especially in the context of our 'new' Europe. I would like to remind the visitors of CAC of Robert Owen by planting part of the museum including its curator into the CAC exhibition space.

Option 2:

2. Beat it.

— They're out to get you, better leave while you can
Don't wanna be a boy; you want to be a man
You wanna stay alive, better do what you can
So beat it, just beat it
You have to show them that you're really not scared
You're playing with your life, this ain't no truth or dare
They'll kick you, then they'll beat you,
Then they'll tell you it's fair
So beat it, but you wanna be bad
Just beat it (beat it, beat it, beat it)
No one wants to be defeated
Showin' how funky, strong is your fight
It doesn't matter who's wrong or right
Just beat it (beat it, beat it, beat it) —
(Written and composed by Michael Jackson)

In the video that accompanies the Michael Jackson song Beat it, 2 urban gangs come together in an industrial warehouse to fight. Michael Jackson enters, breaks the fight up, and leads the 2 groups into a fabulously choreographed dance routine. The tension is broken and everyone cheers. For me, the song and the dance routine is a very black and white, rather ridiculous but accessible metaphor for complex political issues surrounding the entrance of countries into Europe and the subsequent



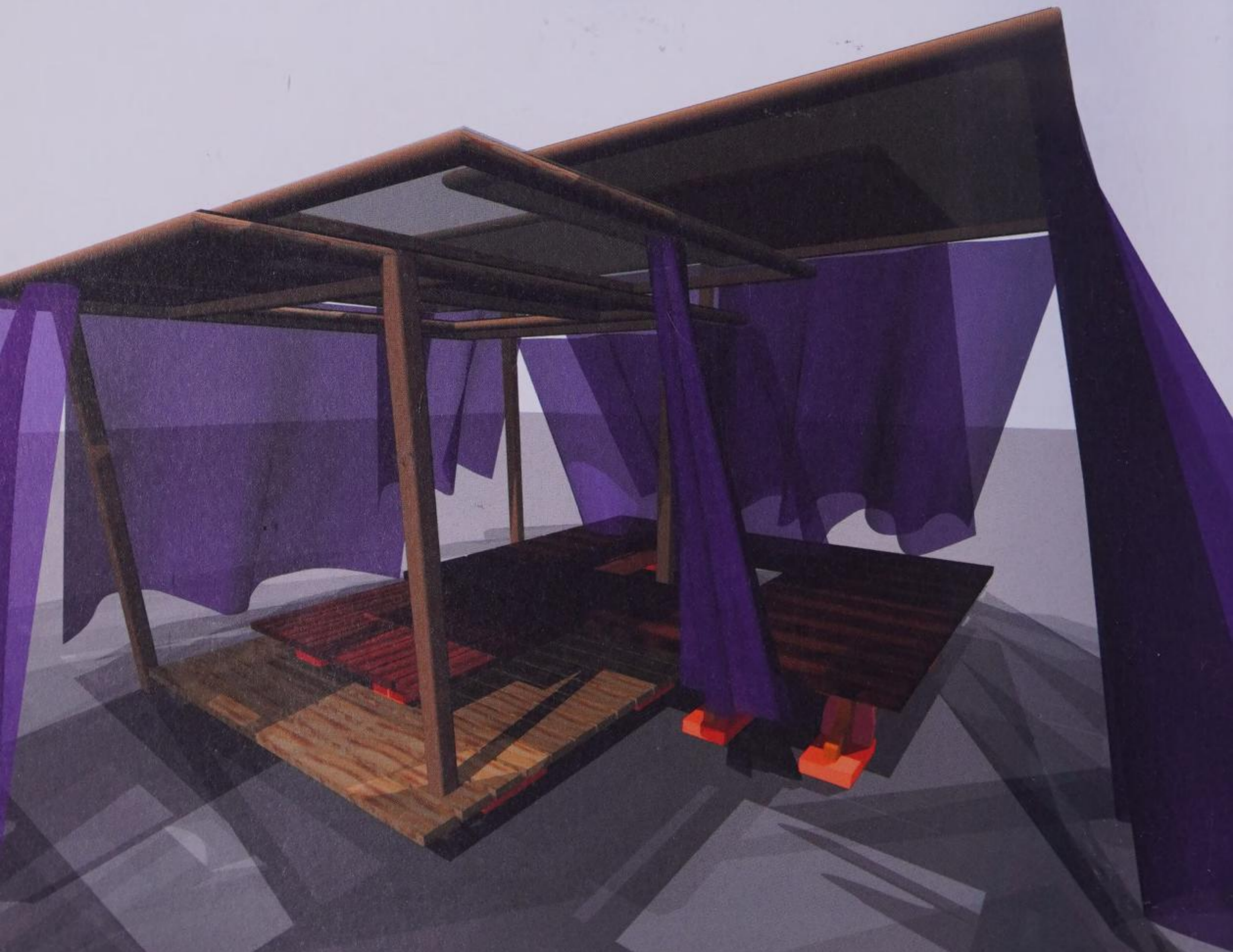
formation of a new superstate. I guess I question what one will lose or gain by doing so and I wonder who will take over the part of the Michael Jackson character to rescue us.

For the CAC, I want to re-enact the dance routine from the Beat it video. I will work specifically with art students from Holland and Lithuania who will perform the dance routine on the opening night of the exhibition. The Dutch students will play one urban gang, the Lithuanians the other. They will be asked to collaborate on costume, sets and documentation. I want to start the process of putting on a show to re-energize a group of young students and to at least encourage everyone to use skills they may have previously kept outside of their own art practice. It will be a new direction that the whole group will experience together.

< Maria Pask, project proposal
Olandu biuras, 2004



Edwin Zwakman, *UN-LINE*, paint on
trolley, project proposal *Olandu biuras*,
2004



pavilion of emptyness
dré wapenaar 2004



Expectations. Nobody knows what will happen here in November. There are nine Dutch artists invited to do a project in Vilnius. They are supposed to make a team. They had the possibility to discuss things before they started working. They should come back with some individual ideas or even realize something together. But they never have worked together before. And they all are very different. In fact, I would be disappointed if I could predict the final result or foresee the show. It will be not easy to handle things until the end. End of *Olandu biuras*. But that's the game. I am no less excited.

Pictures that follow. I made them during our meeting time in April. They show different moments of our work preparing the ground for the project in November.



Atelier Van Lieshout, artists' collective established 1995 in Rotterdam by Joep van Lieshout, born 1963, lives and works in Rotterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): Sprengel Museum, Hannover, 2004; Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, 2004; Gio Marconi Gallery, Milan, 2004; *Utopia Station*, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2003; Le Rectangle, Lyon, 2003; Camden Arts Centre, London, 2002; Biennale of São Paulo, São Paulo, 2002; *Sonsbeek 9*, Arnhem, 2001; 49th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2001.

Hendrik-Jan Hunneman, born 1970, lives and works in Rotterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Enfin La Fin*, W139, Amsterdam, 2003; *KISS & GO*, Vleeshal, Middelburg, 2002; *La Cinca*, Veemvloer, Amsterdam, 2002; *Early Works*, De Ateliers, Amsterdam, 2002; *Cargo 1*, Stichting Kunstwerk Loods 6, Amsterdam, 2001.

Job Koelewijn, born 1962, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): Museum De Paviljoens, Almere, 2004; *People Die of Exposure*, SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, 2003; *Try and See it Your Way*, Henry Moore Foundation, Leeds, 2002; *Running Shadow*, Stella Lohaus Galerie, Antwerp, 2002; *The Beauty of Intimacy*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Baden-Baden, 2002.

Lucas Lenglet, born 1972, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *dialogue series #4* (with Tim Ayres), Galerie Markus Richter, Berlin, 2004; *panicROOM*, Schloß Ringenberg, Hamminkeln, 2004; *breaking space*, Artis, 's-Hertogenbosch, 2002; *Cargo 3*, Stichting Kunstwerk Loods 6, Amsterdam, 2002; *Concrete*, W139, Amsterdam, 2002.

Gabriel Lester, born 1972, lives and works in Brussels. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Beautiful Gamble*, IASPIS, Stockholm, 2004; *Ahuman*, MUU, Helsinki, 2004; *Clock & Clockwork*, Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, 2003; *Haupt/Nebenwegen*, Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne, 2003; *Kelder in de Vliering*, W139, Amsterdam, 2002; *What is Cinema*, TENT, Amsterdam, 2002.

Maria Pask, born 1969, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Starhawk! the musical*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2004; *Now What? Dreaming a better world in six parts*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2003; *De Appel*, Amsterdam, 2002; *Galeria Priestor*, Bratislava, 2002; *House of Arts*, Brno, 2002.

Jennifer Tee, born 1973, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *Journal #1. Nameless Swirls, An Unfolding in Presence*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2003; *Ultraviolet, Ripeness of Event*, Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam, 2003; *In Air I Presume. The Non-Logical Hunt for Toverknaal*, Museum Het Domein, Sittard, 2001.

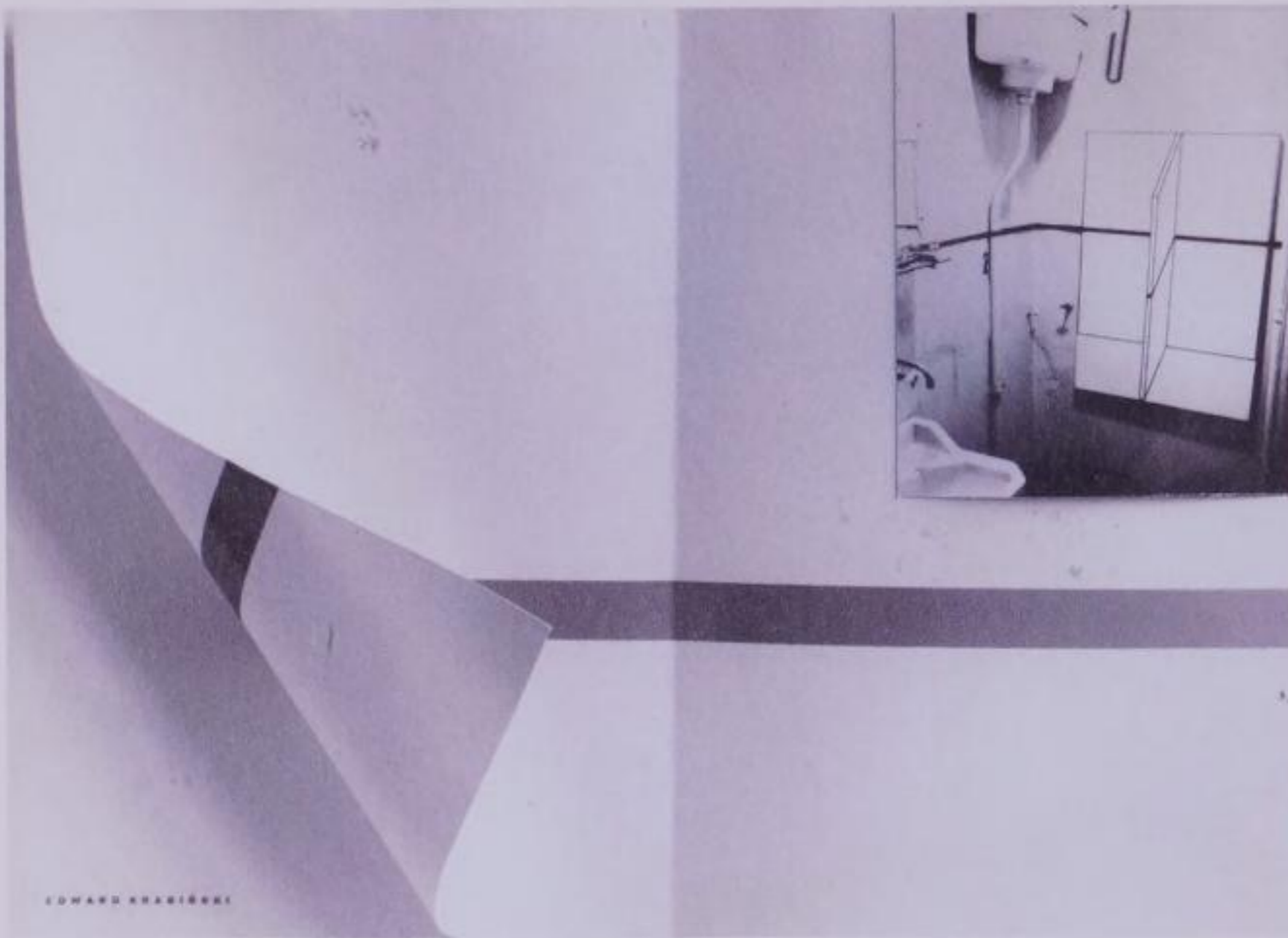
Dré Wapenaar, born 1962, lives and works in Rotterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): *The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere*, MassMOCA, North Adams, 2004–2005; *Prophetic Corners*, 6th Periferic Biennial, Iasi, 2003; *Shine, wishful fantasies and visions of the future in contemporary art*, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2003; *New Hotels for Global Nomads*, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, 2002; *International 2002*, Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, Liverpool, 2002.

Edwin Zwakman, born 1969, lives and works in Amsterdam. Recent exhibitions (selection): Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam, 2004; *Constructed Moments*, kw14, Den Bosch, 2004; *Post-Nature*, Instituto Tommy Othake, São Paulo, 2003; *Woning*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2002; *Crown Gallery*, Brussels, 2002; *Moving Landscapes*, Sala Uno, Rome; *True Fictions*, Schloss Arolsen, Munich and Ludwig Forum, Aachen, 2002.

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI'S STUDIO

EPIISODE 7
FOKSAL GALLERY FOUNDATION,
WARSAW
DECEMBER 2004

CURATORS: JOANNA MYTKOWSKA
AND ANDRZEJ PRZYWARA
IN COLLABORATION WITH:
BAR ARCHITECTURE STUDIO,
ROTTERDAM AND MARCIN
KWIETOWICZ, WARSAW



< Document from Edward Krasiński's archive, 1970s, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

> Door to Edward Krasiński's studio, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

During the dozen or so years he spent in his studio/flat, Edward Krasiński created a changing yet precisely thought-out collection of works from various periods and objects he made specifically for the place. A version of this collection has been preserved in the studio. We found out about Edward Krasiński's death on 5 April 2004 while away in the Netherlands doing research for our participation in *Who if not we...?*. All new contacts and developments suddenly lost their allure. Krasiński (born 1925) had been seriously ill for many months, his flat had been vacant for more than two years and we were taking care of the space. The flat was not a typical artist's studio, and we were always reluctant to call it a 'studio'. Krasiński never let anybody see him 'working' and was indignant whenever someone called what he was doing 'work'. If he invited anyone to the studio, it was to show the final effect rather than the process itself. The studio seemed a perfect setting for celebrating solitude and friends' visits. We knew that it would be up to us and the artist's daughter,

Paulina Krasińska, to decide what to do with the place. We rejected outright the idea of turning it into a museum, firstly because of the nature of Krasiński's 'oeuvre', and secondly because of the deadness into which artists' studios fall if turned into memorial rooms. We were tempted to leave everything as it was, slightly coated with dust, and to show it rarely, to keep this unusual place semi-concealed, without subjecting it to any of the known procedures of memory recording. We realized, however, that if we did this, the fragile objects and subtle meanings would soon fade and vanish irretrievably. Besides, because of its location on the eleventh floor of an ordinary apartment block in downtown Warsaw, the place would soon gain the status of an oddity. Instead, we have decided to settle for a different solution: to leave the main part of the studio unchanged and undisturbed, but to surround it with a framework of contemporary architecture that would help extend its function and create various contemporary references to the historic studio.





<Edward Krasiński's portrait, 1993,
courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation,
Warsaw

>Edward Krasiński's studio, 2004,
courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation,
Warsaw, photo: Aneta Grzeszykowska
and Jan Smaga



We have decided to rebuild the corridor leading to the studio's two main rooms – Krasiński's private room and a 70 square metre terrace – into a multifunctional space, suitable for organizing meetings or exhibitions, and serving as a studio for visiting artists. A small office space and a guest room would also be squeezed in. We have decided to commission this project to Rotterdam's BAR architecture studio, whose work we know from Utrecht, where they converted a historic tenement house into the contemporary art centre, BAK, *basis voor actuele kunst*.

Edward Krasiński's studio has a lengthy history, and has in fact become a legendary place in the history of Polish art. In 1962 (when the building was erected) the government offered the studio to Henryk Stażewski who moved in with painter Mewa Łunkiewicz and her husband Jan Rogoyski. Stażewski was one of the founders of the avant-garde movement, a member of international art groups of the 1920s and

1930s such as *Cercle et Carré*, or *Abstraction Création*. In 1927, he was one of the organizers of Kasimir Malevich's first exhibition outside of Russia, which took place at the Institute for the Promotion of Art at Warsaw's Polonia Hotel. In 1931, he established (along with Władysław Strzemiński and Katarzyna Kobro) and helped organize *Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi* in Łódź, the world's first museum of modern art. The works donated to him by foreign artists, including Piet Mondriaan and Theo van Doesburg, now form the core of its collection. Stażewski founded and wrote theoretical texts for the periodicals *Blok* and *Praesens*. He was particularly interested in the concept of neoplasticism, which he popularized in Poland and used to creatively define his own artistic position. In the 1960s, Stażewski returned to painting with his critically-acclaimed series of white reliefs (1961). Stażewski's artistic attitude and vitality gained him the respect of many young artists, and in 1966 he co-founded *Galeria Foksal* in Warsaw. From the 1960s onwards Stażewski



< Edward Krasiński's portrait, 1980s, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

> Edward Krasiński's portrait, 1990s, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

spent his mornings painting in an armchair that has been preserved to this day (and exhibited regularly), and entertained guests in the afternoons. His flat was a place of meetings and discussions, an enclave of freedom in communist Poland, and Stażewski himself was a link to the avant-garde tradition whose continuity had been broken after the war. Krasiński started visiting Stażewski and Mewa in the mid-1960s, staying on and off in the small room adjacent to the studio after Mewa's death in 1967, and moved in for good around 1970. After Stażewski died in 1988, the studio, once full of abstract paintings, gradually emptied, leaving Krasiński alone in an empty apartment.

The studio began taking its present shape in 1988 as Krasiński filled the place with works he had shown at exhibitions and objects created specifically for the studio. The new objects always turned up as if *en passant*; slight readjustments gradually changed the mood of the apartment making it a true

expression of Krasiński's personality. Living alone in the studio inspired him to produce a number of important works, which transformed the nature of his art. In 1989, Krasiński organized the *Hommage à Henryk Stażewski* exhibition at Galeria Foksal. The exhibition included black-and-white photographs of the studio's furniture: bookshelves, cupboards, windows and doors, as well as several real objects, including a table topped by a shark's fin (as if a shark were swimming under the table), designed in collaboration with Stażewski. The illusion in the photographs is almost perfect, with only small details revealing which photo was made in the gallery and which in the studio. Life-sized black-and-white photographs of the studio transposed into exhibition spaces would become a natural background for the blue strip, Krasiński's means of communication. On at least two occasions the studio was the protagonist of exhibitions: in Münster (1993), where two photographed views of the studio were cut into strips and stuck to two sides of columns; and at the



Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw (1998), where Krasiński showed a labyrinth ending in a wardrobe. As the studio gradually filled with these objects duplicating its features, it became a play of reflections and repetitions.

The objects now in the studio refer to Krasiński's earliest artistic activities. His early objects, made since the beginning of the 1960s, were gravity-defying sculptures that try to hang in space or imitate movement: wooden spikes suspended on thin wires, falling drops arrested a moment before falling, bent and twisted cables and wires. The studio contains either the original objects or copies Krasiński made in the 1980s. The logic of their functioning hints at a predilection for theatricality governing the structure of the studio, an almost childish delight in imitation, subtly subverting the

laws of nature and transforming the studio into a visual trap set for the viewers. Numerous objects suspended in space, improbable combinations of objects, omnipresent puns and situational jokes give the place an air of the absurd. However, contrary to what has often been said, they have little to do with surrealism. Suspending things on threads, leaning the heavy on the fragile, and a general inclination towards the peripheries, are more in keeping with Alfred Jarry's pataphysics.¹ Things halted in mid-drop, frozen movement, repetitions and tricks all testify to the artist's search for the impossible. The logic of absurdity reigns supreme in Krasiński's studio, though it avoids being pushy. An egg in an open bird cage, a tree branch growing out of the floor. A clasp fastened to the light switch, suggesting it has been hung on the wall

1. Pataphysics was introduced to the critical work on Edward Krasiński by Marek Goździewski in his text 'The Blue Tape Stripe Line', in (ex. cat.) *Edward Krasiński* (Warsaw: Fundacja Galerii Foksal, 1997).



Edward Krasiński's studio (view from terrace), 2004, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, photo: Aneta Grzeszykowska and Jan Smaga

Edward Krasiński's studio, 2004, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, photo: Aneta Grzeszykowska and Jan Smaga

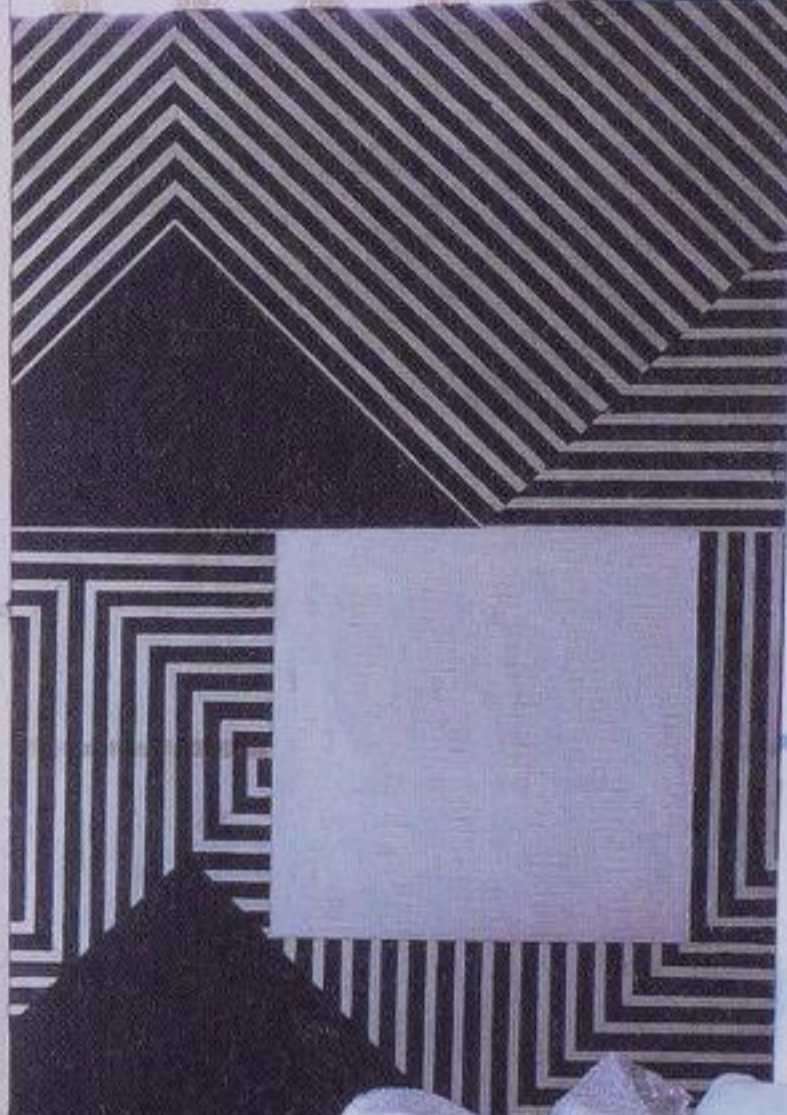
» Henryk Stażewski's former room, 2004, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, photo: Aneta Grzeszykowska and Jan Smaga

like a painting; swelled floorboards rising several inches above the floor. A faucet in the middle of the living room wall. A stick growing out of the floor throwing a painted shadow. Photographs of friends stuck to wooden cubes suspended in the centre of the room. Furry mice fastened to various objects are embodiments of hallucination. All these imperfect instruments of illusion have something childish about them, and childishness is something Krasiński embraced, as when he insisted that others call him by the diminutive name of Edzio.

Running around the whole studio is a strip of the blue scotch tape Krasiński would become perhaps most famous for, stuck at a height of 130 cm. Its first appearance in his work dates back to 1968, when he stuck it to tree trunks in Zalesie near Warsaw. In 1970, Daniel Buren helped Krasiński stick the tape onto the front wall of the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. From that moment on, the blue tape became his trademark. Buren visited the studio in 1974 and stuck his own

tape on the windows of Stażewski's room. During his next visit, in 1993, to attend a seminar organized in the studio, Buren glued strips of tape on the windows of the apartment's central room. The blue strip can be perceived as a continuation of Krasiński's earlier sculptures, a natural consequence of their gravitation towards the linear, but also as a manifestation of the quest for dematerialization, the desire to replace the theatre of cheap illusion with a total figurative gesture. The strip could potentially appear everywhere, run without end: its possibilities were inexhaustible. It was by accident that Krasiński came across a 19 mm-wide strip of blue scotch tape, but it was an accident that Krasiński had been waiting for. Towards the end of the 1960s, the magical causative power of linear objects, in spite of their illusionistic nature, was starting to become exhausted. Krasiński was searching for a way out of the dilemma, as reflected in photographic records of his performances showing him entangled in the line (*J'ai perdu la fin*, 1969), standing next to coils of wire,





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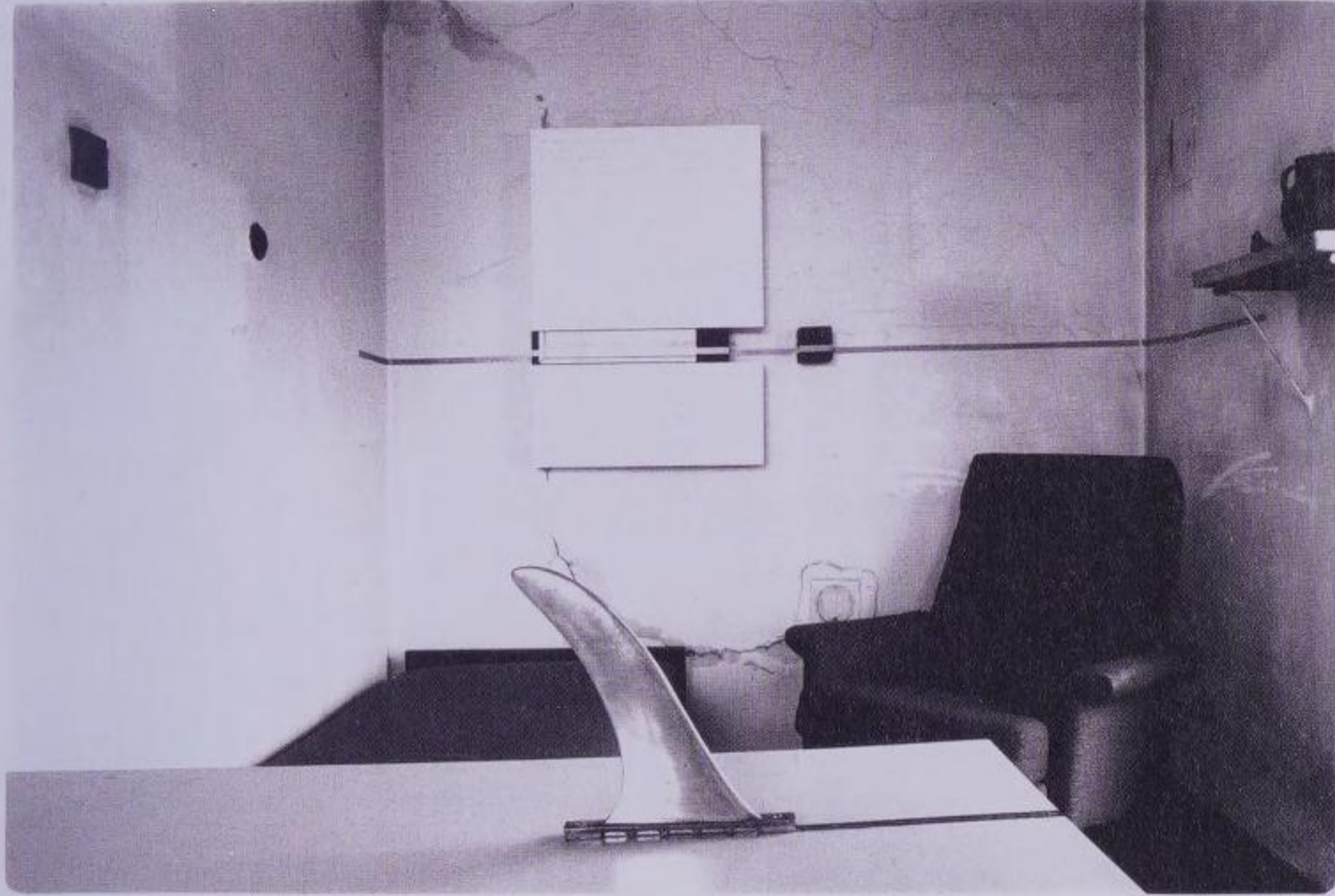
Homage to Henryk Stażewski, multiple installation views, Foksal Gallery, 1989, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

photographed with moving objects: a folding and unfolding wooden zigzag. Photographs from the late 1960s show Krasiński at work; by the early 1990s, they would celebrate only his presence. One such portrait hung on the apartment's front door. Another, fixed to the frame of the bed in which Henryk Stażewski died, traced the course of spiritual heritage. Yet another shows Krasiński playing table tennis with a gallery owner, a red ball hangs in the air between them. Krasiński's most radical conceptual gesture preceding the blue ribbon was to send a message with the word 'blue' repeated 5,000 times as his contribution to the Tokyo Biennale (1970). When the ship carrying the works was stopped in transit, Krasiński, knowing the works would not get there in time, sent a telegram. The telegram and the exhibition plans have been preserved at the studio.

The strip was a means of self-definition often applied in external, urban space, and above all inside, in enclosed spaces. The ribbon could cut through everything in its way.

It was particularly good for defining all kinds of back rooms, recesses, and other margins of official spaces. In museums, it was a useful device to determine scale. In the early 1970s, Krasiński introduced objects that were something of an obstacle for the strip. At first, these would resemble fragments of rooms: a section of wall with piping and a toilet chain (now in the studio), part of a door, or a wallpapered surface. Then, around 1975, the objects gave way to abstract diagrams of spaces, their axonometric projections. This gave birth to a series Krasiński would work on and modify for the rest of his life.

Other objects returning from exhibitions to the studio include the black-and-white reproductions of historical paintings Krasiński hung in the place of the originals at various museums (Łódź, Münster, and Göteborg). Another object reflecting his struggle with the act of painting is a black ladder used when mounting exhibitions, to which a slaughterhouse hook, complete with a blood-red point, has been fastened.





Homage to Henryk Stażewski, multiple installation views, Foksal Gallery, 1989, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

The only thing hanging from the sturdy hook, however, is a thin string. The frailty of painting is also implied by several randomly arranged shot-glasses, each containing a drop of dried red paint and signed with a printed 'E'. Krasiński gave these small tributes to the death of painting to guests attending his seventy-fifth birthday party.

Krasiński described his situation as follows: 'I inherited a large, empty studio from Henio [Henryk Stażewski]. I had put up at other people's places for all my life, and here I was with this studio all of a sudden: 120 square metres, and to top it all off, a terrace. Traces of his paintings were on the walls, the ghosts of Henio's paintings, these whitish rectangles on the walls. And wires. And now the place is too full again. But I haven't been arranging anything, it has been mounting, accruing by itself. Is accruing by

itself. Building up, like dust on the floor. From time to time I made some decision, hang something, Henio's shelves were photographed for an exhibition and got back here; paintings, still packed, stand in the corridor because there is no place for them anywhere else. But I have the situation in hand, and I'm very careful for the place not to get cluttered. At the same time, it's neither an exhibition nor a collection. I only live here, though I'm still staying in the small room, just as it was when Mewa and Henio were here. The studio is there to sit in, have a drink; sometimes someone will show up. I rarely go to the other room. There are only all kinds of remnants here. There is a large painting by Henio, which is a remnant. Hang something on the wall today, a painting for instance, and the next day it will have become a remnant, that's why there are only remnants here'.²

2. Edward Krasiński, from interview with Wiesław Borowski and Edward Krasiński, in (ex. cat.) *Edward Krasiński* (Warsaw: Galeria Zachęta, 1998).



Edward Krasinski's studio (view of blocks of flats), 2004, courtesy of Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, photo: Aneta Grzeszykowska and Jan Smaga

Edward Krasinski, 1925–2004, lived and worked in Warsaw. Studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Cracow, 1945–1950. Major exhibitions (selection): Anton Kern Gallery, New York, 2003; Klosterfelde, Berlin, 2001; Galerie Jeu de Pomme, Paris, 2000; Manifesta 3, Ljubljana, 2000; Musee d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris, Paris, 1970; *Between Man and Matter*, Tokyo Biennale, Tokyo, 1970; Foksal Gallery, Warsaw, 1966; Krzysztofory, Cracow, 1965.

BAR architecture studio was founded 1999 by Joost Glissenaar, born 1965, and Klass van der Molen, born 1966, live and work in Rotterdam. Recent projects (selection): animal shelter, Amsterdam, 2003–present; alteration of a hostel for drug addicts, Utrecht, 2002–2003; 30 houses for the elderly, library, and welfare centre, Amsterdam 2002–present; bridge service building, Middelburg, 2001–2004; printing office Plantijn Casparie, Utrecht, 2000–2003; alteration BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, 2000–2003.

Marcin Kwietowicz, born 1973, lives and works in Warsaw. Recent projects (selection): Hall in the Center for Contemporary Art (CCA), Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw with W. Koteckim and A. Salamonem, 2003; *Small house in the Polish tradition and Polish Landscape*, collaboration with A. Kowalczyk, 2001; *Monument of the Battallion of the Polish Resistant Army (from II World War)* in the courtyard of the Department of Architecture of the Warsaw Technical University, Warsaw, 1994.

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI'S STUDIO / EPISODE 7

Edward Krasinski was an important figure in the art world when we met him in the late 1980s, and for us he became a friend and a reference point in art. His strategy of abstaining from action and distancing himself jocularly from the paradigms of modernism enabled us to understand the changing principles of art. Krasinski was always in tune with the times, liking to show his work with that of young artists, as he did with Paweł Althamer at Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana (2000), an exhibition that was very important for us. The gesture of sticking on the tape, marking one's territory, belongs to the unsurpassed romantic utopias of the past. Transforming one's life into a work of art is one of the few forms of asceticism available today. His studio was a microcosm, a world he arranged his own way. We would like this world to survive.

JOANNA MYTKOWSKA AND ANDRZEJ PRZYWARA
Translated from the Polish
by Marcin Wawrzyńczak

While there is no doubt that the political integration of ten new member states into the European Union – eight of which belong to the former Eastern bloc – is a reality, generating new ways of thinking and talking about ‘united’ Europe and its future are perhaps even more complicated tasks. The book *Who if not we...?* has two central goals: to preview the 7 episodes (exhibitions) in the programme, and to catalyze a new discussion concerning the artistic, political and social impacts of EU expansion. These two aspects of the book reflect our belief that in both the artistic and intellectual realms, creative and critical thought can provide a framework for concrete political participation. Thus *Who if not we...?* not only explores the issues and challenges of contemporary Europe through artists’ work, but also through new and anthologized texts by significant European philosophers, artists and writers. We hope that these texts will encourage the development of a fresh debate about issues such as the status of East–West discourse, the ‘blind spot’ in Western art historiography of Central and Eastern European art and the transatlantic rift created by the events of 9/11 and the ‘war on terror’.

This section of the book includes new texts by Ole Bouman, Boris Groys, Borut Vogelnik (of the artists’ group IRWIN) and Slavoj Žižek. In *Synchronizing Europe* Ole Bouman analyses the problem not of history, but of time. He suggests that social cohesion and understanding are not only generated by political ties, but by something much more basic – shared time. Bouman claims that the need for Europe to turn from an empty symbol into a ‘new ideas machine’ is a pressing one, so much so that he proposes the establishment of a European Ministry of Time, which would improve the synchronicity, and thus, the social and creative life of all those who live in Europe. In *The Post-Communist Condition*, Boris Groys considers the impact of the historical ‘event’ known as communism and claims that the entire world (not just the former communist countries) is ‘in a condition which one could term post-communist’. He outlines the development of both Eastern and Western variants of utopian ideology, and writes that the distinction between utopia and anti-utopia, and the choice between these competing political models, is the central political question of the present. Borut Vogelnik also speaks about ‘time’ and the ways that the East and West are conceived, claiming that the East is a ‘timed space’ measured against the canonical standards of the ‘timeless’ West, which presents itself as an evolved, really existing utopia. To illustrate this problem, the author considers the distinctions (real and perceived) between the art systems in East and West, and explains IRWIN’s recent artistic project, *East Art Map* (2002–present) in which the artists (along with numerous other contributors) are developing a chart that establishes the history of art from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the former USSR from 1945 to the present. And in *Was Will Europa?*,

philosopher Slavoj Žižek writes about the tensions between national interests, globalization and EU integration, and considers the threats posted to democracy and human rights inherent in the orthodoxy of America's 'war on terror'. But he notes that, 'What we find reprehensible and dangerous in US politics and civilization is thus *a part of Europe itself*, one of the possible outcomes of the European project'. Žižek concludes that Europe could provide a counterweight to American hegemony, but only if it can present itself as an 'autonomous, ideological, political and economic force with its own priorities'.

JILL WINDER

SYNCHRO- NIZING EUROPE

OLE BOUMAN

Do reports of yet another suicide attack somewhere in the world cause you, too, to feel something like nostalgia for the era of protracted hijackings and hostage-takings, when terrorists were still prepared to spend the final weeks or days of their lives with their victims? When even at the high point of their holy war the most fanatical zealots still felt the need to talk to their captives in an effort to persuade them of the righteousness of their cause? When there was still a negotiation stage during which ultimatums were set, declarations read out, safe conducts demanded and the world's press briefed on the ideals behind this or that action? Do you remember survivors' tales of how they had developed sympathy for captors, as frightened as they themselves, who were nonetheless at pains to explain their motivation? How despite the fear and hatred and the unequal balance of power they had eventually managed to communicate with one another and in some cases the victims had even succeeded in getting their tormenters to see reason? There is more going on here than the psychological management of fear according to the Stockholm syndrome. The real point is that time renders things negotiable, reversible; it softens attitudes and favours understanding, even in the most extreme circumstances. Shared time is a basis for deliberation, conversion, opinion-forming, collectivity, nation building. Conversely, none of these things can happen in the absence of shared time. This ancient piece of wisdom is not very popular nowadays when the preference is for the here-and-now, for irreversible processes, faits accomplis, pre-emptive strikes and the deliberate avoidance of dialogue. For isolation in a mental cocoon of one's own. For driving into a compound with a truckload of explosives. For stepping into the metro with a backpack filled with dynamite. Sowing nothing but panic, nothing but meaninglessness.

The clash of civilizations is not a matter of long-drawn-out sieges or dogged trench warfare but of smouldering hatred and sudden outbursts of aggression. What began as an Old World humanist dream, as a European vision of consistently subjecting space, time, cause and effect to human will over time, has become completely entangled in its own dialectic. Now even the war, the terrorist/anti-terrorist madness, has become a personal agenda item, a capricious hybrid of fundamentalism and hooliganism whose never-ending attacks spawn only fear.

FEAR RULES

This is also more generally a time of fear and discontent, especially in Europe. This ageing, depopulating and morally confused part of the world is beset by fears. Fear of approaching old age when there will not be enough money to pay for pensions. Fear of geopolitical irrelevancy, squeezed out of contention by the new giants of East and West. Fear that this loose confederation of nations will

surrender its sovereignty to the Brussels monster for little or no return. Fear of plummeting share markets, exploding debt mountains, collapsing property markets, the eastward flight of jobs. Fear that biotechnology will irrevocably distort our relationship with nature. Fear of melting ice caps and other by-products of the greenhouse effect. Fear of nuclear proliferation. Fear of a disintegrating society in thrall to single-issue politics, private interests, corruption, grasping and calculating citizens and other variants of the culture of narcissism. Fear that a destabilized democracy will degenerate into a bread and circuses populism of politicians who are more concerned with how their hair looks than with the needs of a society spanning at least three generations. In short, this is a time of fear of ourselves. For anyone who still dares to think knows that we ourselves are largely to blame for all this. It wasn't foreigners who got us into this mess. Nor will a Fortress Europe mentality get us out of it. The sense of fear haunting Europe is born of ignorance – ignorance of the other, but also of ourselves.

Sadly, self-knowledge is not the most strongly developed faculty in times of fear. Far stronger is the faculty for projection. People who are afraid find it much easier to point to 'the other' as the source of their fear. And causes for that fear are never hard to find because the other will always include a few problem cases – rabble rousers, hooligans, vandals, morons, provocateurs, terrorists – who are by no means averse to deriving their own sense of relevance from the prevailing fear and who are consequently always good for daily reports of an excess here and an assault there. Such a climate favours the scapegoat mechanism in which people are prone to generalize and to turn the other into a hydra-headed monster that can only be defeated by draconian measures, even the suspension of basic principles of democratic governance. The upshot is performance contracts for discouraging or deporting immigrants, policies of zero tolerance, new screening methods and civic entrance exams for would-be immigrants, organized raids and preventive stop and search, widespread wiretapping, the closure of public areas for public use and so on. In other words, a spate of regulatory measures is let loose on us today with the same fanaticism with which only yesterday, during the Golden Age of postmodern relativism, every attempt to regulate new social phenomena was rejected as an unacceptable infringement of the individual right of self-determination.

Here you have the contemporary knee-jerk response to fear: measures. Measures are the be-all and end-all for mediocre spirits. Europe today can without difficulty be described as an aggressive swarm of measures – unconstrained, for the time being at least, by a constitution that might provide them with a culturally informed logic. Measures aimed at curbing fear appear at present to be of two kinds: preventive

measures and repressive measures. The preventive ones pertain to everything a government and society can do to avert still more problems. Borders are sealed, exclusion zones created, legislation amended – all measures which, in spite of the rhetoric surrounding the economic necessity of an 'attractive location climate', are guaranteed to spoil or only very selectively encourage such a climate. Repressive measures pertain to a new, strict regime intent on punishing all forms of social disorder. The only problem is that for prevention you need the gift of clairvoyance and for repression an unshakable faith in the rightness of your policy. And this is exactly what is most lacking at present.

Anyone with any foresight at all must perceive that in the long run the fears outlined above can only be quelled by embracing rather than excluding the other; not by trying to condition people by way of measures, but by understanding people through spending time with them. True prevention is not a question of avoiding but of actively addressing problems. Whichever way you look at it – from the economic viewpoint of an ageing Europe, from the religious viewpoint of the search for meaning in a profoundly secular society, from the psychological viewpoint of the need for respect and recognition, from the demographic viewpoint of a declining social dynamic – in the long term a new infusion of energy is an absolute necessity. But without tolerance, there can be no new energy.

Similar difficulties dog the strategy of repression. Without a strong belief in the moral core of law enforcement, it rapidly degenerates into total arbitrariness. Policy that is not informed by what Georg Simmel once called 'the idea of Europe', an inspirational idea more enduring than today and bigger than the individual, becomes a question of the current fad. Typical European historical lessons, such as the division of the Carolingian Empire, the separation of Church and State, the Balance of Power, the Dialectic of the Enlightenment, the Holocaust and the Yalta legacy, are conveniently forgotten. Politicians concentrate on immediate gains, not on what is really needed. Repression turns into policy for the public stage, a diligent search for scenarios that score well with the media and for individual careers. It is a form of repression that benefits no one in the long run because instead of acting as a corrective, it escalates. We are in the middle of such escalation now.

In short, measures adopted on such muddled grounds have a tendency to be counterproductive. All they do is to invoke yet more measures until the policy as such gets tangled up in itself and its own objectives. Responses such as these serve not to quell the fears of our times but to confirm them. Before you know it, people are hitting out wildly in all directions. Europe, back to square one. You reach a stage when you are thankful for the anaesthetizing effects of consumption,

tourism, museumizing and similar formulas for keeping people quiet. At least they help to postpone full-blown violence.

The mediocre response of mere measures will never be enough to ensure peace, freedom and prosperity. Fear is very often the company on the road to serfdom. So Europe today is yearning for a narrative, a will of its own, a vision, emotional attachment. To achieve that it must shrug off its negativism and embrace European civilization with total conviction. But perhaps it is possible to come up with a different approach that, rather than re-emphasizing civilization as a goal in itself, creates a new one. An approach that is not coercive but participatory. A response that would not interpret Europe as a static territory, with a fixed cultural canon, but as a synchronized experience in time. Mounting fear of the future can only be curbed by finding multiple forms of time-sharing: conversations, collective narratives, rhythms, rituals, shared expectations, daily routines and so on. It is a simple but largely forgotten message: those who share time with one another are more likely to develop mutual understanding. Those who do not share time with one another inevitably grow apart. If, for a variety of historical reasons, such sharing no longer occurs of its own accord, it will have to be organized and propagated. Up till now, European unification has been largely a question of economic and political faits accomplis. But there is not one serious programme for European encounters, the synchronic sine qua non of any kind of integration and nation building. For this the ideal of the animated coffee house, as advanced by that consummate Euro-intellectual George Steiner, will not suffice. What is needed is some genuine, continent-wide brainstorming, a process of active re-invention – and this is precisely what Europe lacks. For too long 'Europe' has been a formula, masquerading as an ideal, the sole purpose of which has been to prevent another war. An instrument for de-escalation. But the question of how Europe is to cope with new global escalations – economic, political and cultural – is becoming pressing. There has been no shortage of forces to shake Europe out of its complacent slumber. But there are scarcely any ideas about how we are to achieve the next step: engaging in a dialogue in order to turn this continent into a new ideas machine. But first it is necessary to explain more precisely why the time factor is so important in all this.

SOCIETY AS CLOCK

Society and Time: it might sound like an abstract, somewhat unrealistic association, but in fact the sharing of time is at the heart of social unity and solidarity. Synchronicity is the cement that binds society. For a long time the rhythm of the years, the rotation of the seasons, the sequence of feast days, was a collective experience. Shared time – whether it be churchgoing, a sporting event, a ball or the weekly episode of well-loved television series – provided plenty of matter for

conversation. The reason people so often start by talking about the weather is that this is still something we experience together. But alternation has made way for omnipresence. Things that used to be regulated by temporal conventions are now permanently available in a pervasive freedom of choice. You can shop any time you want. There is always sport on TV, as well as drama, entertainment and porno. And if it's not on TV, it's on the Internet. Indeed, everything is on the Internet, twenty-four hours a day. There is always work, too. Likewise celebration: symposia, carnivals and other festive occasions. And holidays too, at the drop of a hat. It's a simple matter of taking some of your own free days and heading off – on a hiking trip through the Atlas Mountains, diving along the Great Barrier Reef, snowboarding in the Rockies. The further away the better (the European tourist attractions have long ceased to be the object of eagerly awaited pilgrimages and are more often the setting for a mid-week or weekend break). Instead of a rhythmic succession of events, culture has become a pick-and-choose menu from which the citizen-turned-consumer puts together his or her own programme. Time has become a commodity, complete with a price tag. Lives are no longer devoted to something, but filled with something. Who you are is determined not by your actions but by the trail you leave behind in hundreds of databases. Granted, this is all a bit overstated. Even now one still occasionally encounters people with whom one can arrange to share the important things of life. But the fact remains that the underlying organizational systems have had their day. One could analyse this on various levels but the level of European civilization offers plenty of departure points for an anthropology of time. After all, many moments of synchronicity had to do with cultural values that prevailed throughout the continent and which are now in decline. Secularization has put an end to our God-fearing sharing of the Judaeo-Christian tradition in which the individual was part of a narrative of creation and salvation, in which the time for prayer dictated the daily rhythm and the time for sacrifice gave structure to the year. The dismantling of the great European ideologies has put an end to the utopian notion of life in which today was irrevocably bound up with tomorrow. We are no longer irreversibly and collectively on the road to a better world. Betterment is up to the individual now. Individualization has severed the social temporal ties whereby people experienced things together. In many cases life experience has become a matter of personal choice and not something that is automatically shared with others. All these historical tendencies have resulted in a release from the straitjacket of time that dictated when you experienced moments of value and with whom.

At this critical moment in European history, in which the Union must prove and reassert its relevance and vitality, we find ourselves in the onward-rushing universal here-and-

now. The past is sinking into oblivion while the future has ceased to be the focus of our aspirations. Exit two time dimensions that people can share. As for the here-and-now, it is much more of a personal affair. Yet it is precisely at this moment that we are supposed to cope with an influx of different and competing cultures. Anyone can see that this must lead to problems.

Just as individual lives consist of an accumulation of strictly separate levels of experience, so society as a whole is turning into a pluralist patchwork of diverse temporal experiences. Even in notoriously monocultural suburbia we see an emerging mosaic of black and white schools, full and empty parking spaces, moribund churches and flourishing mosques. It is all part of the clouding of the collective sense of time in multicultural society. Conflicts flare over the organization of time. Pungent cooking smells in the early morning. Five times a day to the house of prayer during Ramadan. Anger when Saint Nicholas fails to visit a 'black school'. Everyone is more wide awake than ever, but nobody knows what time it is for someone else. What this situation teaches us is that time is the fundamental order that binds everything together and without which everything falls apart. An unquestioned acceptance of the clock, diary and calendar is making way for a collection of temporary and arbitrary agreements that are made on purely pragmatic grounds and only remain valid as long as it suits the people concerned. This is the culture that gives rise to the dissatisfaction that has been so keenly evident in most European countries in recent times. It is also at the heart of the integration problem. Far more than a shared language, it is shared time that enables people to live in harmony and to respect one another. Some biologists even go so far as to claim that the ability to empathize with the way another person spends their time is what distinguishes us from animals. And although the perception of time scarcely rates a mention in the current fierce debates on integration, it is a problem that can only be understood in terms of a wide diversity of social attitudes.

What reaction patterns can we detect in the current discourse on society? It is no longer a debate about Left or Right, socialist or capitalist. Although it is certainly possible to treat time as a class war issue, choosing a position is not so much a matter of striking a balance between social justice and individual freedom. Increasingly, positions are adopted in a (usually unconscious) reaction to today's fragmented temporal order. In other words, these reaction patterns are neither ideological nor materialistic but temporal. On the one hand, there is the progressive approach in which the individual right to self-determination with regard to time is central and the tendency towards further atomization of time is not really disputed. According to this way of thinking, it is up to those who think differently to become just as progressive, enlightened and individualistic. On the other

hand, there is a powerful conservative tendency which expresses itself primarily in terms of the preservation of values and standards, but whose real aim is to counter further fragmentation of time with an eleventh-hour appeal to the needs of society. Such thinking betrays a latent jealousy towards those groups which still display the social cohesion inherent to a strongly shared sense of time. After all, the only family that could still be termed the 'cornerstone of society' is the average immigrant family. In the final analysis, the whole debate about Europe as a cultural unity is about how far we can go in personalizing time before that unity ceases to be a unity. Are there no pan-European phenomena that truly bind us together? Absolutely, and not infrequently such things, like 'democracy' or 'enlightenment' or 'romanticism', are regarded as a tediously predictable tyranny of clichés, rather than as something that engages our emotions. Yet time is not held together by vague sentiments but through concrete, public actions. By dialogue.

SYNCHRONICITY

If it is true that all forms of community are ultimately grounded in shared time, one is forced to ask whether our increasing capitulation to divisive time will eventually make community impossible. Conversely, one could start to investigate how the synchronicity underlying every community might be restored. For the subject of this essay, that restoration would be on a European scale. That is what it's about: the synchronization of the experience of time to a level at which you begin to develop a certain generosity towards another person, to their worldview, life rhythm and ideals. But what begins as tolerance of another person's lifestyle often ends in indifference to the other person's time. What begins as a search for 'the other in ourselves' is liable to degenerate into an impatient, even aggressive, search for ourselves in that other. The emancipation of time from the shackles of faith and ideology had a liberating effect on the individual's right to self-determination, but this has in turn resulted in a society in which people have become their own time units, shut up in their time capsules and communicating with one another only via protocols.

According to American sociologist Robert Putnam, the Western world is experiencing a crisis of social capital. Communities are disintegrating as a result of long working hours in the information professions, two-career families, suburbanization, the rise of new media and above all the transition from a civil to a narcissistic society. The result is that people hardly do things together anymore. Yet one of the greatest binding factors for any community is the sharing of drama and the sharing of time. For a continent that is having difficulty reinventing itself, this is where the problem – but also the solution – lies. Europe has turned its back on its own invention, the shared historical drama. Yet, especially given the area of tension it currently finds itself operating in,

it must surely be possible to reinvent it. There is no dearth of suitable historical events: the Fall of the Wall, the war in the Balkans, the transatlantic schism of 9/11, the introduction of a new currency, the expansion of the EU to include the Slavic states. What we now need to find is some way of underpinning these events with a shared experience, hopefully without inducing another huge historical trauma.

It begins with this insight: the most fundamental and consequently most difficult task is to come up with a strategy that brings people together psychologically in a way that is not simply conservative (bring back the good old times), regressive (back to basics) or even reactionary (a call to order). This is a very real danger in the European context. It is all too easy to interpret the unity of time as a nostalgic project, replete with romantic images of wholeness, clarity and security: a 'we'-filled longing for the restoration of family, tribal and blood ties. On this reading Europe is primarily Frankish, has reconciled itself to the Germanic and is now grudgingly prepared to take the Slavic on board. A romantic restoration of something that has never existed, an empire against all odds.

The deracination engendered by globalization conjures up a need for a new point of reference. A longing for a European Ur-mother. But longing is not the same as action. Nostalgia is a very limited form of re-synchronization, even when this nostalgia is shared with others. Were it to form the basis for actual policy, propaganda for a *Europe Profonde* or *Das Europäisches Heim* would not be far away. In Euro-nostalgia all you share is a romanticized memory, an absence, certainly not events. True kinship can only be achieved by experiencing something together. In Europe that has for too long been the Second World War. The entire European Union was based on *Nie wieder Krieg*. As the veterans die out, however, that binding factor is rapidly losing its force. A new experience must be created. Simply breathing new life into the old one will not suffice.

So how is this to be achieved without promoting the cause of the next big disaster? First of all, it cannot be accomplished without a vision. A vision of a form of European temporal culture that encompasses local, national and international policy levels. I would suggest that there are two basic levels on which this vision could manifest itself. One is politics; the other is culture. To begin with the first: there are countless possibilities at the level of policy making. For instance, a European super-ministry for temporal organization, a Ministry of Time, could help to further awareness of the vital importance of synchronicity for the well-being and integration of European nations and peoples. There are many ways of doing this, from a reformulation of multicultural policy to include the notion of time, to an international media campaign. Secondly, such a ministry could work towards

the introduction of European community service. In light of the previously noted importance of collectively shared stages of life, such a compulsory contribution to society, in which everyone could in principle meet fellow members of their generation across all strata of society and all ethnic groups at least once in their life, would have an emotional and stabilizing effect in addition to the obvious practical benefits. Thirdly, many countries have a custom of daily collective ritual, usually with some spiritual overtones. In the US, for example, pupils in public schools begin the day by reciting the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag. Might something similar be feasible for Europe? Fourthly, this ministry could prepare a memorandum setting out quite clearly the temporal consequences of the tension between individual freedom of choice and compulsory collective solidarity. Allowing individual interest to prevail results in less synchronization. But what is really at issue here is not the tension between social justice and individual interest but success factor number one in a society with flourishing social relations: shared time. Fifthly, such a Ministry of Time could propose a series of fiscal measures aimed at promoting synchronization. Taxes on the purchase of time in the form of private services, exemptions for initiatives that create collective time. Sixthly, a lot more could of course be done towards the creation of a temporal organization through an orchestrated action in which the cultural, technological and integration policies, as well as other areas of responsibility of the current European commissioners, are vetted for their time dimension. Seventhly, the machinery of government and politics should also be scrutinized with reference to the aspect of time: sessions of representative bodies, speed of circulation of policy documents, sound bites in political interchange, regular automatic pay raises for civil servants and so on and so forth. Eighthly, there is the task of organizing the media. Thanks to their multiplicity and far-reaching penetration of society, the media are the ideal instrument of synchronization. The average European spends more than two hours a day watching television and whiles away the minutes spent in traffic jams listening to the radio. These hours and minutes are currently consumed by zapping between the growing number of channels and stations that make up the fast food menu of broadcasting. But if government were to become a guardian of public time, it should surely be possible to come up with something other than the distribution of broadcasting frequencies? Instead of leasing out frequencies, the Ministry of Time could assume the task of deploying the available talent to ensure that the channels are dedicated to something of substance. Ninthly, there is an urgent need for an evaluation of the seemingly unstoppable subjectification and individualization of time. As a result of the effect of market forces on the times at which shopping, education, work and leisure activities are available, people are able to draw up their own personal daily timetable without consulting anyone else. Tenthly,

the ministry could consider establishing a number of new national, or still better European, events in support of the collective European identity. This might well entail the commissioning of art and architectural works.

This brings us to that other manifestation of a European vision, the aforementioned mandate of culture to produce or facilitate synchronicity. This vision would be about transforming art and culture from their current focus on hyper-personal universes, unique objects and celebrity status, into a practice of dramatic and creative time sharing. If Europe today is no longer a genuine public realm, no longer a refuge for the mind, no longer a stage for poets and thinkers, no longer the most logical forum for politics or the natural breeding ground of genius. If Europe has forfeited its status as the cradle of democracy and its culture can no longer be relied upon to make it free...what is its culture? If the European citizen is no longer an autonomous, free, upright, approachable, self-assured individual, but rather a consumer whose life is defined not by their deeds but by the digital trails they leave. If everything is recorded and analysed, whether it be by iris recognition, fingerprints, credit card transactions or the ubiquitous CCTV camera. If the integrity of individual Europeans can be readily checked via cradle-to-grave databases and gigantic computer systems that are continuously scouring the Net in search of subversive behaviour patterns. If highly personal data are accessible to parties who do not even know the person concerned...what kind of culture is that? If democracy is on the line in a network society where the bulk of public intercourse takes place on web sites, in chat rooms and electronic voting booths, a society in which the citizen becomes a netizen...what kind of culture is that?

The answer to these rhetorical questions is clear. Such a culture will certainly not be about aesthetically pleasing, meticulously styled object buildings on superb locations, or about untouchable masterpieces of art. Nor even about spatial interventions on troublesome spots, aka site-specific art. Something different is called for and the proposition advanced here is that it should no longer be sought in space or matter, but in *time*. Culture in Europe's public space becomes culture in Europe's public time. In other words, in the time that we share, the time in which we acknowledge the other and the other can get to know us.

Culture could be the intensification of such moments, could ensure that this time is experienced by all and that a language is found in which to express those shared moments. Art-specific time. This art requires new makers, new forms, new organizations and a new public. Culture must begin again from scratch. For a culture that serves the experience of time rather than of place must itself be time-bound. A moment. A momentum. It notes the course of events and

makes use of this. It concentrates not on form but on process. It develops activities that we no longer recognize by the place where they occur, but by the artistic effect they produce. In short, activities characterized not by borders but by border-crossing. Their focus is not on eternity but on history. This art is itself time, a creative moment in the ever so costly public time.

Culture – let it for once not be a sector but an attitude. An attitude that can appear and disappear as needed. Through the dimension of time it can rediscover its indispensability. And by cutting right through society it will also rediscover its public.

Translated from the Dutch by
Robyn de Jong-Dalziel

THE POST- COMMUNIST CONDITION

BORIS GROYS

The expansion of NATO and the European Union into Eastern Europe has often been interpreted as signalling the definitive end of the Cold War. And frequently the impression is that communism, now defunct, represented nothing more than an interruption, interval or delay in the continuous 'normal' development of East European countries – a delay which, once it was over, left no traces other than a certain appetite to 'make up for lost time'. Seen from this perspective, communism appears once again as the spectre of communism, the haunting embodiment of nothing that after its disappearance just evaporated into thin air. On the other hand, to speak of the post-communist condition means giving serious consideration to the historical event that communism was and earnestly inquiring what traces still remain of communism and to what degree the experience of communism still marks our own present reality – but it also means asking why communism can at all be regarded as a mere historical intermission. Incidentally, this inquiry concerns not merely former communist countries but the entire world, which currently finds itself in a condition one could term post-communist.

For a long time communism was nothing more than a promise, a utopia, an intellectual construct and a political vision. This vision looks back on an extensive history of formulation and reformulation, stretching from Plato and Thomas More to the utopian socialist movement of the nineteenth century. But whether or not this vision could be turned into practice remained an unresolved issue throughout its long history. The place of the communist utopia once lay solely in the future; today the place of communism lies in the past: communism took place as an actual event in actual history. The fact that this event has, in the meantime, been concluded is precisely what constitutes its reality. Indeed, even in the context of Soviet socialism, communism nonetheless stood as a future goal and ideological vision. Only once the history of the fulfilment of the communist vision was concluded did it assume a definitive historical reality. Concluded here, naturally does not mean exhausted, obsolete, superseded or proven impossible; what it does mean, among other things and in particular, is that it is released for historical repetition.

Again and again the claim is made that the twentieth-century communist experiment never actually spawned true communism – instead state socialism of the Soviet variety is purported to have been a betrayal of the communist ideal, to have been a totalitarian dictatorship which was more a parody of communism than its true fulfilment. Likewise it is also declared that the actual experience of socialism in fact bears no relevance whatsoever to the formulation and nourishment of the communist ideal – which is why it would be better simply to forget this whole sorry

business. Not merely from, let us say, an anti-communist perspective but from a left-wing, pro-communist point of view too, actual socialism in the twentieth century has proven to be a blank nothing, a simple delay, an interval – and in this instance, a delay in the development of the communist ideal. But this diagnosis only looks convincing at first sight. All fulfilment of an abstract ideal is by definition a betrayal of the ideal; moreover, none of the former ‘actually existing’ socialist countries ever claimed to have achieved communism, but saw themselves merely as transitional forms somewhere down the very long path towards communism.

As a real event in real history, communism is not a ‘system’ or a ‘formation’ or an ‘institution’ but a stage upon which the struggle to build communism as an actual historical option is being waged. In other words, the communist event can be defined as a transfer of the debate about communism out of the theoretical domain into the domain of concrete political action. This event is an amalgam of all kinds of communist orthodoxies and heresies, but to which anti-communism, apostasy and dissidence also belong. The termination of the communist event signifies a renewed transfer of the debate back from the domain of *Realpolitik* into the theoretical domain. The post-communist debate about communism is, however, fundamentally different from the pre-communist debate about communism. For, deep down, all participants in this theoretical discussion now know that, the moment certain circumstances allow this discussion to reassert its influence on the realm of political action, they will all find themselves back in the already familiar event of communism – in the same ‘stage production’ they are so well acquainted with from history. The new production of this stage play is bound to take a different approach – there will be a different cast, some things will probably be done ‘better’, others ‘worse’ – but nonetheless it will inevitably be a repeat performance of the same play. A good analogy to this is found in the endeavours of medieval monarchies to establish a Christian state. It would be quite inappropriate to reproach these monarchies for not having achieved ‘true Christianity’, since Christianity itself envisages its own fulfilment occurring only in the kingdom of God. But in the Middle Ages the question of how one might be admitted to the kingdom of God turned into a political issue, which is why medieval monarchies are genuinely Christian. For that reason Satanists and atheists were also genuinely Christian since they too were participants in the Christian event – just as the anti-communists in the Cold War were integral to the communist event because they fought, and thereby confirmed, communism as an actual political option. Today Christianity inhabits the politically non-committal realm of the ‘freedom of conscience’, but it is clear that as soon as circumstances change to reinvest religion with direct

political relevance, the medieval struggle for the fulfilment of the Christian ideal will also once more attain the same actual political immediacy.

The post-communist condition is not, however, characterized solely by the insight that the establishment of communism, rather than being equated with the coming of the absolute 'Other', is instead – at best – a repeat performance of the same drama with other means. Far more important than this is the fact that, increasingly, the present political situation in the West can be perceived and described in the same terms as Soviet communism once used to be – in other words, as the realization of utopia or the realization of anti-utopia. Western capitalism's self-depiction as utopia stems from the rhetoric of the Cold War. During that period, western capitalism came under considerable pressure to prove its legitimacy, leading the West more and more to advertise itself to a global audience as superior to the communist ideal. In the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, capitalism was generally regarded as being an economically efficient but morally unjust and flawed order; the only reason for accepting it was that human nature, as seen from a still intact Christian perspective, was per se similarly unjust and flawed. Only in the course of the Cold War did an unreserved apologia for the 'actually existing' western capitalist order gradually become audible, since it has been credited not only for being the home of economic affluence but also the true incarnation of human rights, social solidarity, individual creative freedom and the highest standard of morality.

In the era of the Cold War the West trumpeted itself as a model for the entire world – a model that could and should be exported around the globe in the just same way as the communist model was. Accordingly, the West saw itself as the true place of utopia fulfilled – in the manner of an ideological potlatch with Soviet communism. But this gesture has at the same time availed the West to the possibility of total rejection as the fulfilment of anti-utopia. Orwell's vision of an anti-utopian world of total surveillance in a permanent state of emergency was penned as a satire on Soviet society, but in the meantime, its rhetorical application has primarily come to address the current political conditions in the West. The communist demand for the fulfilment of utopia on earth dealt traditional politics a blow from which in all probability it will never recover. For this demand opens up the possibility of wholly accepting or wholly rejecting the exemplary totality of prevailing 'society'; this choice between total affirmation and total negation denies conventional politics all room for manoeuvre. It once used to be chiefly religions whose 'values' could be accepted or rejected in total – society as it de facto existed only offered the political parameters for such a choice. In the post-communist situation it is

individual societies themselves that need to embody certain values as a whole and are then promoted as finished products on the international political market – regardless of whether the particular social model is American, European or Islamic. The historical accomplishment of communism lies precisely in how it transformed actual society into a political model. In other words, it refused to recognize society in its entirety as a historically evolved ‘natural’ entity, and thus as utterly singular, perceiving it instead as an artificial construct that can equally be exported or imported from country to country. The true challenge posed by the Soviet experiment was the claim made by Stalin (and then constantly reiterated by the Soviet leadership) that the Soviet Union represented the place and earthbound incarnation of utopia – if not in the sense of its total fulfilment, then at least in terms of its practical advancement. To win the competition against Soviet communism, its rivals felt compelled not only to appropriate this claim as their own but even to outdo it – and thereby redefine their own societies as universal political models. The present political and cultural situation is the consequence of this protracted one-upmanship. What has been lost is the neutral ground between the affirmation and negation of each individual model of society. The pressure to make a choice is mounting; the question of the distinction between utopia and anti-utopia has become the central political issue of our time.

To put it differently: the communist event introduced an era of the worldwide, international political market for competing models of society. Each of these models hails itself as utopia – and is denounced by its rivals as dystopia. Consequently, this also means that the original scenario of the communist event is repeated not only when communism itself is again treated as an actual option, but also on every occasion when an old or a new post-national project is launched on the international market for political projects, models and systems. These projects and models can be considered post-national in that they become disengaged from a national context and made available for international use. Thus the ‘European project’ is extolled by some as the utopian embodiment of human rights, peace and affluence – and demonized by others as the machinations of an ominous Brussels bureaucracy intent on installing a state of total surveillance and control. Islamic fundamentalism is perceived by its opponents as a reincarnation of the communist nightmare, yet celebrated by its adherents as a universal model of the kingdom of God on earth. One hears talk of the neo-Bolshevism of present-day American neo-conservatives and so on and so forth.

In historical terms, communism was the first of these post-national models of society. The ‘post-national’ character

of the communist event also explains why in the context of *national* history this event can at best be treated as a mere pause or interruption. Every event is an event within a particular history which requires a protagonist if it is to be narrated. Today we are still living in a system of nation states – our historiography can only function as a narrative if its protagonist is a nation or a nation state; the history of mankind manifests itself merely as the sum of all national histories. So for us, an event only becomes historical once it can be narrated as an episode in the history of a nation. Communism, on the other hand, was programmatically anti-national. Its aim was to overcome traditional national differences, to do away with existing national cultural identities and in their place foster a new, global, communist humanity as the protagonist of a new history. But this new post-national humanity never came about – or rather it dissolved at the same time as communism did. Hence the event of communism lost its historical subject, the historical protagonist to whose history it could have belonged.

This, incidentally, is the key difference between communism and fascism or National Socialism, with which communism is commonly equated. Fascism defines itself within the system of nation states as an event in the historical life of a particular nation. This is why fascism occupies a fixed place within any historiography seeking to tell the history of a nation. By contrast, communism's advent is encountered within any national historical narrative at best as a destructive influence from the outside, as the work of the 'Other', of an alien force, as an invasion by spectral powers from the extra-historical non-space of *u-topia*. This is also why a *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) to redeem communism, as analogous to the redemptive process of coming to terms with a fascist past, ultimately fails, since it lacks a subject that could assume responsibility for the communist past. For communism, this subject could only be the spectre of a utopian communist humanity – which has in fact evaporated, just like the 'new class' of communist nomenclature that historically represented this humanity. But spectres cannot assume responsibility for historical deeds of any kind.

Hence a positivist, realistic historiography aspiring to grapple with concrete facts and not spectres finds no social place for communism as such. Instead it generally prefers to proclaim communism as a mere facade intended as a camouflage for solid national interests. Basically, this kind of positivist historiography is a reiteration of the traditional Marxist gesture of demythologizing and demystifying sacred history, which in the eyes of classical Marxism served as a facade intended as a camouflage for solid class interests. However, since class interests, along with Marxism, have vanished from the sights of current historiography, there are no 'real' protagonists of history left besides the nations.

Accordingly, it has now become characteristic for recent historical commentary on formerly communist-dominated East European countries to view communism simply as an ideological facade for Russian imperialism.

Even if such an interpretation might appear corroborated by numerous facts, it should not be forgotten that in Russia itself the suppression of Russian national identity was prosecuted not less, but more forcefully by the apparatus of communist ideology. Besides the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian philosophical tradition, and its historiography and literature from pre-Revolutionary eras were also largely banned or rigorously censored. So it is hardly surprising that the dismantling of the communist regime in the early 1990s was accompanied and spurred on by cries on the streets for 'Russia! Russia!'. In that period the anti-communist revolution in Russia was waged as a fight for national liberation – as a campaign to emancipate Russia from the grip of the Soviet Union and liberate it from the dictatorship of Soviet authorities. The civil war between the Reds and the Whites that first spawned the creation of the Soviet Union had been a war between the communist 'International' and the nationalist 'Russia'; back then the 'International' won. But in the 1980s and 1990s 'Russia' got its revenge. For Russian nationalists today, anything connected with communism is automatically the work of others: Jews, Latvians, Georgians and so on. That, of course, does not mean that Russian nationalists take no pride in the achievements of the Soviet state during the communist era – except that these accomplishments are ascribed solely to the capacity of the Russian people to remain creative, resilient and victorious in the face of the ruinous communist dictatorship. Anything 'good' that arose in the Soviet era is thus ascribed to the Russian nation's cultural identity; anything 'bad' is seen as resulting from the anti-national aspects of communism.

Hence from the 'realistic' perspective of positivist historiography (with nations as its protagonists), the universalist project of communism can be perceived in no other way than as a project of destruction, subjugation and damage. But the same also holds true for all the other post-national projects. In the context of the post-communist condition we are therefore confronted with a strange conundrum: on the one hand, various social projects, models and systems remain on offer on the international political market. Moreover, each social model is now under immense pressure to prove its worth in this global marketplace. And those social models which proclaim to be valid for one nation alone have today justifiably come under suspicion of being ultimately racist. On the other hand, we still lack a historiography that could operate as the history of post-national importable or exportable social projects and models; this would be a different historiography, which rather than

taking the allegedly naturally grown nations as its protagonists would instead turn to 'artificial' and ideologically produced peoples that have come together via shared political projects (such as the communist people or the European people). Only once such a different historiography has been found will the tiresome quest for a supra-national 'European identity' become obsolete; such a historiography would instead raise the question of a hitherto unheard-of new people artificially fostered by a common political project.

Translated from the German by
Matthew Partridge

TOTAL RECALL

BORUT VOGELNIK
(IRWIN)

The current way of speaking and thinking about 'the East' as opposed to 'the West', both generally and in matters of art, is noteworthy for at least two reasons:

1) It refers to a new situation in terms of an old one; what is more, the new situation was originally meant to supersede the old one and to make such terms obsolete: the very recurrence of the old classification now sounds like an omen of defeat.

2) In evoking the topos 'the West and the rest',¹ it adds a subtle twist: while 'the rest' acquires a certain consistency when viewed from 'the West', not only does it fall apart when left on its own, but its components, such as 'the East', come into being only if and when they are articulated into opposition with 'the West'. This way of speaking, then, is merely a shorthand for domination.

Consequently, the opposition does not so much indicate a distinction (and there are solid grounds for one) as point to a hierarchy – and, indeed, not so much to a hierarchy between the two terms (for these are now trivial and almost ethnographic) as to a hierarchical taxonomy. For even before a piece of art, art practice or trend from 'the East' can be spoken of in the usual aesthetic terms (such as 'conceptualist', 'neo-avant-garde', 'media art' and the like), it must first be qualified by the adjective 'Eastern'. Whatever is thus modified will always remain something specific, over-determined, regionally defined and local, as opposed to the things that are considered part of something general, canonical and over-determining – although, in fact, they are merely 'Western'. This is the mechanism encapsulated in point No. 2. 'Eastern', of course, means 'still Eastern' – that is, still prey to its own history, as described in point No. 1. What is 'Eastern' is specific and localized because it is enmeshed within its past, not emancipated from history. Meanwhile, what parades as general and canonical – as the measure against which the peripheral and provincial are to be measured – is something that was long ago emancipated from its history, from any history, for this is why it can be imposed as 'general and canonical'.

When speaking about space, one speaks of *TimeSpace*.² The space of the East is, within the current ideology, very much a timed space. Correlatively, the 'timeless' West is presented as a non-space: it is what all local spaces are to be measured against, for they only arise into being in the face of this non-space of the real existing utopia. To present historicity as a degrading feature that relegates whatever it affects to the obscure periphery and disqualifies any eventual claim to wider relevance by whoever falls prey to its grip, is something more than a strong invitation to amnesia (one that has, presumably, been successfully

1. For an eloquent denunciation of this paradigm, see the introduction to: Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998). The book as a whole provides a theoretical deconstruction of the paradigm and offers an alternative perspective.

2. See Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The Inventions of TimeSpace Realities: Towards an Understanding of Our Historical Systems', in *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press, 1991).

received in the history-free 'West'). Such a view is also in itself the falsification of a history that would rather be forgotten. To present an a-historical non-space as the *telos* and norm is, of course, a suppression of history that, in the same gesture, deforms what is being suppressed. The ideology hinging on the East–West opposition not only robs both sides of their separate histories, it also robs them of their common history – and so precludes any possibility of them having a common history in the future. While this is, of course, true, it is no less true that one can say this only now, when the two sides are no longer operating at cross purposes, but are, in fact, trying to establish communication.

Ever since the historical avant-gardes, the period in which the division between East and West occurred, and right up to the so-called process of transition, these two dimensions of 'late modernity' have been separated not only by physical borders, but also by an 'iron curtain' of ignorance and a *cordon sanitaire* of imposed muteness. I concede, of course, that such generalizing is problematic. Individual artists and their positions cannot, after all, be unreservedly lumped together into a simple opposition, but this can be done, surely, when it comes to the art system, or rather, art systems. The borders of the art system that was being developed in the West did correspond, throughout this period, to the borders of the western world. Its sophisticated tools for the reflection, categorization, distribution and consumption of art did not apply to the art production of the East. (Though a very few artist-immigrants managed to get themselves included in the symbolic order of the art of the West.) The socialist states were not only excluded from the symbolic order of modern art; they themselves also excluded this order. Indeed, the basis of the revolution was precisely the disavowal of the existing symbolic order. The moment of the historical avant-gardes emerges when artistic procedure is turned against this specifically modern understanding of 'art': that is, when the artistic procedures of deconstruction, immanent estrangement and corrosion seize the 'ideology of art', which had previously been the background upon which art was produced. The decisive 'surplus', however – the additional element that could not be developed outside the revolutionary context – was precisely the 'organizational' aspect, the multitude of practices and practical forms that broke with the inherited romantic, individualistic and neo-romantic logic of the 'group' or 'artistic movement' and introduced on a mass-scale a completely new organizational concept, one defined in terms of class. While it may be extreme, it is not absurd to claim that the liquidation of this endeavour towards a revolution in specifically cultural terms was one of the factors that contributed to the ultimate failure of the Bolshevik type of revolution.³ It was replaced by the old/new art system based on presuppositions identical to those

3. This opening section includes material from Rastko Močnik's text 'East', which was written for publication in *East Art Map/Artforum* in *New Moment*. Močnik comments: 'I could not have written the text that follows without my conversations with Borut Vogelink. With no intention to shrink from the responsibility for the unavoidable stupidity of a generalist rumination, I would still like to thank him for the sheer pleasure of an intellectual adventure'.

in the art system of the West. But unlike the West, where the art system managed to be to a large degree internationalized, the states in the East set up their own local and mutually unconnected art systems, each with its own corresponding art historical narrative. The privileged targets of avant-garde artistic procedures – the 'work of art' and 'the author', as well as the aesthetic itself as an autonomous sphere, a set of institutions and a discourse – have once more found a home in the East; the difference, however, is that, because of the localization of the art system, there remains autonomy in judging and determining the quality of individual works of art. In short, just as in many other spheres, we are dealing here with a rejection of the basic assumptions that made the revolution at all possible, with a 'defeat' that occurred long before the defeat that today can hardly be concealed.

The difference between the art system of the West and the art systems of Slovenia⁴ and Yugoslavia – which in their basic assumptions are entirely similar to that of the West – may, apart from their ideological emphases, be reduced to the systems' working mechanisms, which were realized in an autonomy of judgment and domination of the local space. Although the Slovene art system has made a tradition not only of comparing its creativity with that of other nations but also of considering itself a constituent part of the world, declaring its artistic product to be susceptible to global understanding and objective evaluation, nevertheless, the ways in which it differs from the Western system must be taken seriously. The question, indeed, is, how does it participate in the articulation of a system that will possibly, sometime in the future, lead to a truly global art system? Despite the principle of comparing Slovene art production with so-called international art production, there are very few actual comparisons made between concrete Slovene works and international artworks; even rarer are there any comparisons involving current, still vital art developments as they occur. Although there is quite a bit of advanced theoretical activity, contemporary theory is only very rarely applied to concrete art practice in Slovenia. Instead of producing a discourse about (and in conjunction with) current artistic practice – which might establish a dialogue between the so-called international art production and that of Slovenia – Slovene art criticism often behaves as if clearly articulated objective criteria for judging art already exist and some sort of global art now covers the entire planet. It behaves as if somebody else has already established a global art system for us, too, or as if such a system were the natural order of things. In this way, it forgets that, if there is anything obvious about the art system, it is that the criteria for judging this 'natural order' are constantly changing and, for that very reason, have to be constantly imported. As a result, our space does not participate in the formulation of definitions or the

4. While the assertions in the present text primarily relate to experiences with the art systems of Slovenia and socialist Yugoslavia, they can to a large extent be applied, despite numerous differences, to the other countries of Eastern Europe.

establishment of criteria for what is artistic. And this is only logical, since how can we, and why should we, interfere in the natural order of things? It even happens that, from a substantialist point of view, there is condemnation of the way the international structures of the art system function; they are said to be unfair, deficient and so on. About this there can be no doubt, since the system's two key assumptions (about global art and objective criteria for assessment) are unrealistic. What remains unexplained, however, is how we are to recognize fairness and soundness in our own domestic structures. Over decades of autarkic decision making, guaranteed sovereignty produced an art historical narrative that adjusted itself to local needs and aspirations. During the period of mutual exclusion and non-communication – not to mention non-interference – between East and West, this presented no problems whatsoever, just the opposite; non-communication and non-interference provided the perfect conditions for the creation of local mythologies.

What about artists, then? Obviously, artists, or rather their positions, cannot be lumped together into a simple opposition – and not only because of their subjective versatility but also because of the nature of the local art system. Squeezed as we have been between two systems, we have tried to rationalize or pave over their discrepancies, but most often we have simply not wanted to take any notice. Even if one does note the differences in the way the art systems function – and does not consider them merely a reflection of different political systems, which has generally been the case in the past – it undoubtedly becomes more difficult to articulate any sort of position whatsoever, since anything one might think about art is already well-known. And so we try to accommodate ourselves to new things as they come along, since communication with artists, and between artists, is reduced to the presentation of artworks. Here I am thinking of both 'internal communication' within a single country and communication with the so-called international arena. Such reduced, functionalized interest was also characteristic of the way dissident artists were treated during the time of the Cold War. Dissident art was supposed to demonstrate that creative individuals were essentially the same whether in the East or the West and that it was only the repressive systems of the East that prevented this essential similarity from being confirmed. After the fall of the socialist systems, 'Westerners' began to include works by individual 'Eastern' artists in their exhibitions, all in the name of the universality of artistic creation. Nowadays, these artists are no longer proof of an essential similarity suppressed by communism, but rather they are seen as proof that, as far as art production is concerned, there are no longer any differences, so to speak, between the former East and the West.⁵ It seems that the relationship has

5. Robert Fleck, 'Art After Communism?', in *Manifesta 2: The European Biennial of Contemporary Art* (Luxembourg: Agence luxembourgeoise d'action culturelle a.s.b.l. & Casino Luxembourg-Forum d'art contemporain a.s.b.l., 1998), pp. 193–197. Robert Fleck pointed to the disappearance of differences between Eastern and Western young contemporary art in the post-communist context. 'The disappearance of communism from the cultural and political map', wrote Fleck, 'has deeply influenced recent art throughout the world. Since the 1990s, the environment is no longer divided between conflicting alternative social systems. Today's artists need no more [to] take positions in the ideological battle, which marched through [the] European landscape'.

completely changed, but such a rationale shows that the specific narrowing of interest has been preserved.

The production of contemporary art in an environment that not only does not have a comparable, mature art infrastructure but is very often even hostile to art production is something quite different from the production of contemporary art in countries with an extensive gallery and museum structure linked to international currents, a well-organized marketplace and a sense of continuity in the critical-theoretical treatment of present, past and future art production. To say there are no longer any differences between the former East and the West is, at the very least, strange, since we know that in all other areas such differences remain. It is as if, among all the various activities in the East that have been engaged in the difficult process of transformation, only the artistic sphere has been able to change overnight. But the very experts who assure us that the differences have been done away with are very often the same ones who say that the art infrastructure, theoretical discourse and, especially, the art market in the former East have in no way achieved the standards of the West. It is as if concurrent art production – that is to say, individual artworks – in the East and the West may be compared, but the art systems cannot be. In other words, the individual artwork is supposed to have an equal chance of being found worthy, regardless of its conditions of production. Supposedly, there is no relationship whatsoever between the artwork and the way it is linked to the larger system, which is so differently organized in different countries. Who could guess, then, why people in the West should be so involved with the infrastructure, the market, the articulation of current art production and the introduction of new technologies into art? Why, then, did Clement Greenberg write in 1948, 'The main premises of Western art have at last migrated to the USA, along with the center of gravity of industrial production and political power'?

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a feeling of insurmountable distance transformed into a general wish and hope that the two halves of Europe might join together as soon as possible. This was most evident in Germany, which was the only country able to promise an almost instantaneous reunification intended to remove all traces of difference in the living and working conditions between eastern and western regions. Indeed, Germany was a place where conditions for rapid reunification – and the related desire to forget – were optimal. But despite the fact that East Germany was one of the most developed socialist countries and that the amount of capital invested there after 1990 far surpassed investments in any of the other countries in transition, it is now clear that German reunification did not take place all at once. This is even truer with regard to

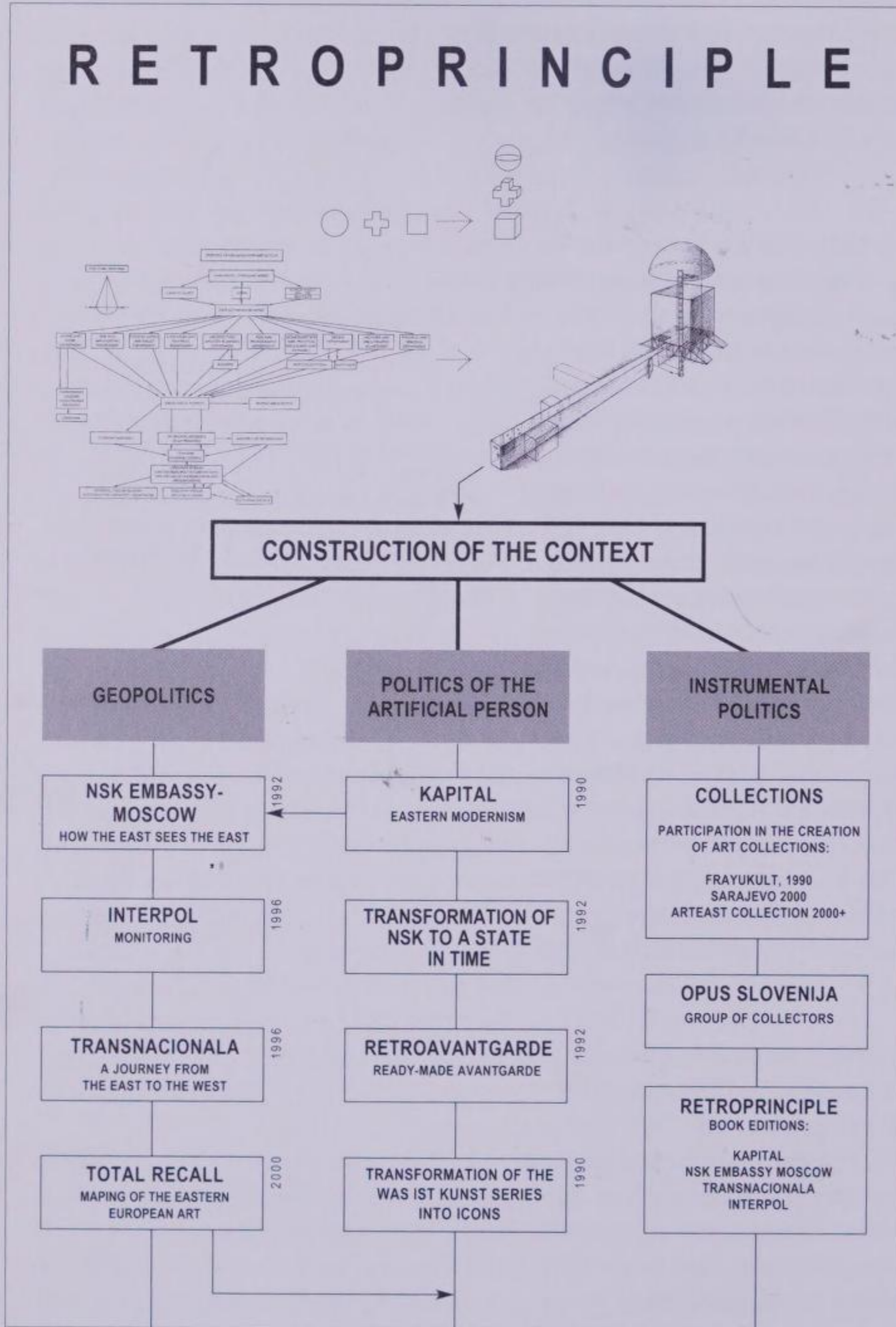
all the other countries that did not have the advantage of a European Union identity. Although the strategy of oblivion is potentially effective, it is at the same time problematic. It might be called a 'black-box' conception of entire social entities. 'Black-box theories do have certain legitimate functions in science: they are economic, and they make it possible to advance by circumventing terrains of ignorance that are difficult to penetrate. But to turn such a makeshift solution into practice, some 130 years after it was first proposed, seems to merit the harsh designation of a celebration of obscurantism', as Goran Therborn puts it.

It seems that the silence of the artists and art scenes of the former East would perfectly complement the aspirations and expectations of both local and foreign experts.⁶ Of course, we have not resigned ourselves to this. Just the opposite, in fact. In certain areas, the field of art is so densely covered by the mesh of criticism, interpretation and so on, that assessments about whether something is or is not art happen on an almost daily basis; thus, any attempt by outsiders to intervene in the system is more or less illusory. But there are long temporal periods in huge geographical territories that remain uncovered. If in the West it is hard to find a single square metre that has not been organized in some way, then in the East there are vast stretches of 'no-man's land' – which is something we have begun to see as a quality. It is hard to imagine that art in the post-socialist countries would preserve the model of self-sufficient non-communicativeness. And if, on the other hand, the global art system wants to be more than just a pretence, then it will have to make room for the countries that have so far been excluded from it. In certain areas, it seems, intervention in the narrative of art history is not only possible, it is inevitable.

I am part of IRWIN, a group of artists (Dušan Mandić, Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek and myself) that was established in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1983. We had no desire to escape our own history; rather, we started putting it to use, and not merely as a circumstance of fact but also as a means. Our key projects in the 1990s were aimed at articulating and constructing the context of IRWIN. Given the specific practice of interpreting and inscribing (or excluding) things in the art history narrative characteristic of the former socialist territories, as well as the fact that the desired oblivion – if not explicitly, certainly implicitly at least – was disrupting the line of any possible historical narration, we made ourselves the point of support. Like Baron Munchausen, we grabbed ourselves by the hair and lifted ourselves up. We decided on the East as the field of reference for our activities out of the following considerations: because we are from the East (although such an assertion is extremely unpopular in Slovenia, it is never-

6. I, too, have to take full responsibility for the 'unavoidable stupidity of a generalist rumination', as Rastko Močnik puts it in note No. 3. There are, of course, several exceptions to this state of affairs, both in the East and the West. But the increasingly present intent to examine in a deeper way the art production of the East only confirms the conviction that our persistence in dealing with these issues is not entirely unjustified.

RETROPRINCIPLE



theless true that, despite certain differences, we were part of the so-called East for nearly half a century; we shared with the East a whole range of characteristic features in the way our society was organized, including the way the operations of the art system were organized; and last but not least, external perspectives also placed us, as a rule, in the East); because even if we wanted to, we could not escape it; because it is impossible to establish communication without first articulating your own position; because in the East it is still possible to intervene in the field of articulation as a 'private individual' on levels that are elsewhere in the exclusive domain of institutions; and because such interventions are, thanks to already familiar models, so much like painting from nature that we were prepared to see them, in their uniqueness and beauty, as artefacts.

We have published five books, which were the final products of five projects stretching over the past fourteen years. The start of our work on the first of these, the project *Kapital*, dates back to the period of the socialist system, which had already been transformed by the time we published the book. Meanwhile, the most recent of these projects will be published in its complete version at a time when Slovenia has already become a full-fledged member of the European Union. These projects, then, literally connect the beginning and end of the period we call 'the time of transition'. But this external correspondence is not the only thing that connects this series of projects with the concept of transition. Transformation is the theme and the content of the Retroprinciple book series.

These projects have a number of points in common, but we will highlight only two of the most important ones. All of them were focused on providing reflection on the modern art of the East, and all of them, from the very start, included as an ultimate goal and central artefact the production of a book. In normal circumstances when an artist does not reflect on his work himself, if he fails to articulate it in communication or writing, then somebody else will do it instead. A problem arises when there is no such someone, when the art system in a given area is organized in a way that impedes communication and articulation. Then the only possibility of communicating with contemporary art production is to assume and refer to someone else's already existing articulation, written in different circumstances for different purpose. And if we hold the view that text is not an external objectivizing addendum to art production but an internal, integral part of it, then we have to undertake communication and articulation on our own.

Already with the project *Kapital*, our suspicions were confirmed with regard to the difference in the way the art systems operated in the East and the West (and here we do not mean the differences that were a programmatic consequence of the differing political systems). We were, indeed, being presented with ample evidence that such differences did, beyond a shadow of a doubt, exist in a whole range of empirical facts and minor details – and some not so minor – that shaped the conditions of production. If we take Karl Marx even a little bit seriously, then we cannot avoid the assertion that the conditions of production determine the production itself. A difference in conditions is reflected in a different kind of production. The Retroprinciple book series begins with a thesis about the specific conditions of art production in the East. Through travels to Moscow⁷ and across the USA⁸ we tried to articulate, in many discussions, this difference, which in the *Interpol* project⁹ materialized as open conflict. Eventually it became apparent that one of the key differences was precisely a difference in the regulation of communication, articulation and inscription – which is something that the Retroprinciple books have, to the best of our abilities, attempted to thwart. It follows, then, that this series should now culminate in *East Art Map (EAM)*, which is a synthesis of the experiences and realizations accumulated over the course of the previous projects. *EAM* deals with the most basic level of organizing information – the drafting of a simple chart of the most important artworks and artists from the area of Europe's East in the period from 1945 to 2000 – something so elemental and obvious that it is easy to overlook just how important it is, given that such a chart does not exist. In Eastern Europe there are, as a rule, no transparent structures in which those events, artworks and artists that are significant to the history of art might be organized into a referential system accepted and respected outside the borders of a single given country. Instead, we encounter systems that are closed within national boundaries, most often based on a rationale adapted to local needs, and sometimes even doubled so that alongside official art histories there are whole series of stories and legends about art and artists who opposed the official art world. But written records about such artists are few and fragmented. Comparisons with contemporary Western art and artists are also extremely rare.

A system that is so fragmented prevents, in the first place, any serious possibility of comprehending as a whole the art created during socialist times. Second, it represents a huge problem for artists who not only lack any solid support for their activities, but are also, therefore, compelled to navigate between the local and international art systems. And third, such a system impedes communication among artists, critics and theoreticians from these countries. Eastern European art requires an in-depth study that will

7. From 10 May to 10 June 1992, the artistic action *Irwin–NSK Embassy* took place in a private Moscow apartment at Leninsky Prospekt No. 12. The action was organized by Apt-Art International and the Ridzhina Gallery. The *Embassy* was conceptualized as a live installation. Besides the documents and artefacts of NSK and their guests Goran Djordjević, Mladen Stilinović and Milivoj Bijelić, the central event of the project was a week-long programme of lectures and public discussions. The lecturers were Rastko Močnik, Marina Gržinić and Matjaž Berger from Slovenia and Vesna Kesić from Croatia, as well as a number of well-known figures from the Moscow conceptual, media and philosophical scenes: Viktor Misiano, Valery Podoroga, Aleksandr Yakimovich, Tatyana Didenko and Artyom Troitsky. The aim of the event was to establish an encounter between the similar social contexts of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. This meeting between individuals with similar aesthetic and ethical interests, as well as similar social experiences, showed that the topic that aroused the most enthusiastic and most intense debates was the art and culture of the 1980s and the specific role these played in the transformation of Eastern Europe. The resulting publication was *Irwin–NSK Embassy Moscow: How the East sees the East*, edited by Eda Čufer and published jointly by IRWIN and Obalne Galerije Piran in 1993.

8. *Transnacionala* was an art project in which an international group of artists (Aleksander Brener, Vadim Fishkin, Yuri Leiderman, Michael Benson, Eda Čufer and the five members of IRWIN – Dušan Mandić, Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek and Borut Vogelник) – set out on a one-month journey across the United States in two recreational vehicles. The aim was to discuss various issues during the course of the trip: art, theory, politics and existence itself – all in the context of the contemporary world. On their way, the group stopped in Atlanta, Richmond, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle. In cooperation with friends and hosts Mary Jane Jacob, Katharine Gates, Randy Alexander, Charles Krafft, Robin Held and Larry Reid, a number of artistic events, presentations and discussions with local art communities were organized. The resulting publication was *Transnacionala*, edited by Eda Čufer and published by SOU Ljubljana, as part of the series KODA, in 1999.

trace its developments, elucidate its complexities and set it in a wider context. But it seems that the very immensity of such a project makes it very difficult to realize, so that any insistence on a complex, unsimplified presentation inadvertently results in there being no presentation at all.

The aim of *EAM* is to display the art from the entire territory of Europe's East, to take artists out of their national frameworks and present them in a uniform scheme. Our objective is not to tell some ultimate truth; rather, it is far more modest and, we hope, more practical. We seek to organize the fundamental relationships between Eastern European artists where these have not been organized, to draft a map and draw up a chart. Today a chart intended to categorize art – the legacy of a classicism that has long been transcended – is rightly seen as something restrictive and, above all, inadequate. And yet, paradoxically, this kind of tabulation, founded in classicism, remains a key tool for orientation, even in the field of art. *EAM* is meant to serve as an orientation tool in the still-uncharted field of the art of the East. There is no need to emphasize just how crucial it is to have a proper orientation in art, just as in other fields. Whenever someone looks at a work by Joseph Beuys, for example, if he is the least bit familiar with art production, he will instantly perceive it in relation to an entire network of other artworks and artists, among whom Beuys occupies an important place. A map of the art produced for the most part in the West is present in almost everyone's consciousness, at least in its simple outlines. Very rarely does it happen that, when looking at a certain work of art, one does not have at least a basic orientation about its place in the art system.

Just the opposite is true when it comes to art originating in the East; in most cases, one is at a loss to say just where and how a work belongs. A great deal of effort is required in deciding whether a given work is of real significance for the production of a certain region. This sort of disorientation is the case not only for art-lovers from the West, but also for most art-lovers in the East. The non-existence of a transparent art system is more than just the consequence of certain conditions in the East; it is, in fact, a constitutive part of the art system in these areas. Instead of a transparent art system that is comparable to others on an international level, what we have to deal with in our region are art historical narratives that are not, as it were, susceptible to being translated into the international art language. The persistence of local mythologies relates not so much to a lack of knowledge or expertise, but rather to the fear of any realignment in the value system. This is why in our region experts from one country have typically not intervened in the interpretation of the art of another country. This principle, for example, held true even on

9. *Interpol* took a long time to be realized, perhaps too long. But this temporal quality, the self-sustaining duration, was something fundamentally inherent in the project. The idea for the project comprised several stages. First, the curators chose artists in Moscow and Stockholm. Then, the chosen artists had to choose a partner (or partners) from among their own circle or from anywhere else (these partners did not necessarily have to be artists), and together they would create a project that was required to possess the quality of totality. This meant they had to develop the entire exhibition space of Farb-fabriken and not only sections of it. As a result, different projects, co-existing in one space, would automatically come into conflict. This is why the next stage was to be a meeting between all *Interpol* participants, including a discussion that was intended to lead to a compromise. The artists had to find a way to adjust their projects in order to exist peacefully side by side. Another possibility was also considered: the first meeting could result in the projects shifting towards greater interactivity where all the participants became involved in a collective work. That is why an additional meeting, a kind of general rehearsal, was not excluded. See Jan Aman and Viktor Misiano's introduction in *Interpol: The Art Exhibition which Divided East and West* (Ljubljana and Moscow: IRWIN and Moscow Art Magazine, 2000), p. 5.

the territory of the former single state of Yugoslavia, where experts from one constituent republic were reluctant to intervene in the art system of another republic – or rather, this happened only very rarely and then it was, as a rule, considered excessive.

In a desire to transgress closed systems of interpretation and evaluation, *EAM* has been organized as a uniform system – this despite the number of countries it encompasses. Given the imperative for intervention, the selection of artists assembled so far is merely the foundation for subsequent phases, which have been planned so as to transgress the borders of these art fiefdoms on various levels and in concrete ways, to the best of our abilities. Our initial assumption was that the memory or awareness of what has actually influenced the development of art in these local areas exists. We invited twenty-four eminent art critics, curators and artists to present up to ten key art projects from their respective countries that originated over the past fifty years. The choice of the particular artworks, artists and events, the description of the relationships between them, as well as their presentation (sometimes accompanied by a more general text about the specific circumstances of the given country) was always left entirely up to the individual selectors.

We invited Inke Arns, Vladimír Beskid, Iara Boubnova, Calin Dan, Ekaterina Degot, Branko Dimitrijević, Marina Gržinić, Sirje Helme, Marina Koldobskaya, Suzana Milevska, Viktor Misiano, Edi Muka, Ana Peraica, Piotr Piotrowski, Branka Stipančić, Janos Sugar, Jiří and Jana Ševčík, Miško Šuvaković, Igor Zabel and Nermina Zildžo to contribute to *EAM*. The initial results of their efforts were published in September 2002 in the magazine *New Moment* (issue no. 20: *Artforum in New Moment*), produced in collaboration between IRWIN and *New Moment* and co-edited by Livia Páldi. The individual selections were combined into a whole in order to allow for comparative views on the chosen material and to present it in the form of a map that can answer basic 'Who? Where? and When?' questions. A CD-ROM for *East Art Map* was also produced, in collaboration with RenderSpace Pristop Interactive from Ljubljana and the Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum in Hagen, Germany. This version of the project was first presented as part of the *Museutopia* exhibition at KEOM Hagen in June 2002.

As the first step of the second phase, *East Art Map* will be transferred to the Internet, where we will invite the public to provide additional data, which may, indeed, change the map's topography. In this way, we will: accelerate the collection of data and democratize its organization; make it possible for anyone to collaborate in the creation of a history that unfolds before our eyes;

and establish a space and create conditions that will facilitate communication among theoreticians, critics and others from all over Eastern Europe.¹⁰ Using the material collected thus far – transformed to some degree by the intervention of interested individuals through the Internet presentation and supplemented by commissioned essays – we intend to produce, ultimately, a single fully integrated publication. We hope this publication will become a useful source of information for the wider public interested in contemporary art. It will also serve as the basis for an exhibition scheduled to take place in October 2005 at the Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum.

If experts from the field of art history and theory, or indeed, anyone who understands things better than we do, should find that *EAM* is somehow lacking or in many ways superficial and imprecise, or that it does not reflect the image that in their opinion should be reflected, then we will have to agree. We have no intention of stubbornly insisting on being right. Just the opposite, since we are well aware of the complexities of the problem we are tackling, as well as our own limitations. Moreover, we do not think it wise, or even possible, to outline such a system once and for all, and we will, of course, be delighted if someone corrects our mistakes. Along with the distinct pleasure of creating such a system, there is also an opportunity rarely afforded to artists, one grounded in the very deficiency of the art system in which we operate. In other words, although we love this specific 'void', at the same time we expect – indeed, we demand – that art historians and theoreticians do their jobs properly. Paradoxically, it is just such a demand that opens up this 'void' – this still living remnant of the former time – in all its fullness.

Local mythologies, which, as is typical of mythologies, do not support critical examination or comparison, have become deeply interwoven in the social fabric of the individual countries. Interventions in such structures personally affect a whole range of people, raising questions about their work and credibility or the value of their property. But it is not merely for private and personal reasons that a whole network of individuals strive to preserve local mythologies; there are also many nobler and more general reasons. The long years of isolation of the national art systems have led to many 'arrangements' (to put it mildly), so that when the local system is forced to confront the international system various things can happen: certain pillars of national art might lose their shine, the symbolic order might be threatened and, in smaller nations where culture plays an even more accentuated role in building national self-esteem, one of the props of national pride might be shaken. The problem is not all that simple, squeezed as we are between a Scylla of local self-sufficiency on one side and a Charybdis of

10. The second phase of *EAM* will be carried out in collaboration with the *Relations* programme of the German Ministry of Culture.

risk to national pride on the other. But if we do not want to place ourselves in the position of the peripheral and provincial, which is expected to measure itself against the established standard, against what parades as general and canonical; if we do not want to be robbed of our own history and wish instead to participate in the construction of a future common history – then we will choose Charybdis.

Translated from the Slovenian by
Rawley Grau

WAS WILL EUROPA?

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

Whenever, in the months before Slovenia's entry to the European Union, a foreign journalist asked me what new dimension Slovenia will contribute to Europe, my answer is instant and unambiguous: NOTHING.

Slovene culture is obsessed with the notion that, although a small nation, we are a cultural superpower: we possess some *agalma*, a hidden intimate treasure of cultural masterpieces that wait to be acknowledged by the wider world. Maybe, this treasure is too fragile to survive intact the exposure to the fresh air of international competition, like the old Roman frescoes in a wonderful scene from Fellini's *Roma* which start to disappear the moment the daylight reaches them... Such a narcissism is not a Slovene specialty; there are versions of it all around Eastern Europe: we value democracy more because we had to fight for it recently, not being allowed to take it for granted; we still know what true culture is, not being corrupted by the cheap Americanized mass culture...

My rejection of such a fixation on the hidden national treasure in no way involves an ethnic self-hatred. The point is just a cruel one: all Slovene artists who made a relevant contribution had to 'betray' their ethnic roots at some point, either by isolating themselves from the cultural mainstream in Slovenia itself or by simply leaving the country for some time, living in Vienna or Paris. It is the same as with Ireland: not only did James Joyce feel the urge to leave it in order to write *Ulysses*, his masterpiece about Dublin; Yeats himself, the poet of Irish national revival, spent years in London. The greatest threats to national tradition are its local guardians who warn about the danger of foreign influences.

Furthermore, the Slovene attitude of cultural superiority finds its counterpart in the Western patronizing cliché according to which, the East European post-communist countries are a kind of retarded poor cousins who will be admitted back into the family if they will behave properly. Recall the reaction of the press to the last elections in Serbia where the nationalists gained big – this was read as a sign that Serbia is 'not yet ready for Europe'. A similar process is going on now in Slovenia: the fact that nationalists collected enough signatures to enforce a referendum about the building of a mosque in Ljubljana is sad enough; the fact that the majority of the population thinks that one should not allow the mosque is even sadder; and the arguments evoked (should we allow our beautiful countryside be spoiled by a minaret that stands for fundamentalist barbarism, etc.) make oneself ashamed of being a Slovene. In such cases, the occasional threats from Brussels cannot but appear welcome: show multiculturalist tolerance or...

However, this simplified picture is not all the truth. The first complication is the strange fact that the very ex-communist countries which are the most ardent supporters of the US 'war on terror' deeply worry that their cultural identity, their very survival as nations, is threatened by the onslaught of cultural 'Americanization' as the price for the immersion into global capitalism – we thus witness the paradox of pro-Bushist anti-Americanism. In Poland, the most ardent supporter of US politics is the ex-Communist president Kwasniewski, while the main opposition to the participation of Poland in the anti-Iraq coalition comes from the Rightist parties. Towards the end of January 2003, the Polish bishops also demanded from the government that it should add to the contract which regulates the membership of Poland in the European Union a special paragraph guaranteeing that Poland will 'retain the right to keep its fundamental values as they are formulated in its constitution' – by which, of course, are meant the prohibition of abortion, of euthanasia and of same-sex marriages. In Slovenia, my own country, there is a similar inconsistency: the Rightist nationalists reproach the ruling Centre-Left coalition that, although it is publicly for joining NATO and supporting the US anti-terrorist campaign, it is secretly sabotaging it, participating in it for opportunist reasons, not out of conviction. At the same time, however, it is reproaching the ruling coalition that it wants to undermine Slovene national identity by advocating full Slovene integration into westernized global capitalism and thus drowning Slovenes into contemporary Americanized pop culture. The idea is that the ruling coalition sustains pop culture, stupid TV amusement, mindless consumption, etc., in order to turn Slovenes into an easily manipulated crowd unable of serious reflection and firm ethical posture... In short, the underlying motif is that the ruling coalition stands for the 'liberal-Communist plot': ruthless unconstrained immersion in global capitalism is perceived as the latest dark plot of ex-Communists enabling them to retain their secret hold on power.

The almost tragic misunderstanding is that the nationalists, on the one hand, unconditionally support NATO (under US command), reproaching the ruling coalition with secretly supporting anti-globalists and anti-American pacifists, while, on the other hand, they worry about the fate of Slovene identity in the process of globalization, claiming that the ruling coalition wants to throw Slovenia into the global whirlpool, not worrying about the Slovene national identity. Ironically, the new emerging socio-ideological order these nationalist conservatives are bemoaning reads like the old New Left description of 'repressive tolerance' and capitalist freedom as the mode or appearance of unfreedom.

This ambiguity of the Eastern European attitude finds its perfect counterpart in the ambiguous message of the West to post-communist countries. Recall the two-sided pressure the US was exerting on Serbia in the summer of 2003: the US representatives simultaneously demanded that the Serbian government deliver suspected war criminals to the court in The Hague (in accordance with the logic of the global Empire which demands a trans-state global judicial institution) *and* to sign the bilateral treaty with the US obliging Serbia not to deliver to any international institution (i.e., to the *same* court) US citizens suspected of war crimes or other crimes against humanity (in accordance with the nation state logic) – no wonder the Serb reaction is one of perplexed fury. And a similar thing is going on at the economic level: while putting pressure on Poland to open its agriculture to market competition, Western Europe is flooding the Polish market with agricultural products heavily subsidized from Brussels.

How do post-communist countries navigate themselves in this sea with conflicting winds? If there is an ethical hero of recent times in ex-Yugoslavia, it is Ika Saric, a modest judge in Croatia who, without any clear public support and in the middle of threats to her life, condemned general Mirko Norac and his colleagues to twelve years in prison for the crimes committed in 1992 against the Serb civilian population. Even the Leftist government, afraid of the threat of the Rightist nationalist demonstrations, refused to stand firmly behind the trial against Norac. However, when, in the middle of the threats by the nationalist Right of large public disorders which should topple the government, the sentence was proclaimed, 'Nothing Happened': the demonstrations were much smaller than expected and Croatia 'rediscovered' itself as a state of the rule of law. It was especially important that Norac was not delivered to The Hague, but condemned in Croatia itself – Croatia thus proved that it does not need international tutelage. The dimension of the act proper consisted in the shift from the impossible to the possible: before the sentence, the nationalist Right with its veteran organizations was perceived as a powerful force not to be provoked, and the direct harsh sentence was perceived by the liberal Left as something which 'we all want, but, unfortunately, cannot afford in this difficult moment, since chaos would ensue' – however, after the sentence was proclaimed, nothing happened, the impossible turned into routine. If there is any dimension to be redeemed of the signifier 'Europe', then this act was 'European' in the most pathetic sense of the term.

And if there is an event which embodies cowardice, it is the behaviour of the Slovene government after the outbreak of the US–Iraq war. Slovene politics desperately tried to steer a middle course between US pressure and the unpopularity

of the war with the majority of the Slovene population. First, Slovenia signed the infamous Vilnius Declaration for which it was praised by Rumsfeld and others as part of the 'new Europe', of the 'coalition of the willing' in the war against Iraq. However, after the foreign minister signed the document, there ensued a true comedy of denials: the minister claimed that, before signing the document, he consulted the president of the republic and other dignitaries, who promptly denied that they knew anything about it; then, all concerned claimed that the document in no way supports the unilateral US attack on Iraq, but calls for the key role of the UN. The specification was that Slovenia supports the disarmament of Iraq, not the war on Iraq. However, a couple of days later, there was a bad surprise from the US: Slovenia was not only explicitly named among the countries who would participate in the 'coalition of the willing', but was even designated as the recipient of financial aid from the US to its war partners. What ensued was pure comedy: Slovenia proudly declared that it would not participate in the war against Iraq and demanded to be stricken from the list. After a couple of days, a new embarrassing document was received: the US officially thanked Slovenia for its support and help. Slovenia again protested that it did not qualify for any thanks, it refused to recognize itself as the proper addressee of the letter of thanks, in a kind of mocking version of 'please, I do not really deserve your thanks!', as if sending us its thanks is the worse thing the US can do to us now... Usually, states protest when they are unjustly criticized; Slovenia protests when it receives signs of gratitude. In short, Slovenia behaved as if it was not the proper recipient of the letters of praise which went on and on – and what we all knew was that, in this case also, the letter *did* arrive at its destination.

The ambiguity of Eastern Europeans is therefore just the mirror of inconsistencies of Western Europe itself. Late in his life, Freud asked the famous question, '*Was will das Weib?*', admitting his perplexity when faced with the enigma of feminine sexuality. And a similar perplexity emerges today, when post-communist countries are entering the European Union: which Europe will they be entering?

The ongoing 'war on terror' effectively confronts us with the two main ideological features 'Europe' stands for: it is perceived either as a symbol of democratic universalism in contrast to more traditional ethics grounded in a particular way of life, or as a monstrous aberration, the symbol of an excessive hubris, of the imperialist expansion and domination which disturbs some presupposed holistic balance. What I want to propose are three theses: that 'Europe' effectively designates both of these things; that the conjunction of these opposite features is what I am

tempted to refer to as the Christian-democratic legacy; and that today, this legacy is more precious and worth fighting for than ever.

In what sense does Christianity provide the foundation of human rights and freedoms? There are, *grosso modo*, two basic attitudes discernible in the history of religions. On the one hand, there is the pagan Cosmos, the divine hierarchical order of cosmic Principles, which, when copied onto society, gives the image of a congruent edifice in which each member is at its own place. The supreme Good is here the global balance of Principles, while the Evil stands for their derailment or derangement, for the excessive assertion of one Principle to the detriment of others (of the masculine Principle to the detriment of the feminine one, of Reason to the detriment of Feeling...); the cosmic balance is then re-established through the work of Justice which, with its inexorable necessity, sets things straight again by crushing the derailed element. With regard to the social body, an individual is 'good' when he acts in accordance with his special place in the social edifice (when he respects Nature which provides food and shelter, when he shows respect for his superiors who take care of him in a fatherly way), and Evil occurs when some particular strata or individuals are no longer satisfied with their proper place in it (children no longer obey parents, servants no longer obey their masters, the wise ruler turns into a capricious cruel tyrant...). The very core of pagan Wisdom resides in the insight into this cosmic balance of hierarchically ordered Principles, more precisely, into the eternal circuit of the cosmic catastrophe (derailment) and the restoration of Order through just punishment. Perhaps the most elaborated case of such a cosmic order is the ancient Hindu cosmology, first copied onto the social order in the guise of the system of casts, and then onto the individual organism itself in the guise of the harmonious hierarchy of its organs (head, hands, abdomen...); today, such an attitude is artificially resuscitated in the multitude of New Age approaches to nature and society.

Christianity introduces here a principle that, measured by the standards of the pagan cosmology, cannot but appear as a monstrous distortion: each individual has an immediate access to the universality (of the Holy Spirit, or, today, of human rights and freedoms); I can participate in this universal dimension directly, irrespective of my special place within the global social order. Do Christ's 'scandalous' words from Luke not point in this direction: 'if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes even his own life – he cannot be my disciple' (14:26)? Here, of course, we are not dealing with a simple brutal hatred demanded by a cruel and jealous God: family relations stand for the entire socio-symbolic network, for any

particular ethnic 'substance' that determines our place in the global Order of Things. The 'hatred' enjoined by Christ is therefore not a kind of pseudo-dialectical opposite to love, but a direct expression of what Saint Paul, in Corinthians I 13, deployed with an unsurpassable power as *agape*, the key intermediary term between faith and hope: it is love itself that enjoins us to 'unplug' from our organic community into which we were born, or, as Saint Paul put it, for a Christian, there are neither men nor women, neither Jews nor Greeks... No wonder that, for those fully identified with the Jewish 'national substance', as well as for the Greek philosophers and the proponents of the global Roman Empire, the appearance of Christ was perceived as a ridiculous or traumatic scandal.

And is not (at a different level, of course) a similar 'uncoupling' at work in passionate sexual love? Is not such love one of the greatest pulverizers of social hierarchy? When, in the balcony scene, Romeo and Juliet solemnly proclaim their renunciation to and hatred of their own family names (Montague, Capulet) and thus 'unplug' themselves from their particular (family) social substance, do they not provide the supreme example of what 'hatred of one's parents' as the direct expression of love is? And, furthermore, do we not encounter something similar in democratic 'unplugging': we are all directly members of the democratic collective, irrespective of our place in the intricate set of relations that form our respective communities?

So what is democracy, at its most elementary? A phenomenon which, for the first time, appeared in ancient Greece when the members of the *demos* (those with no firmly determined place in the hierarchical social edifice) demanded that their voice be heard against those in power. They not only protested the wrong they suffered and wanted their voice be recognized and included in the public sphere, on an equal footing with the ruling oligarchy and aristocracy; even more, they, the excluded, those with no fixed place within the social edifice, presented themselves as the embodiment of the Whole of Society, of the true Universality: 'we – the "nothing", not counted in the order – are the people, we are All against others who stand only for their particular privileged interest'. The political conflict proper designates the tension between the structured social body in which each part has its place, and 'the part with no-part' which unsettles this order on account of the empty principle of universality, of what Étienne Balibar calls *égaliberté*, the principled equality of all men qua speaking beings – up to the *liumang*, 'hoodlums', in the present feudal-capitalist China, those who are displaced and freely float, lacking their work-and-residence, but also cultural or sexual identity and registration.

Politics proper thus always involves a kind of short-circuit between the Universal and the Particular: the paradox of a universal Singular, of a singular which functions as the stand-in for the Universal, destabilizing the 'natural' functional order of relations in the social body. This identification of the part of society with no properly defined place within it (or resisting the allocated subordinated place within it) is the elementary gesture of politicization, discernible in all great democratic events from the French Revolution (in which *le troisième état* proclaimed itself identical to the Nation as such, against the aristocracy and clergy) to the demise of East European socialism (in which dissident 'forums' proclaimed themselves representative of the entire society against the Party *nomenklatura*). In this precise sense, politics and democracy are synonymous: the basic aim of anti-democratic politics always and by definition is and was depoliticization, the demand that 'things should return to normal', with each individual sticking to his or her particular job.

Although the ongoing 'war on terror' presents itself as the defence of this legacy, it courts the danger clearly perceived a century ago by G.K. Chesterton who, in his *Orthodoxy*, deployed the fundamental deadlock of the critics of religion: 'Men who begin to fight the Church for the sake of freedom and humanity end by flinging away freedom and humanity if only they may fight the Church.... The secularists have not wrecked divine things; but the secularists have wrecked secular things, if that is any comfort to them'.

Does the same not hold for the advocates of religion themselves? How many fanatical defenders of religion started with ferociously attacking the contemporary secular culture and ended up forsaking any meaningful religious experience? In a similar way, many liberal warriors are so eager to fight the anti-democratic fundamentalism that they will end by flinging away freedom and democracy themselves if only they may fight terror. They have such a passion for proving that non-Christian fundamentalism is the main threat to freedom that they are ready to fall back on the position that we have to limit our own freedom here and now, in our allegedly Christian societies. If the 'terrorists' are ready to wreck this world for love of the another world, our warriors on terror are ready to wreck their own democratic world out of hatred for the Muslim other. Some of them love human dignity so much that they are ready to legalize torture – the ultimate degradation of human dignity – to defend it.

A whole series of recent initiatives point in this direction: from the US rejection of The Hague global war crimes court to national political initiatives like Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System) and debates about the

need to legitimize torture. When, in his new book *Why Terrorism Works*, Alan Dershowitz not only condemns what he perceives as the international community's reluctance to oppose terrorism, but also provokes us to 'think the unthinkable', like legalizing torture, i.e., changing the laws so that, in exceptional situations, courts will have the right to issue 'torture warrants', his argumentation is not as easy to counter as it may appear. First, torture 'unthinkable'? Is it not going on all the time everywhere? Secondly, if one follows Dershowitz's utilitarian line of argumentation, could one not also argue for the legitimacy of terror itself? In the same way one should torture a terrorist whose knowledge can prevent the death of many more innocent people, why not fully condone terror, at least against military and police personnel waging an unjust war of occupation, if it can prevent violence on a much larger scale? Here, then, we have a nice case of the Hegelian opposition of In-itself and For-itself: 'for itself', with regard to his explicit goals, Dershowitz is, of course, ferociously attacking terrorism – however, 'in itself or for us', he is succumbing to the terrorist lure, since his argumentation against terrorism already endorses terrorism's basic premise.

Unfortunately, the US is not alone in this tendency. Recently, an ominous decision of the European Union passed almost unnoticed: the plan to establish an all-European border police force to secure the isolation of the Union territory and thus to prevent the influx of the immigrants. *This* is the truth of globalization: the construction of *new* walls safeguarding the prosperous Europe from the immigrant flood. One is tempted to resuscitate here the old Marxist 'humanist' opposition of 'relations between things' and 'relations between persons': in the much celebrated free circulation opened up by global capitalism, it is 'things' (commodities) which freely circulate, while the circulation of 'persons' is more and more controlled. This new racism of the developed world is in a way much more brutal than the previous one's: its implicit legitimization is neither naturalist (the 'natural' superiority of the developed West) nor any longer culturalist (we in the West also want to preserve our cultural identity), but the unabashed economic egotism – the fundamental divide is the one between those included into the sphere of (relative) economic prosperity and those excluded from it. What lies beneath these protective measures is the simple awareness that the present model of late capitalist prosperity *cannot be universalized* – the awareness formulated with a brutal candour more than half a century ago by George Kennan:

We [the US] have 50 percent of the world's wealthy but only 6.3 percent of its population. In this situation, our real job in the coming period...is to maintain this

position of disparity. To do so, we have to dispense with all sentimentality...we should cease thinking about human rights, the raising of living standards and democratization.

And the sad thing is that, concerning this fundamental awareness, there is a silent pact between Capital and (whatever remains of) the working classes – if anything, the working classes are *more* sensitive to the protection of their relative privileges than the big corporations. This, then, is the social and political reality behind the discourse of universal human rights: *the Wall separated those covered by the umbrella of Human Rights and those excluded from its protective cover* – do we, in the West, have any right to condemn the excluded when they use any means, inclusive of terror, to fight their exclusion? What we find reprehensible and dangerous in US politics and civilization is thus *a part of Europe itself*, one of the possible outcomes of the European project. There is no place for self-satisfied arrogance: the US is a distorted mirror of Europe itself. Back in the 1930s, Max Horkheimer wrote that those who do not want to speak (critically) about liberalism should also keep silent about fascism. *Mutatis mutandis*, one should say to those who detract the new US imperialism: those who do not want to engage critically with Europe itself should also keep silent about the US.

What this means is that, if one is to redeem European legacy, the first move should be radically self-critical: suffice it to recall the total ethico-political fiasco of Europe when faced with the Yugoslav crisis of the early 1990s. There is a grain of truth in Rumsfeld's ironic pun against the 'old Europe'. The French-German united stand against the US policy apropos Iraq should be read against the background of the French-German summit a month ago in which Chirac and Schröder basically proposed a kind of dual Franco-German hegemony over the European Community. So no wonder that anti-Americanism is at its strongest in 'big' European nations, especially France and Germany: it is part of their resistance to globalization. One often hears the complaint that the recent trend of globalization threatens the sovereignty of the nation states; here, however, one should qualify this statement: *which* states are most exposed to this threat? It is not the small states, but the second-rung (ex-)world powers, countries like United Kingdom, Germany and France: what they fear is that, once fully immersed in the newly emerging global Empire, they will be reduced at the same level as, say, Austria, Belgium or even Luxembourg. The refusal of 'Americanization' in France, shared by many Leftists and Rightist nationalists, is thus ultimately the refusal to accept the fact that France itself is losing its hegemonic role in Europe. The levelling of weight between larger and smaller nation states should thus be counted among the beneficial

effects of globalization: beneath the contemptuous deriding of the new Eastern European post-communist states, it is easy to discern the contours of the wounded narcissism of the European 'great nations'.

And things are no better with the Leftist nostalgia for the old Social Democratic welfare state 'betrayed' by the Third Way Left. This nostalgia is also false, since one should ask the obvious hard question: *what was, effectively, the alternative?* If today's 'post-politics' is opportunistic pragmatism with no principles, then the predominant Leftist reaction to it can be aptly characterized as 'principled opportunism': one simply sticks to old formulas (welfare state, etc.), and calls them 'principles', dispensing with the detailed analysis of how the situation changed – and thus retaining one's position of *die schoene Seele*.

If the Left were to choose the 'principled' attitude of fidelity to its old program, it would simply marginalise itself. The task is a much harder one: to rethink thoroughly the Leftist project, beyond the alternative of 'accommodation to new circumstances' and sticking to the old attitude. Apropos of the disintegration of state socialism two decades ago, one should not forget that, at approximately the same time, the western Social Democratic welfare state ideology was also dealt a crucial blow, that it also ceased to function as the imaginary able to arouse a collective passionate following. What these two defeated ideologies shared is the notion that humanity as a collective subject has the capacity to somehow limit impersonal and anonymous socio-historic development, to steer it in a desired direction. Today, such a notion is quickly dismissed as 'ideological' or 'totalitarian': the social process is again perceived as dominated by an anonymous Fate beyond social control. The rise of global capitalism is presented to us as such a Fate, against which one cannot fight – one either adapts oneself to it or one falls out of step with history and is crushed. The only thing one can do is to make global capitalism as human as possible, to fight for 'global capitalism with a human face' (this is what, ultimately, the Third Way is about).

In an old joke from the defunct German Democratic Republic, a German worker gets a job in Siberia; aware of how all mail will be read by censors, he tells his friends: 'Let's establish a code: if a letter you will get from me is written in ordinary blue ink, it is true, if it is written in red ink, it is false'. After a month, his friends get the first letter written in blue ink: 'Everything is wonderful here: stores are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and properly heated, movie theatres show films from the West, there are many beautiful girls ready for an affair – the only thing unavailable is *red ink*...'. Is this not the very matrix of how ideology functions, not only in 'totalitarian' conditions

of censorship, but, perhaps even more, in the more refined conditions of liberal censorship? We 'feel free' because we lack the very language to articulate our unfreedom. What this lack of red ink means is that, today, all the main terms we use to designate the present conflict – 'war on terror', 'human rights', etc. – are *false* terms, mystifying our perception of the situation instead of allowing us to think it: our 'freedoms' themselves serve to mask and sustain our deeper unfreedom.

And is it not the same with the choice 'democracy or fundamentalism'? Is it not that, within the terms of this choice, it is simply not possible to choose 'fundamentalism'? What is problematic in the way the ruling ideology imposes on us this choice is not 'fundamentalism' but, rather, *the specific content concealed under the umbrella of 'democracy'*: as if the only alternative to 'fundamentalism' is the system of parliamentary liberal democracy in conjunction with today's global capitalism. The basic message of the mass media is: the easy games are over now, one should *take sides* – are you against or for (terrorism)? And, since nobody is openly *for*, this means that doubt itself, a questioning attitude, is denounced as implicit support of terrorism... *This, precisely, is the temptation to be resisted: precisely in such moments of the apparent clarity of choice, mystification is total.* The choice proposed to us is *not* the true choice. Today, more than ever, one should gather the strength to step back and reflect upon the background of the situation.

The standard complaint addressed by many American liberals to the European Leftists was that they did not show enough sincere compassion with the victims of the September 11 attacks. Along the same lines, the American reproach to European criticism of its politics is that this is a case of envy and frustration at being reduced to the secondary role, of the European inability to accept one's limitation and (relative) decline; however, is it not the opposite which holds even more? Is not the surprise at why are they not loved for what they are doing to the world the most fundamental American reaction (at least) since the Vietnam War? We just try to be good, to help others, to bring peace and prosperity, and look what we get in return... The fundamental insight of movies like John Ford's *Searchers* and Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* is still more than relevant.

These complaints are sustained by the more fundamental unspoken reproach that Europeans do not really share the American Dream – the reproach is in a way fully justified. To put it bluntly, do we want to live in a world in which the only choice is between the American civilization and the emerging Chinese authoritarian-capitalist one? If the answer is no, then the only alternative is Europe. The Third

World cannot generate a strong enough resistance to the ideology of the American Dream; in the present constellation, it is only Europe which can do it. The true opposition today is not the one between the First World and the Third World, but the one between the Whole of First and Third World (the American global Empire and its colonies) and the remaining Second World (Europe). Apropos Freud, Theodor Adorno claimed that what we are getting in the contemporary 'administered world' and its 'repressive desublimation' is no longer the old logic of repression of the Id and its drives, but a perverse direct pact between the Superego (social authority) and the Id (illicit aggressive drives) at the expense of the Ego. Is not something structurally similar going on today at the political level, the weird pact between postmodern global capitalism and the pre-modern societies at the expense of modernity proper? It is easy for the American multiculturalist global Empire to integrate pre-modern local traditions – the foreign body which it effectively cannot assimilate is European modernity. Jihad and McWorld are the two sides of the same coin, Jihad is already McJihad.

The key news from China in 2002 was the emergence of a large-scale workers movement, protesting the work conditions which are the price for China rapidly becoming the world's foremost manufacturing location, and the brutal way the authorities cracked down on it – new proof, if one is still needed, that China is today the ideal capitalist state: freedom for capital, with the state doing the 'dirty job' of controlling the workers. China as the emerging superpower of the twenty-first century thus seems to embody a new kind of ruthless capitalism: disregard for ecological consequences, disregard for workers' rights, everything subordinated to the ruthless drive to develop and become the new superpower. The big question is: what will the Chinese do with regard to the biogenetic revolution? Is it not a safe wager that they will throw themselves into unconstrained genetic manipulation of plants, animals and humans, bypassing all our 'Western' moral prejudices and limitations?

The dilemma Europe faces here is not abstract: the properly dialectical paradox is that we may lose 'Europe' through its very defence. On behalf of the 'war on terror', a certain positive vision of global political relations is silently imposed on us, Europeans. And if the democratic legacy of Europe is to survive, one should take the September 11 fiasco as the last warning that the time is running out, that Europe should move fast to ascertain itself as *an autonomous ideological, political and economic FORCE with its own priorities*. Not Third World resistance to Americanized globalism, but unified Europe is the only feasible counterpoint to the USA and China as the two

global powers. Consequently, the Left should unabashedly appropriate the slogan of unified Europe as a counterforce to Americanized globalism.

This, then, is the only true question beneath the self-congratulatory celebrations that accompany the extension of the European Union: *What Europe are we joining?* And when confronted with this question, we are all in the same boat, 'New' and 'Old' Europe.

One of the aims of this book, reflected in our selection of both newly commissioned and anthologized texts, is an attempt to mark a shift in the discourse about the cultural, geographical, political and artistic impact of the collapse of communism in Europe. Although on a political level, the early years of the 1990s were dominated by the use of relatively simplistic concepts of 'East' and 'West' that owed a heavy debt to the old rhetoric of the Cold War, a tentative optimism permeated the activity of artists and intellectuals. While it was clear that the divisions the Iron Curtain imposed on European cultural and artistic activity would not be easily overcome by the end of the communist regimes in the Eastern bloc, there was also hope that freedom of movement, the development of shared knowledge, collaboration, exchange and access to information – especially via the web – could help to quickly permeate the divide. Towards the end of the 1990s, however, a new kind of critique began to be voiced by artists, writers and intellectuals who re-articulated the complexities and contradictions of 'united' Europe. Certain events over the past five years such as NATO expansion and the Kosovo War, philanthropist George Soros's decision to withdraw financial support from the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art Network, and more recently, 9/11 and the US-led war in Iraq were important catalysts in these debates. The anthology contains six key texts written during this period that are influential points of reference and whose arguments are relevant to the further development of the discourse.

Inke Arns and Andreas Broeckmann's text, *Rise and Decline of the Syndicate: the End of an Imagined Community*, charts the birth, life and death of the Syndicate, an extremely dynamic Internet mailing list that connected artists, theorists and others interested in media culture from all over Europe. The people on the network often discussed pressing issues in European culture and politics, and attempted to reconceptualize them through the notion of 'Deep Europe'. 'Deep Europe' – a term attributed to a few and further defined by many – is a kind of 'vertical mapping, or a vertical measuring, of the different cultural layers and identities in Europe'. In his essay *Europe: Vanishing Mediator?*, Étienne Balibar calls upon intellectuals – specifically European intellectuals – to address the urgent political questions of our time and to 'reject the non-political temptation', in part by acting as translators or travellers who continuously broaden their knowledge and interpret the world. Balibar also specifically analyses the calls from American liberals toward European intellectuals for support after 9/11, and addresses Europe as an unresolved political problem – not just a geographical entity – whose intellectuals need to aid in the development of a new philosophical conception of Europe that is less defined by national borders and national citizenship. Robert Fleck's essay *Post-Communist Art* is a newly translated extended version of his essay *Art after Communism?* which appeared in the *Manifesta 2* catalogue

(1998). In the essay, Fleck made the oft-quoted and oft-misunderstood claim: 'Today's artists need no more [to] take positions in the ideological battle, which marched through the European landscape from 1917'. While Fleck believes there are no longer any significant aesthetic differences between the work of young artists from Central and Eastern Europe and those in the West, he also recognizes that the conditions of artistic production and reception in Central and Eastern Europe still differ from the West in important practical and philosophical ways. In addition, Fleck addresses the impact of the Soros Centers of Contemporary Art, which were established in every post-communist country in the early 1990s. Bojana Pejić, co-curator of *After the Wall* (1998, Stockholm), an extensive exhibition of post-communist art, discusses the politics and problems of naming post-communist countries and art from the region in her catalogue essay *The Dialectics of Normality*. Struggling in the absence of an adequately complex 'geo-linguistic' convention that could locate not only a precise geography, but also a cultural, political or social history of the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe and the former USSR, she also asks what it means for an artist from one of these areas to be labelled as such. The author also analyses the rhetoric of European Union discourse, suggesting that it relates to – and in some cases mirrors – socialist propaganda's use of notions such as 'building the future', 'becoming' and the vision of a 'harmonious cooperative future'. In his text *Central Europe in the Face of Unification*, Piotr Piotrowski takes on the problem of artistic geography from a different perspective by considering the way that Central and Eastern European art has been categorized and exhibited in recent history. Piotrowski proposes that the paradigm of artistic geography, which is characterized by the concept of exhibiting art works based on the artists' geographical location or nationality, needs to be replaced by a kind of 'critical geography'. This critical geography would be a more fluid model which takes into account the ever-shifting nature of power on the borders between the margins and the centre. And in his text from the catalogue of *Arteast 2000+*, *The (Former) East and its Identity*, Igor Zabel writes that the Cold War divisions of Europe, the death of which is so often trumpeted, have not been overcome but have 'evolved and mutated into new divisions' that are 'part of the strategies of power and dominance in contemporary Europe'. Indeed the 'East' is called the 'former East' but 'the West' remains the site and symbol of normality and hegemonic power. Zabel proposes that assuming a critical *Eastern* identity as a strategic behaviour inside of the art system could function as a kind of active resistance to Western structures of identification.

JILL WINDER

RISE AND
DECLINE
OF THE
SYNDICATE:
THE END OF
AN IMAGINED
COMMUNITY

INKE ARNS
& ANDREAS BROECKMANN

Preface 2004: The following text was written in November 2001 after the demise of the 'Syndicate' Internet mailing list which had been in existence since 1996. The list connected people involved in media culture from all over Eastern and Western Europe and some non-European countries. The text offers both a description of the list and the 'imagined community' it connected, and an analysis of how a successful list and networking project like the Syndicate could fail. Here we, as the mailing list's administrators, present our personal perspective on the opportunities and the limitations of networking people online. The successor list project, 'Spectre: list for media and culture in Deep Europe' has around 750 subscribers (May 2004) and a stable, low-noise flow of announcements and informational postings on media art and digital culture, mainly but not exclusively from Europe.

The Syndicate mailing list imploded and went down in August 2001, destroying the lifeline of the Syndicate network. The network had been in a shaky situation for a while, due – we believe – to the destabilization of the precarious balance between the personal contacts of list members, the lurking and filtering-and-not-reading-let-alone-posting subscribers and a growing number of self-promoters who used the list as a personal performance space and disregarded the social rules of the online community.

Some people insisted on continuing the list on a new server, taking over the subscriber list, while we decided to form a new list, Spectre, which has been running on the previous Syndicate list-serve in Berlin since 28 August 2001. The list currently [as of November 2001] has 250 new subscribers and continues the tradition of the Syndicate list as a low-noise, open platform for exchange and cooperation in media culture in Europe.

After six years of successful work with and for the Syndicate community, the demise of the Syndicate list in August 2001 was a rather shocking experience for many of us, imposing on us the realization of how feeble such a community channel can be and how easily destroyed. It proved that responsibility and care are essential elements in a viable social online environment, and we had to learn the hard way that there is no consensus about the rules that should guide behaviour and interaction. The following text gives a brief summary from our personal perspective of the Syndicate initiative as it developed since its inception in 1996, and attempts an evaluation of its end.

Andreas Broeckmann started administering the Syndicate mailing list after its installation on the server of the Ars Electronica Center in Linz (www.aec.at) in January 1996, helping people to subscribe, unsubscribe and post to the

majordomo list. As the subscriber base grew from the original 30 subscribers to about 300 in 1998, Inke Arns joined in administering the list and – together with Arthur Bueno of the V2_Organisation in Rotterdam, who also maintained the Syndicate website and archive on www.v2.nl/syndicate from 1998–2000 – mostly managed the list administration through these years. We taught ourselves the basic majordomo commands, had our private mail accounts jammed with bounced messages, and therefore installed an admin account. Each time we would look into this account there would be hundreds of mails sitting there waiting for us... but somehow it worked. Problems started appearing on an entirely different field.

With its completely open structure (technically and socially speaking) the Syndicate mailing list soon proved to be vulnerable. In the beginning of November 1998 the list was first targeted: all the subscribers were unsubscribed. Luckily we had been extracting the 'who'-file on an almost daily basis and thus were able to reconstruct the list quickly. In September 2000 the list software on the server faced a serious crash that the sysops in Linz could not take care of because of the festival they were in at the time. So we decided to relocate the list onto a server to which we would have easier access for administration and configuration. Since then, the Syndicate list was hosted by an ISP in Berlin (www.openoffice.de) which also soon gave us the opportunity to switch from Majordomo to the more easily administratable Mailman software.

But the Syndicate was much more than a piece of software: it was a network of people. The Syndicate was founded in January 1996 on the last day of the *Next 5 Minutes 2* Festival in Rotterdam. It was a network that devoted itself to fostering contacts and cooperation, improvements in communication and an exchange between institutions and individuals in Eastern and Western Europe active in the media and media culture. By allowing regular e-mail communication between participants regarding forthcoming events and collaborative projects, the Syndicate mailing list developed into an important channel and information resource for announcing and reporting new projects, events and developments in media culture. The complete mail archive is kept at <http://www.v2.nl/mail/v2east/>.

Since the first meeting in Rotterdam in 1996, which was attended by 30 media artists and activists, journalists and curators from 12 Eastern and Western European countries, the Syndicate network grew steadily. In August 2001, it linked over 500 members from more than 30 European and a number of non-European countries. The original idea was to establish an East-West network as well as an East-East network. In the meantime, however, the Syndicate had increasingly developed into an all-European forum for media

culture and art. Over the last few years the division between East and West had been growing less important as people cooperated in ever-changing constellations, in ad-hoc as well as long-lasting partnerships.

Syndicate meetings and workshops had been held regularly, in most cases as part of festivals and conferences. The main meetings took place at half-yearly intervals in Rotterdam (September 1996), Liverpool (April 1997), Kassel (July 1997), Dessau (November 1997), Tirana (May 1998), Skopje (October 1998), Budapest (April 1999; this meeting had been originally scheduled to take place in Belgrade, but had to be relocated due to the NATO bombings) and Helsinki (October 1999), with many smaller meetings and joint projects, presentations and workshops happening in between. Hard copy *Syndicate Readers* edited by Inke and published on the occasion of some of the meetings (Rotterdam 1996, Ostranenie Dessau 1997, Junction Skopje 1998) collected the most important texts from the mailing list in printed form.¹

It was worth condensing Syndicate stuff in this way because most of the time the mail traffic was dominated by announcements. Attempts to turn the Syndicate list into a discussion list and to encourage people to send their personal reports, views and perceptions of what was happening were met by only limited response. In the beginning, when many people on the list still knew each other personally, this strategy was more successful, later, with the exploding rate of lurkers, less.

While in the first three years of its existence, the Syndicate held meetings quite regularly (almost every six months!), and organized panels and workshops with its members, since 1999 the Syndicate list came to be more like a sleeping beauty which in times of crisis would awake and show its full potential. Suddenly, when necessary, everybody was back on, communicating almost breathlessly with each other ('Have you heard about x?', 'The cultural centre Y was closed!', 'Z received his mobilization call!'). The list was last activated in order to support Edi Muka, a Tirana-based long-time Syndicalist, who had been sacked from his post at the cultural centre Pyramid by some politically malevolent officials.

The meetings and personal contacts off-list were an essential part of the Syndicate network: they grounded the Syndicate in a network of friendly and working relationships, with strong ties and allegiances that spanned across Europe and made many collaborations between artists, initiatives and institutions possible. The Syndicate thus opened multiple channels between artists and cultural producers in Europe and beyond, which is probably its greatest achievement. It connected people and made them aware of each other's practices, creating multiple options for international collaborative projects.

1. Inke Arns and Andreas Broeckmann, eds., *Reader of the V2_East Syndicate Meeting on Documentation and Archives of Media Art in Eastern, Central and South-Eastern Europe* (Rotterdam: V2_Organisation, 1996), available online at <<http://colossus.v2.nl/syndicate/synr0.html>>; Inke Arns and Andreas Broeckmann eds., *Deep Europe: The 1996-97 edition. Selected texts from the V2_East Syndicate mailing list* (Berlin, 1997), available online at <<http://colossus.v2.nl/syndicate/synr1.html>>; Inke Arns, ed., *Junction Skopje, selected texts from the V2_East/Syndicate mailing list 1997-98* (Skopje: Soros Center for Contemporary Art, 1998), available online at <<http://colossus.v2.nl/syndicate/synr2.html>>.

A structure like that can work so long as it is supported and protected by a sufficient number of participants. It needs an ethical consensus about what is and what isn't possible on the list, which kinds of actions support and which may tilt the social equilibrium. The case of Andrej Tišma, a Yugoslav artist from multi-cultural Novi Sad and a defender of the Milosevic regime throughout the late 1990s, is a case in point: many perceived his tirades against the West and against NATO as pure Serbian propaganda which became unbearable at some point. Later, Tišma came back to the list and continued his criticisms by posting links to anti-NATO web pages he had created. For us, he was always an interesting signpost of Serb nationalist ideology that was good to be aware of. And it was good that he showed that people can be artists 'like you and me', and be Serb nationalists at the same time. The Syndicate could handle his presence after he agreed to tune down his rants.

However, this consensus was further eroded through the last two years. The 'nn episode' on Syndicate in August 2001, then, was a symptom, but not the reason for the death of Syndicate. This started way before August 2001. Not only that there were no more meetings after 1999, one could also notice that since mid-1999 people felt less and less responsible for the list. Many Syndicalists of the first hour grew more silent (this was partly incited by the hefty discussions during the NATO bombings in ex-Yugoslavia), perhaps more weary, perhaps less naive, many also changed their personal circumstances and got involved in other things (new jobs, new families, new countries). At the same time, the number of subscribers kept growing: more and more newbies kept flowing onto the Syndicate list.

The major change that occurred on the Syndicate around that time (1999) was the transition from a network of people and of trust, to a more and more anonymous mailing list, a list for announcements like so many others. A growing majority of Syndicate subscribers now tended to see the mailing list merely as a quick and handy tool for spreading self-promotion. The mailing list was to serve people's promotional goals, rather than serve as a tool of communication. When calls went out for support in the administration of the list, far too few people responded at all. Many people still did not understand the voluntary nature of the Syndicate initiative, and that the whole project depended on the sharing of work and responsibility. Too many people took the efforts of too few people for granted. Investing time and energy in the administration of such a list became more and more frustrating. When some fellow Syndicalists joined the admin team early 2001, we could have realized that the project had peaked and should have been transformed into something different altogether.

The net entity nn (Netochka Nezvanova, integer, antiorp, etc.), a pseudonym used by an international group of artists and programmers in their extensive and aggressive mailing list-based online-performances and for other art projects, had been subscribed to the Syndicate list in 1997. It was (as the first of less than a handful of people) unsubscribed against its will because it was spamming the list so heavily that all meaningful communication was blocked. In January 2001, nn sent an e-mail asking to again be subscribed to the Syndicate mailing list. (What nn never bothered to realize was that subscription to the list had always been open so that, at any point, it could have subscribed itself – we have always wondered why Majordomo is such a blind spot in this technophile entity's arsenal.) After getting assurances from nn that she was not out to misuse the list, we subscribed it to the Syndicate list.

Naively, as we came to realize, nn went from one or two messages every day in February to an average of three to five message in April and up to eight and ten messages per day in May and June – and that on a list which had a regular daily traffic of three to five messages a day. The distributed nature of the nn collective makes it possible for them to keep posting twenty-four hours a day – great for promoting your online presence, irritating for people who have a less frantic life rhythm. nn's messages are always cryptic, sometimes amusing, often tediously repetitive in their quirky rhetoric and style and generally irritating for the majority of people. Its activity on the Syndicate – like on many other lists it has used and terrorized – soon came to look like a hijack. But the sheer mass of traffic nn was generating, the sheer amount of nn's presence, was overwhelming. Perhaps this phenomenon could be compared to SMEGL, short for super mental gridlock, a term that was developed to describe traffic jam situations in NYC back in the eighties (or was this term coined in Berlin-Kreuzberg's famous Fischbuero? Who knows, the boundaries get blurred...).

In the spring of 2001, nn's and other people's activities who use open, unmoderated mailing lists for promulgating their self-promotional e-mails, triggered discussions about 'spam art', on Syndicate as well as on other lists. Actually, given the extreme openness and vulnerability of a structure like the Syndicate it remains quite astonishing that the list survived for such a long time. What happened in the course of 2000–2001 (not only to Syndicate, but also to several other mailing lists) was that the openness of these lists, i.e. the fact that they were unmoderated, was massively abused, and, finally, destroyed, by relentless 'creative' spamming. One of the basic principles of the Internet – its openness – suddenly seemed to become a mere tool for attacking this very principle. 'Netiquette' did not seem to be of much value anymore and was sacrificed for the egotistical self-expression of (distributed) artist egos. The irony of this process is that,

like any good parasite, this artistic practice depends on the existence of lively online communities: it not only bites, but kills the hand that feeds it. These parasite nomads will find new hosts, no doubt, but they have over the past year helped to erode the social fabric of the wider net cultural population so much that communities have to protect themselves from attacks and hijacks more aggressively than before. Their adolescent carelessness is partly responsible for the withering of the romantic utopia of a completely open, sociable online environment. However educational that may be, we despise the deliberation with which these people act.

nn got unsubscribed from the Syndicate without warning on a day when there had been nothing but ten messages from her. After some days of silence and sighs of relief, angry protests by nn came through. On the list, accusations of censorship and/or dictatorship were made. A small but noisy faction denounced unsubscribing nn as an act against the freedom of speech. They called the administrators fascists, murderers, and 'threatened' to report the case to the human rights watchdog Index on Censorship. While some other list members welcomed the departure of nn on and off the list, and the admin team again and again explained their move, the ludicrous allegations and vociferous insults continued.

The real shock for us was that the majority of list subscribers did not participate in the discussion and thus silently seemed to accept what was going on. It was personally hurtful not to receive more support against the insults raised against us, but more frustrating was the indifference that made the whole process possible. Within few days, the alienation from the atmosphere on the list was so great that we admitted defeat, re-subscribed nn and began to withdraw from the Syndicate. The list was moved to a different server and is now administered by other people at www.anart.no/~syndicate. We wanted to avoid further verbiage and conflict and therefore gave up the name, but we insist that from our perspective the Syndicate project that was founded in 1996 ended in August 2001. What remains under its name is a zombie kept alive by misconceptions about what the Syndicate really was. Maybe we should have stopped the project altogether in the summer?

Filtering has, in a way, done us in. Before there were effective e-mail clients that could filter out lists and other mail communication, everybody on the list got everything more or less instantly, which also meant a higher level of social awareness and social control of what goes on on the list. Today, many people filter the lists they subscribe to and only look at the postings at irregular intervals – some mailboxes don't get opened for months. In this way, people consume the list passively and do not even notice a fiasco like the one that we experienced on the Syndicate list in the summer. I guess that some people who remain subscribed to

the Syndicate list still have not noticed that anything has changed. For a social community, that kind of behaviour – automated deference – can be fatal.

'THERE'S A SPECTRE HAUNTING EUROPE...'

In August 2001, after unsubscribing from the Syndicate, we initiated a new mailing list under the name 'Spectre'. It is an open, unmoderated list for media art and culture in Deep Europe. Spectre offers a channel for practical information exchange concerning events, projects and initiatives organized within the field of media culture and hosts discussions and critical commentary about the development of art, culture and politics in and beyond Europe. Deep Europe is not a particular territory, but is based on an attitude and experience of layered identities and histories – ubiquitous in Europe, yet in no way restricted by its topographical borders. (The term 'Deep Europe' was coined by Anna Balint in 1996. It was passed on by Geert Lovink. It was used by Andreas Broeckmann and Inke Arns. It was interpreted by Luchezar Boyadjiev. It was used more by Sally Jane Norman, Iliyana Nedkova, Nina Czegledy, Edi Muka and many others.)

Spectre is a channel for people involved in old and new media in art and culture. Importantly, many people on this list know each other personally. Spectre aims to facilitate real-life meetings and favours real face-to-face (screen-to-screen) cooperation, test-bed experiences and environments to provoke querying of issues of cultural identity/identification and difference (translatable as well as untranslatable or irreducible). The new list was immediately welcomed by many frustrated Syndicalists who quickly made the move.

Spectre is an unmoderated, but by no means open mailing list. With the Syndicate experience in mind we felt the need to explicitly formulate some basic, apparently no longer self-evident netiquette rules, like 'meaningful discussions require mutual respect', and 'self-advertise with care!'. The list is initially hosted by the two of us, who also have to approve requests for subscription. The blurb explicitly reads: 'Subscriptions may be terminated or suspended in the case of persistent violation of netiquette'. We regret that we have to introduce such a system of control but see no other effective way of protecting something that is dear to us. A lack of sensible protection brought down the Syndicate. Information about Spectre is available at: <http://coredump.buug.de/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/spectre>.

We try to continue the good Syndicate tradition of amiable exchange and are more hesitant about the illusion of being an 'online community'. We maintain our romantic belief in lasting friendships and insist on the need to infuse networks with a strong sense of conviviality. We believe in people and their needs more than we believe in art.

EUROPE: VANISHING MEDIATOR?

ÉTIENNE BALIBAR

Being invited by the Humboldt-Universität Berlin to give this year's first public George L. Mosse Lecture is one of the greatest honours that I have received. It is also for me a moving opportunity to return to Berlin and meet dear friends and excellent colleagues. Finally, it gives me the possibility to present before you some hypotheses on the function that European intellectuals can perform and the ideas that they should advocate in the current international situation, where the very project of a European community of nations and citizens is challenged. For all these generous gifts I want to thank you very sincerely.

I am especially pleased to speak under the auspices of George Mosse. I became aware of the importance of his work rather late in my life. Since reading *Nationalism and Sexuality* and his other books dealing with the relationships between nationalism, race, gender and sexuality in the building of modern communities, I have always considered him a master of historical and political anthropology.¹ I have also realized the extent to which his life and career, marked by the consequences of the European catastrophe of the twentieth century, and shared among the universities of three continents, form an epitome of our cosmopolitan background and a key to the intelligence of our present. I draw a permanent inspiration from them.

Allow me to begin these considerations on the uncertainties of Europe's political identity at the beginning of the twenty-first century by referring to celebrated formulations from another European writer who, although belonging to a previous generation and writing along quite different lines, nevertheless, shared some of the same experiences, namely exile and anti-fascist intellectual commitment: I am thinking of Thomas Mann. As we all know, Mann's attitude toward politics completely changed between the First World War and the period of the rise of Nazism leading to the Second World War. In 1918 he published *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man), in which he rejected 'democracy' along with 'politics' in the name of the alleged opposition between the spiritual notion of 'culture' developed in Germany and the intellectualized notion of 'civilization' developed in France.² But already in 1935, in Nice, before the Comité de coopération intellectuelle (European Committee for Intellectual Cooperation) he launched the famous call: 'Achtung Europa!' (Europe Beware!), and in a 1939 essay, *Zwang zur Politik* (literally, 'No Escape from Politics', translated into English during the war under the title *Culture and Politics*), he returned to the idea of the identity of 'politics' and 'democracy', but drew opposite conclusions. In this essay Mann criticized any concept of culture synonymous with 'political passivity' (*politische Willenslosigkeit*), and called on intellectuals not to abandon the peoples and the cause of mankind at the hour of peril.³ I find it especially remarkable that, in the case of Mann

1. George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

2. Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, trans. Walter D. Morris (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983).

3. Thomas Mann, 'Europe Beware' and 'Culture and Politics', in *Order of the Day: Political Essays and Speeches of Two Decades*, trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), pp. 69–82, 228–237.

as of Mosse, it took the detour of exile to uncover the character of the European civil war, and draw therefrom universalist conclusions. Critical consciousness seems to be closely associated here with dislocation or decentering.

Should we say that, in the current situation, where it is again a question of waging wars between 'cultures' and 'civilizations', an 'apolitical' temptation is on the agenda among intellectuals? This is not true without exceptions, to be sure, but it does seem present, particularly in the form of resignation, even despair, a feeling of powerlessness, which seem to have grown out of two main causes. One is the sensation that – in the age of globalization – the complexity of historical and social processes has escaped the grip of collectively debated strategies and resolution of conflicts (and this is one of the reasons why conflicts tend to become catastrophic). Another is the conviction – to which some great intellectual figures of the past century themselves paradoxically contributed – that the field of intellectual intervention is now mainly 'expertise', that is, a specific and specialized one, which makes it difficult or impossible to address global or universal questions if one does not want to fall prey to the media type of sheer opinion.⁴ There are remarkable exceptions to this nihilistic resignation, undoubtedly, in Germany, in France and in many other parts of the world. Powerful voices of artists, writers, philosophers from Europe, America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, speak and win audiences. But there is an uncertainty as to how to recreate a civic function for intellectuals and intellectuality in general.

In this lecture I want to advocate the right and duty of intellectuals to address urgent political questions with their own instruments, calling on them to reject any 'nonpolitical' temptation. But I want also to take into consideration some of the reasons that account for this temptation, one of them being the uneasiness with cultural identity, and the difficulty of giving a geographical, cultural or institutional definition of the 'place' or 'position' where intellectuals are working, where they could 'meet', where they write and talk from. This place has become, more than ever, *intermediary*, *transitory* and *dialogic*. And it has to take into account the irreversible effects of the globalization of culture – very different from a simple uniformization, indeed. It cannot keep the traditional figure of a double but fixed location that Michel Foucault called the 'empirico-transcendental doublet':⁵ a particular location in the nation, the idiom, the academy and a universal one in the ideal community of mankind. Nor can we believe that, by its sole virtue, the Internet will provide a technical solution for the problem of the constitution of the 'global public sphere' by granting access for all to a single system of communications and data banks. Both our singularity and our universality must adopt more complicated patterns. Intellectuals must become

4. I am especially thinking of Michel Foucault's opposing the 'universal intellectual' of the past and the new 'specific intellectual', which was often misunderstood. See Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power', in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, eds. Paul Rabinow and James D. Faubion, 3 vols. (New York: New Press, 1997–1999), 3: pp. 111–133.

5. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

'nomadic', travelling physically and mentally across borders. They must take risks to elaborate the discourses and patterns of their new transnational function.

When I speak of the right and duty of the intellectuals, I am specifically thinking of *European* intellectuals. In the world today, we are already perceived and addressed not only as 'French' or 'German', but as 'European' intellectuals. In my opinion, however, European intellectuals do not sufficiently exercise their capacity to cross political and cultural borders, translate discourses (other than specialized ones) within and beyond the official limits of the European Union, set the agenda of European politics before the *Öffentlichkeit*, the 'public realm', and thus actively contribute to its emergence. They are not sufficiently acting as citizens of Europe, dare I say thinking European citizens. But I am also aware of the fact that such categories as 'European citizenship', 'European culture' and 'European intelligentsia' are much *too narrow*: not only do they grant no automatic access to universality, but they are clearly *unilateral* – something that we will need to correct when we address the question of, precisely, 'unilateralism'. It is one of my claims that there exists nothing such as a 'synoptic' or *singular-universal* point of view from which the 'characters' of the present times, and the 'justice' of any politics, could be decided: neither the point of view of the empire, nor those of some nation with a 'manifest destiny', the multitude of its adversaries or any specific continental region. This is not to say that we are forever enclosed within particular interests and beliefs. But the universality that we associate with the very idea of politics and the vocation of the intellectual has to be constructed practically and empirically; it has to be approached through confrontation and conflict. One of the ways to contribute to this process, for we European intellectuals, is to listen critically to objections and calls that we receive from other parts of the world: East, West and South, including America.

VOICES FROM AMERICA

Since September 11, many calls are directed toward Europeans. This is flattering for us, but also embarrassing. We understand that we really exist, but we fear some misunderstanding. I shall concentrate on the calls coming from the United States, and for the sake of simplicity, I will quickly review the *official* (or quasi-official) ones that express the view of the current administration, examining in more detail those coming from the *liberal* intellectuals of America.

Some such calls come from President Bush and his group of advisers, but also from speeches and writings of those who, at least temporarily, support his politics (this was notably the case of the group of well-known intellectuals who, in the wake of the war in Afghanistan, gathered around the 'propositions' of the Institute for American Values – among

them such different figures as David Blankenhorn, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington and Michael Walzer).⁶ Their formulations vary from 'Wake up, Europe! Fascism is back!' to 'Join us in the just war', through the now famous 'Whoever is not with us is against us' (which sounds more like a threat than an appeal, in fact). They refer either to American interests or common Western interests, much less often to the interest of international law and institutions. They insist on legitimacy or on efficiency (which in a sense meet on the diplomatic terrain, where in order to rally a broad international coalition efficiently, for example, you must also be legitimate). But they remain *unilateral* insofar as they embody a strong notion of *leadership*, based on material *hegemony* and, most often, on the idea of a global *mission* of the dominant power to keep peace, order and civilization and to protect 'democratic values'. This leaves little room for self-criticism, for the discussion of goals and methods, not to speak of possible contradictions between the domestic interests of the hegemonic power and the universal or common interests that it claims to represent.

We should not, however, underestimate the extent to which a broad acceptance of this point of view, which by nature doesn't seem very attractive, has been helped, not only by the *overwhelming material hegemony* (economic and military as well as ideological, following the collapse of communism and Third World nationalism) of the American 'hyperpower', but also by the traumatic effects of the September 11 attack on Manhattan: the 'world city', the cosmopolitan city par excellence.⁷ In a sense the United States 'enjoys' a paradoxical combination of opposite statuses: dominant hyperpower *and* victim, a situation that produces powerful effects of identification.

Quite different, however, are the calls coming from the liberal intellectuals of America ('liberal' in the sense that, despite their obvious divergences, since they range politically from socialism to neorepublicanism, they advocate the same basic principles: the civil rights and legal protections of the individual are inalienable, governments are accountable before their constituencies, civil authorities must rule over the military, international law has primacy over national interests). This call is indeed self-critical; it is voiced by a 'minority' that wants to distinguish itself from the 'majority' in its own country, criticizing the choices that are imposed by the majority and their elected representatives. It is a call not only for *support* but also for *help* ('Help us, Europe!'), implying that the Europeans should *influence* American internal and external politics, for the sake of Europe itself, for the sake of America, and for the sake of all the others. The underlying idea ('multilateralist' in the broad sense) is that in a globalized world no power (not even the biggest) can 'save' itself *alone* (not to speak of saving the others), but that it could very well 'doom' itself and the others.

6. David Blankenhorn, et al., 'What We're Fighting For: A Letter from America', Institute for American Values, February 12, 2002. In a second letter ('Pre-emption, Iraq, and Just War: A Statement of Principles', dated November 14, 2002), some of the initial signatories express their concern that the new strategic doctrine of 'pre-emption' applied to the case of Iraq by the Bush administration is 'inconsistent with the just war tradition' that legitimized the war in Afghanistan. Both letters are available online at <http://www.americanvalues.org/html/what_we_are_fighting_for.html> and <http://www.americanvalues.org/html/1b_pre-emption.html>.

7. See the subtle analysis by Sophie Body-Gendrot, *La Société américaine après le 11 septembre* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 2002).

I shall recall some of the voices from America that could be heard in this sense in the last months, insisting at the same time on the importance of the idea that they contain and on some of the antinomies that I think they involve. I have selected four significant (and very diverse) voices: Bruce Ackerman, Immanuel Wallerstein, Timothy Garton Ash and Edward Said.

To begin, Bruce Ackerman. In February 2002, the prominent jurist and political philosopher from Yale published an article in the *London Review of Books* with the title, *Don't Panic!*. Ackerman begins with the idea that 'the attack of 11 September is the prototype of similar events that will litter the twenty-first century', and that, 'if American reaction is any guide, we urgently require new constitutional concepts to deal with the protection of civil liberties'. Otherwise, he prophesies, 'a downward cycle threatens.... Even if the next half-century sees only four or five attacks on the scale of 11 September, this destructive cycle will prove devastating to civil liberties by 2050'. However, he does not see 'an absolutist defense of traditional freedom' as the right response on the part of liberals (Ackerman defines himself as a *civil libertarian*). Not only would it not allow any democratic government to achieve popular support and would not help preventing future terrorist strikes, but it would leave totally unanswered the constitutional problems that emerge in situations of crisis. Declaring this concern to 'prevent politicians from exploiting momentary panic to impose long-lasting limitations on liberty', Ackerman is especially critical of the notion of 'war on terrorism' (a 'war' already announcing itself as 'without end'), which can and will be used both to cancel civil liberties (for Americans and non-Americans alike) and to destroy the democratic balance of powers between the administration, Congress and the judiciary. What he advocates is a carefully controlled 'state of emergency' with legal and temporal limits, where as many 'normal' institutions as possible keep working under internal and external scrutiny of the 'defenders of freedom'. And he concludes:

Europe is already influencing this political dynamic. The Spanish Government's refusal to hand over suspected terrorists has checked the Bush Administration's ardour for military tribunals. The French citizenship of the suspected '20th terrorist' helped persuade the Attorney General to try Zacarias Moussaoui in a civilian court.... In the future, it will not be enough to defeat proposals that threaten permanent damage to civil liberties.... A framework law emerging from any major European state would have worldwide influence. It would help us see the 'war on terrorism' for what it is: an extravagant metaphor blocking responsible thought about a serious problem.⁸

8. Bruce Ackerman, 'Don't Panic!', *London Review of Books*, 7 February 2002, pp. 15-16.

Even if you take into account that this was written for a European journal, it remains surprising and striking. The appeal seems to imply that certain traditions rooted in European politics form a legal pole of resistance against the tendencies toward the *miniaturization of politics*, inside and outside America, that threatens the very values in whose name the 'war on terrorism' is declared and fought. It also suggests that Europe should and could act as a bulwark of *international law*, which is an essential safeguard against the corruption of constitutional principles (in particular, the balance of powers that lies at the core of American constitutionalism), that could result from a 'war without an (ascribed) end', in other terms a permanent state of exception.

I want to take my second example from a very different author and context. In a public lecture delivered in December 2002, the Marxist historian and social scientist Immanuel Wallerstein, director of the Fernand Braudel Center at the State University of New York at Binghamton, explained how he saw the prospects of relationships between the United States and the world after the revelation of a completely new situation that the destruction of the Twin Towers had represented for Americans.⁹ In the first part of his talk, he reminds us that the United States 'had always defined itself by the yardstick of the world', which seemed to prove its continuous superiority.¹⁰ In the second part (Attack on America), he quotes from Osama bin Laden's presentation of America as a 'depraved' country, showing that bin Laden was the first person in history to become able to translate very widespread anti-American feelings into a physical attack initiated on American soil that left it momentarily helpless. As a consequence, a 'war on terrorism' was declared, with 'no reservations', that is, including measures against internal enemies. 'It is clear at this point that, even if the events of September 11 will not alter the basic geopolitical realities of the contemporary world, they may have a lasting impact on American political structures.'¹¹ In a certain sense, the powerful America discovers or fears to discover that it is vulnerable. In this third part (America and World Power), Wallerstein discusses the vulnerabilities of American hegemony, by comparing it with previous examples in history. Wallerstein's thesis is that the hegemony of the United States is no longer based on unchallenged economic superiority but only on military capacity. He describes the successive strategies that were implemented after World War II to eliminate forces and powers considered adversary to American interests in the world: containment, neutralization, interventions, subversion and selective 'antiproliferation' military policies:

As a policy, non-proliferation seems doomed to failure.... But there is also a moral/political question here.... The U.S. trusts itself to use such [nuclear]

9. Immanuel Wallerstein, 'America and the World: The Twin Towers as Metaphor' (delivered as the Charles R. Lawrence II Memorial Lecture, Brooklyn College, December 5, 2001), *Transeuropéennes* 22 (Spring-Summer 2002), pp. 9-29.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17.

weapons wisely, and in the defense of liberty (a concept seemingly identical with U.S. national interests). It assumes that anyone else might intend to use such weapons against liberty.... Personally, I do not trust any government to use such weapons wisely. I would be happy to see them all banned, but do not believe this is truly enforceable in the contemporary interstate system. So personally I abstain from moralizing on this issue.¹²

12. Ibid., p. 22.

In his fourth part (America: Ideals versus Privilege) Wallerstein distinguishes between the belief that 'America and Americans are the cause of all the world's miseries and injustices', which he denies, and the belief that 'they are the prime beneficiaries', which he endorses.¹³ He expresses his fear that America, while trying to 'rebuild' the power that the Twin Towers symbolized, might sacrifice the ideals of freedom and universality that went along with the traditional privileges. Finally, in his last part (America: From Certainty to Uncertainty), contrasting a rational view of the uncertainties of the world's future with the irrational attempt by President Bush to 'offer the American people certainty about their future...the one thing totally beyond his power to offer', he addresses his fellow Americans with an eloquent plea for a contribution to the rebuilding of the world based on equality instead of privilege, universality instead of globalization. This is where a reference to Europe (among others) surfaces again:

13. Ibid., p. 23.

What the United States needs now to do is to learn how to live with the new reality – that it no longer has the power to decide unilaterally what is good for everyone.... It has to come to terms with the world. It is not Osama bin Laden with whom we must conduct a dialogue. We must start with our near friends and allies – with Canada and Mexico, with Europe, with Japan. And once we have trained ourselves to hear them and to believe that they too have ideals and interests, that they too have hopes and aspirations, then and only then perhaps shall we be ready to dialogue with the rest of the world, that is, with the majority of the world.¹⁴

14. Ibid., pp. 25–27.

I understand Wallerstein's position as expressing a neo-universalist perspective. It takes the form of a defence of *multilateralism* against the attempt to recreate the conditions of a past economic hegemony through the implementation of a military superiority that remains unchallenged at its own level, but is entirely vulnerable to the new kind of threat that develops *within the limits* of the dominant system. It should be a permanent concern, therefore, to resist the polarization of the world into the mimetic figures of *Leviathan* (the world monopoly of 'legitimate' violence) and *Behemoth* (the ubiquitous power of subversion based on 'fundamentalist' religious creeds). Accordingly, it would be necessary to recreate a *multipolar equilibrium* of forces (be they national

or post-national) that counteracts this polarization. In a more recent talk delivered at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Wallerstein has publicly endorsed the necessity of backing the development of the European Union, precisely in order to counteract the American hegemony, even if Europe is also an 'imperialist' power (there are 'primary' and 'secondary' contradictions – remember Mao!). A multipolar world offers more possibilities for democracy and social transformations than a world with a single superpower.¹⁵

I borrow my third example from the article published in the *New York Times* last April by the British historian and expert on Eastern European affairs, Timothy Garton Ash (who teaches in Oxford but also works at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University), with the unambiguous title: *The Peril of Too Much Power*.¹⁶ This is also a voice 'from America'. Professor Garton Ash begins by stating that 'for most of the twentieth century, the defining political question was: What do you think of Russia? At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is: What do you think of America?'. He deems the picture of America as 'a dangerous, selfish giant, blundering around the world' and 'an anthology of what is wrong with capitalism' to be a caricature, especially if this serves to prove the moral superiority of Europe: 'Of course America can't be reduced in this way. Apart from anything else, it is much too large, too diverse, too much a cornucopia of combinations and contradictions to allow any simple interpretation'.

He goes on to recall how 'America is part of everyone's imaginative life, through movies, music, television and the Web, whether you grow up in Bilbao, Beijing or Bombay. Everyone has a New York in their heads, even if they have never been there'. In a sense it is not the existence of an American culture that is doubtful but rather that of a European one. But then comes the problem of the use of America's power and the effects of the enormous imbalance of power in the world. Not since Rome has a single power enjoyed such superiority, he explains, 'but the Roman colossus only bestrode one part of the world. Stripped of its anti-American overtones, the French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine's term *hyperpower* is apt.... The fundamental problem is that America today has too much power for anyone's good, including its own'. The example of US policy in the Middle East clearly shows that there is a problem both when the Americans intervene and when they refuse to intervene. 'When a nation has so much power, what it doesn't do is as fateful as what it does.' Professor Garton Ash especially fears the consequences of a possible American (or American-led) war in Iraq, without any simultaneous initiative to negotiate a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which would unite the Islamic world against the West while dividing Europe from America, 'with disastrous consequences for years to come'. Finally he explains that,

15. 'Immanuel Wallerstein on the World Movement Facing the Capitalist Domination', World Social Forum at Porto Alegre II, February 2002, available online at <<http://www.attac.org/fsm2002/indexen.html>>.

16. Timothy Garton Ash, 'The Peril of Too Much Power' (op-ed), *New York Times*, April 9, 2002, p. A25.

since 'contrary to what many Europeans think, the problem with American power is not that it is *American*' but that it is *unchecked*. What applies to domestic politics (and is embodied in the American Constitution), namely the necessity for each power to be 'checked by at least one other', also applies in world politics, hence the crucial question: 'Who, then, should check and complement American power'? The internal democratic controls are no longer sufficient or working. 'International agencies, starting with the United Nations, and transnational nongovernmental organizations are a place to start. But they alone are not enough. My answer is Europe – Europe as an economic equal to the United States and Europe as a close-knit group of states with a long diplomatic and military experience.' A difficulty remains, however: '[T]he gulf between its military capacity and that of the U.S. grows even wider'. Europeans therefore face a 'complicated double task': 'to strengthen [their] capacity to act outside [their] own borders while disentangling the idea of a stronger Europe from its sticky anti-American integument'. To make, in short, Europe a 'partner' (with a capacity to resist), but not a 'rival' of the United States. Timothy Garton Ash firmly believes that the United States itself has not real interest to remain in the position of 'lonely' hyperpower.

Finally, I want to quote from a recent article by Edward Said (the Palestinian-American professor at Columbia University, author of *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* among other books): *Europe versus America*.¹⁷ Reporting from England, where he is currently teaching, Said emphasizes cultural differences between the United States and Europe, especially the disproportionate power of religious fundamentalism: '[R]eligion and ideology play a far greater role in the former than in the latter.... [T]he vast number of Christian fanatics in the US...form the core of George Bush's support and at 60 million strong represent the single most powerful voting block in US history'. This American fundamentalism has merged with the conservative ideology of 'American values' developed during the Cold War and has become 'a menace to the world'. It produces the 'unilateralist' external policy, the belief that the United States as an 'elect nation' has a divine mission to be fulfilled by all means. This leads to the only seemingly paradoxical combination of deep anti-Semitism ('these Christians... believe that all the Jews of the world must gather in Israel so that the Messiah can come again') and the global threat against the Arab-Islamic world confronting Israel. Said embarks then on a synthetic comparison of ideologies and the political systems on both sides of the Atlantic: 'There is no trace of this sort of thing in Europe that I can detect. Nor is there the lethal combination of money and power on a vast scale that controls elections and national policy at will'. For Said, Europe remains more democratic in practice, the citizens have more effective control over the politicians

17. Edward Said, 'Europe against America', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, November 14–20, 2002, available online at <<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/612/op2.htm>>. See also Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

and are less exposed to ideological blackmail when they dissent from the official policy (to be 'un-American' is the cardinal sin), and have a less Manichean view of the world. 'No wonder then that America has never had an organized Left or real opposition party as has been the case in every European country'.

But finally comes the concern, which is double: that Europe might lose its political identity, and that it might prove unable to act as a pole of resistance against American unilateralism: 'Tony Blair's whole-heartedly pro-American position therefore seems even more puzzling to an outsider like myself. I am comforted that even to his own people he seems like a humourless aberration, a European who has decided in effect to obliterate his own identity.... I still have time to learn when it will be that Europe will come to its senses and assume the countervailing role to America that its size and history entitle it to play. Until then the war approaches inexorably'.

CONTRADICTIONS AND ILLUSIONS

We certainly cannot ignore this call coming from the intellectuals of America (and also from other parts of the world, although not exactly in the same terms: each would deserve a special analysis). It really touches our common interests. We may observe that all these texts have a certain 'family resemblance'. But we suspect that they include deep contradictions, and fear that they have substituted an imaginary Europe for the real one.

Obviously (and understandably), some American liberals share the view that America is the model democracy; they are especially concerned with the future of democracy in America, which they think should be an interest of the whole world, whereas others – from a more 'global' or 'systemic' point of view – believe that the democratic character of the United States will itself entirely depend on the way America behaves toward the rest of the world (any country that oppresses others cannot itself be a free country). Even more striking are the diverse ways in which these voices refer to the great divides of the world after the Cold War. Some of them ask us to be fully 'Western', but others want us to be properly 'European', that is, to destroy the false identity of the Western world (or bloc) – thus perhaps pushing America more effectively in the direction of its own 'European' traditions. Others imagine that Europe may become the intermediary, at least one of the intermediaries in the great 'negotiation' that should take place in the end: between the American 'Empire' and its real 'others', the peoples and cultures from East and South, the Mediterranean, the Third World. These considerable differences are indeed mirrored in our own reactions.

But what I find even more striking is the latent tension between two opposite ways of formulating the call to Europe:

either as a demand for a *check and balance*, in order to countervail the American (super) power, or a demand for *mediation* within the 'war of civilizations' that America is now apparently waging. If you choose the first formulation, you are in a 'strategic' logic, where the relationships of forces ultimately resolve into military terms, quantitatively and qualitatively (how many troops and weapons, and how do you use them?). Why address Europe in this case rather than, say, Russia, Japan or China? Perhaps because the authors of these texts more or less transfer onto Europe the ideal model of 'forced merged with right' (the rule of law, the constitution of liberty) that they fear America has now betrayed. If you choose the second formulation, you are in a logic of 'moral' and 'social' influences, which certainly does not ignore relationships of forces, but sees them as only one aspect of a more comprehensive process of cultural transformation. In that case, the apparently irreversible gap in military power between the United States and Europe is not necessarily a handicap for Europe. But the question of whether it really displays an *alternative* to American policy becomes more embarrassing. Clearly, 'multilateralism' does not mean exactly the same thing from these two points of view.

The first is compatible with a confrontation between rival 'isolationisms' (more or less what has been reproached to Chancellor Schröder during his last electoral campaign, when he 'unilaterally' announced that Germany would not follow the United States in any war in Iraq),¹⁸ whereas the second implies that political isolation today, among allies or even adversaries, has become obsolete and impossible to achieve. Rather than a 'right of intervention', what we are confronted with would be a 'fact of intervention', that is, interdependence: we cannot ignore it, only perhaps organize it and modify its consequences.

Certainly it would be interesting to examine how certain European voices, official or not, reacted to these demands. But let me refer instead to the way they have been quickly refuted in America. I am thinking in particular of the essay *Power and Weakness* published by the former State Department expert and member of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Robert Kagan, which has received considerable attention on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁹ 'It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world,' writes Kagan, who is targeting the kind of 'European opinion' on whose emergence and development American liberals place their hopes. 'Europeans believe that they are moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation'. But, while Europe would have entered 'a post-historical paradise, the realization of Immanuel Kant's *perpetual peace*', the United States 'remains mired in history, exercising power in the anarchic Hobbesian world where international rules are unreliable and where security and

18. In September 2002, during the German electoral campaign, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (who was re-elected with a slim majority) declared that he would refuse any engagement of German troops in an American-led war against Iraq, even if it was endorsed by the United Nations. This led both to sharp criticism in the United States and the expression of reservations by other European governments. A radical interpretation of Schröder's intentions as paving the way for a 'non-Western' Europe has been proposed by the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, 'La différence de Schröder: La Voix de l'Europe', *Libération*, 7 October 2002, p. 9.

19. Robert Kagan, 'Power and Weakness', *Policy Review* 113 (June–July 2002), pp. 3–28.

the promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might'.²⁰

20. Ibid., p. 3.

One may wonder, then, whence the European rejection of the use of force as a means to solve international conflicts originates? This is not, according to Kagan, because Europeans possess a special character or nature: in past centuries, when they dominated the world, they never tired of using force to increase or keep their power, but they have become weaker, and quite simply they no longer have the capacities for power politics. Europe and America have 'exchanged' their political cultures, as it were: it is now Europe that has adopted the Wilsonian discourse dreaming of 'civilizing the world' by putting an end to the wars and doing away with *Machtpolitik*, whose terrible effects Europeans have lived on their own soil. A nice project indeed but with one proviso: what makes European pacifism and moral consciousness materially possible is American military power itself! 'The irony is that this trans-Atlantic disagreement is the fruit of successful trans-Atlantic policies. As Joschka Fischer and other Europeans admit, the United States made the new Europe possible by leading the democracies to victory in World War II and the Cold War and by providing the solution to the age-old "German problem". Even today, Europe's rejection of power politics ultimately depends on American's willingness to use force around the world against those who still do believe in power politics. Europe's Kantian order depends on the United States using power according to the old Hobbesian rules.' Most Europeans do not realize that they can project themselves into 'post-history' or 'post-modern history' only because the United States did not follow this path. But as a result 'this has put Europeans and Americans on a collision course'.²¹ Formally speaking, they remain allies, but the former see the latter as a 'rouge colossus', and the latter see the former as a virtual obstacle, if not a potential traitor. Perhaps it would be better to acknowledge this contradiction, rather than desperately trying to fill the cultural gap.

21. Robert Kagan, 'Europe and America III: Different Philosophies of Power', *International Herald Tribune*, May 27, 2002, p. 10 (a summary of the arguments of 'Power and Weakness').

I don't believe that I distort the meaning of Robert Kagan's analysis if I say in a nutshell: the 'European' position, expressing something like a religion of law, is at the same time *powerless* ('Europe? How many divisions?' we might ask, echoing a famous question raised by Stalin), and *illegitimate* (since it disguises a historical regression as moral progress, misrepresenting its real weakness as an imaginary strength). Finally it is self-destructive: it undermines the defensive capabilities of the Western democracies, everywhere under attack in the world, which remain its only safety. It is decidedly not America that has 'too much power'; it is Europe that has too little.

A double question is at stake here. *There is a first question concerning the 'power' of Europe.* In a sense, Europe as

a sum is even *less* powerful (not *more*) than some of its constitutive nation states, or its power is less effective, more difficult to implement (hence the project of many: to 'reinforce' it, to achieve more 'integration'). *There is also a second question concerning the 'political capacity' of Europe* in today's world, in particular its capacity to help resolve conflicts (be they 'old' or 'new' in Mary Kaldor's terms),²² and hence the concept of the political by which the capacity can be measured.

22. See Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Here is the position that I want now to develop; undoubtedly, from a certain point of view, *Europe does not exist; it is not a political 'subject'* (the subject of a political power). And in this sense to ask Europe to disturb the ongoing processes and plans, to 'check and balance' other powers, is a pure illusion. But on the other hand you cannot (or you can less and less) reduce the idea of 'mediation' to *the alternative of power politics (ultimately relying upon military force) and 'moral' powerlessness*, even if you admit that a diplomatic and institutional expression has to be found for such a mediation at some moment. The question then becomes: how to imagine *a change in the relationship between 'politics' and 'power' or, perhaps better, in the very notion of 'power'*.

I agree that European political capacity, which is a necessary condition of its autonomy, in a sense simply does not exist. 'Economic weight' is a weak argument, especially in a globalized economy. Even if you crown it with a (partially) common currency, it represents only a variable statistical aggregate, precisely so long as no corresponding 'strategy' or 'economic (therefore also social) policy' exists. If you reflect further on the recent confrontation at the United Nations Security Council about the right of the United States to launch what it called a 'preventive war' against Iraq, which (provisionally) ended with a compromise (the United States accepting an international procedure that, at least in theory, leaves Iraq the possibility to prove its 'innocence'),²³ you see clearly that it is not 'Europe' that, to some extent, has checked American power. It is a conjunctural (and highly fragile) convergence of middle-range powers (France, Germany, Russia, China, Mexico) that refused to become completely 'marginalised' in international relations. They are not all of Europe, and not all of them are European. In addition, they would not have achieved anything without certain internal divisions within American strategy itself.

23. Resolution no. 1441 of the Security Council of the United Nations, dated November 8, 2002.

Above all, there is a strong case to be made for Europe's incapacity to *solve its own problems without American 'help'*. When I say its 'own' problems, I am also thinking of neighbouring problems where Europe is necessarily involved. This is exactly the opposite of the liberal dream, but there are numerous dramatic and recent examples, of which we can list but a few. Europe remains unable to solve the Irish problem, where two of its old nations are involved,

each with its own 'diaspora'. It proved unable to prevent the civil war in (former) Yugoslavia, which produced the worst crimes against humanity since Nazism, whether by offering a framework for development and coexistence to the various Balkan communities (which belong since time immemorial to the European ensemble) or by launching a military intervention to neutralize the aggressors and protect the populations with some chance of success (when this was finally undertaken by NATO under American leadership, it was with questionable results). The United States then has good reasons to explain that, beginning with the two World Wars, it has been American intervention that has stopped bloodshed and opposed savagery on European soil (although Americans tend to 'forget' that the Soviet 'patriotic war' against Nazism played an equally important role, which the contemporaries still remember, associating Omaha Beach with Stalingrad in their memories of World War II). What seems to be characteristic of the twentieth century, and could characterize the twenty-first as well, is not a 'European mediation' in conflicts involving America, but rather an 'American mediation' in conflicts that rend Europe and prove that it is unable to provide an effective political expression for the historical and moral identity it claims to represent.

This is equally true concerning the way Europe deals with violent situations that have developed at its 'borders' (and, in fact, where it is so intimately mixed, and affected, that the distinction with the previous 'internal' cases sometimes seems quite artificial). Algeria, Palestine-Israel, Chechnya: these are the names of a long series of shameful collective resignations of Europe. Each time in different ways, tracing back to colonial history, to its own ethnic and religious divisions, its wars and genocides, Europe was involved as a cause or a mirror of these 'impossible to solve' conflicts, whose continuous degradation threatens its own civility and moral identity. History seems to show that any political entity (call it a 'state' in the broad sense), in order to exist, needs an 'idea' or a universal project to unify its human and material forces. But Europe's project can no longer be to subjugate the world, as in the colonial era. Nor can it be a messianic project of announcing (after the Christian or the communist model) the birth of the 'new man'. Europe can indeed try to exercise a 'civilizing' influence in the world, as well as to build the moral conditions of its own construction, but in order to do so it has to be more active. By abandoning the Chechens to the total war waged against them by post-Soviet Russia, Europe keeps in the traditional line of blindness before genocidal processes, and it practically denies the 'European' character of Russia, destroying the possibilities of finally lifting the 'Iron Curtain' (or its latest replica). The Russians can do what they like, they are not 'applying' to the European Union. By practically endorsing the plans of the U.S.-Israel alliance in the Middle East (with some limited counterweights: periodical statements that the United Nations resolutions

should be enforced, humanitarian projects that neither protect the Palestinians from colonization and state terrorism nor completely convince them to reject terrorism), the Europeans help the development of a new 'generalized' anti-Semitism in the world, where judeophobia and arabophobia paradoxically merge. By keeping silent on the crimes of the Algerian army (which seem to match the crimes of the Islamic terrorist groups) and backing the repression of democratic movements by other authoritarian regimes in North Africa, while at the same time racially and culturally discriminating against their own 'immigrant' populations from the Maghreb, they provoke a disastrous collapse of the 'Euro-Mediterranean' project (a theme to which I return).

But, we may ask, is this the only way to analyse the situation? I would suggest that the new 'global' conjuncture offers other alternatives. Undoubtedly the cultural divisions and conflicting interests of the world also affect us in Europe and could become acute. There is to date no strong symbol of a common identity that could help neutralize or suppress them. Undoubtedly Europe and America are not separated spaces, any more than Europe and Eurasia, or Europe and the Middle East. In this respect some countries owe their history or their geography or their demographic composition the virtual capacity to 'open gates' and 'build bridges'. Whether you think of Britain, Ukraine, Turkey or the Balkans, it would be absurd to forcefully locate them on a single side of an external 'European border'. Undoubtedly Europe does not have the capacity to build a *Grossraum* on the continent, to impose a kind of European 'Monroe Doctrine' (a geostrategic idea that was invented in the 1930s by Carl Schmitt to justify German imperialism and that is now retrieved by some in a democratic context).²⁴ But you can read all this in the opposite sense. No European 'identity' can be *opposed* to others in the world because there exist no absolute *border lines* between the historical and cultural territory of Europe and the surrounding spaces. There exist no absolute border lines *because Europe as such is a 'border line'* (or 'a Borderland', to borrow Scott Malcomson's beautiful title for a beautiful book on the Bosphorous and its region).²⁵ More precisely it is a super-position of border lines, hence a superimposition of heterogeneous relations to the other histories and cultures of the world (at least many of them), which are reproduced within its own history and culture.

We must therefore concentrate our attention on a very singular pattern of dialectical interactions between the 'interior' and the 'exterior'. This was precisely the theme of a recent essay by the director of the Institut français des Relations Internationales, Thierry de Montbrial, acting chair of the French Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, *Europe: La Dialectique intérieur-extérieur*.²⁶ After many others, Montbrial draws lessons from the recent international events. He too agrees that there is an amazing disproportion

24. The Monroe Doctrine was expressed in the Message to Congress by President James Monroe dated December 2, 1823. It enunciated four principles: that the American continents were no longer to be considered open for colonization by the European powers; that the political system of the Americas was different from that of Europe; that the United States would consider any attempt on the part of the European powers to extend their system to the Western Hemisphere as dangerous to its peace and safety; and that the United States would not interfere in the internal affairs of European countries. For the text, see Richard Hofstadter, *Great Issues in American History: A Documentary Record*, vol. 1: *From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), pp. 244–247. It was later used to legitimize U.S. imperialist policies in Latin America as 'inter-American affairs'. The German conservative, later Nazi, jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt had started very early to discuss its meaning for a new conception of international relations (see Carl Schmitt, 'Völkerrrechtliche Formen des modernen Imperialismus' (1932), in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles* (Berlin: Dunker and Humblot, 1994), pp. 184–203). In 1938 he used it to legitimize German plans to create a 'European Great Space' under German leadership (see Carl Schmitt, 'Neutrality According to International Law and National Totality', in *Four Articles, 1931–1938*, ed. and trans. Simona Draghici (Washington, D.C.: Plutarch Press, 1999)). Hitler himself borrowed the formula of a 'European Monroe Doctrine' in his *Reishtagrede* of April 28, 1939, rejecting Roosevelt's warning against an aggression of Poland by Germany. For a recent use, see Jean-Pierre Chevènement (former Socialist minister of the interior), 'Pour une doctrine de Monroe européenne', *La Lettre de République Moderne* 104 (December 2000), available online at <<http://www.tribunes.com/tgr/JPC/Monroe%europeenne.htm>>.

25. Scott L. Malcomson, *Borderlands: Nation and Empire* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994).

26. Thierry de Montbrial, 'Europe: La Dialectique intérieur-extérieur', *Le Monde*, 19 November 2002, pp. 1, 17. See also his latest book, Thierry de Montbrial, *L'Action et le système du monde* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002).

between Europe's limited influence in international negotiations and its economic prosperity, a military gap that automatically confers upon the United States the responsibility of decision making in security matters, and he pictures a sharp contrast between Europe's incapacity to define a common foreign policy and the 'strong demand upon Europe' that he perceives in the world, from the former Soviet Empire to Latin America. He quotes from a 'Brazilian authority' who would explain this 'insufficient offer' as a consequence of Europe's remaining 'ashamed of the way it destroyed itself in the first half of the twentieth century'. His own explanation is different, however, taking the form of a dialectical reversal. In the history of the building of nation-states, it was the strong pre-existing national unity, the feelings of belonging and identity, that made it possible for the state to mobilize all the human and material resources needed to achieve international goals. But now, in the case of the European unification, however impressive the achievements since 1957 may appear, the reverse is true: a 'European Europe' can emerge only if foreign policy and defence policy are impossible in the immediate situation, but a 'combined intervention' of European nations is the 'high politics' of world affairs (decisions concerning war and peace, as in the case of Iraq, for example) can result from a permanent alliance between the three major European powers (Great Britain, France and Germany) if they agree to consult each other following certain established rules.

This idea of a 'dialectical relationship' between interior and exterior is well meant, but I fear there is something like a *petitio principii* in the (very conventional) way it is used here. Why should it be easier for a 'common political will' to emerge at the level of the three European 'great powers' (in reality, medium powers), rather than at the level of all members of the European Union, or rather than developing a majoritarian opinion on the European scale, especially when it comes to discussing 'world affairs'? The reverse could very well be the case. But above all I think that the change of method as it is advocated here should be much more radical, if we are to cope with the new situation we have entered. I myself would suggest that we must draw all the consequences from the fact that *Europe is a borderland* rather than an entity that 'has' *borders* (or 'will have' them in the future). This quite naturally leads us to completely re-examine the relationships between 'strategy', 'power', 'agency' and 'subjectivity' (or 'identity'). In order to overcome the dilemma of a strategy that presupposes the autonomy of the subject that conceives and implements it, *agency* must have a privilege over *identity*. What is at stake is indeed a complete change in the way *relations of power* are calculated, imputed, and recognized on the world scale.

[...] I have been following the guiding thread provided by the obligation to 'answer' (at least answer *something*) to the call

of American liberals (among whom I include those who, like George Mosse in the past, or Edward Said nowadays, were driven to America by exile, and became essential contributors to its intellectual life), and it took us some distance further away. Allow me to summarize this path, leaving aside some inevitable detours: starting with the critique of the equivocalities of any demand addressed to Europe to act as a counterweight or a mediator, I advocated in the end an 'antistrategic' metamorphosis in our conception of the relation between power and political capacity. Meanwhile, I made some concrete suggestions concerning the way European nations, European states, European institutions and European social forces and public opinion could favour a new system of international relations. It will be said that any 'antistrategy' remains a strategy.²⁷ This is, of course, true; if it was not the case, there would be no point in offering this idea to determinate actors, in a situation that is critical, both urgent and antagonistic. What was important in this choice of terms was to make clear how deeply we must locate the inversion of perspectives necessary to *answer the call* that we receive: we must displace the call, we must call in return upon the Americans to think in different terms, we must question the very presuppositions of the demands. We must *start changing the concept of the political*. As a way of concluding, I would like to explain why I chose this title (*Europe, Vanishing Mediator?*), and I will return to the function of the intellectuals.

As a matter of fact, while I was sketching the elements of this presentation,²⁸ I happened to read (with considerable delay: almost thirty years!) Fredric Jameson's brilliant essay *The Vanishing Mediator; or, Max Weber as Storyteller*.²⁹ Jameson attempts to show that, at the core of Weber's interpretation of the processes of modernization or rationalization (which is basically a European or Eurocentric process), but also of certain Marxian descriptions of revolutionary processes in the past, there lies a dialectical figure that can be called the figure of the vanishing mediator. This is the figure (admittedly presented in speculative terms) or a *transitory* institution (or force, community or spiritual formulation) that creates the conditions for a new society and a new civilizational pattern, albeit in the horizon and the vocabulary of the past, and by rearranging the elements inherited from the very institution that has to be overcome. This is notoriously the case of the 'Protestant ethic', centred around the paradoxical notion of a 'worldly asceticism', or an immanent spiritual calling, where a twist in the meaning of religious beliefs in fact prepares the subjective conditions for a secularized behaviour of individuals and the whole society, the emergence of 'rational' economic subjects. It creates therefore the conditions for its own suppression and withering away. But without this 'vanishing' mediation no transition from the old to the new fabric of society would have been possible.

27. As was pointed out during the discussion following this talk at the Humboldt-Universität.

28. An initial version was presented at the New School for Social Research in New York on 14 March 2002, where I had been invited by Nancy Fraser from the Department of Political Science and Jay Bernstein from the Department of Philosophy.

29. Fredric Jameson, 'The Vanishing Mediator; or, Max Weber as Storyteller', in *Ideologies of Theory*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 2: pp. 3–34 (originally published in *New German Critique* 1 (Winter 1974), pp. 52–89).

It seemed to me that I could in fact play on the double meaning of this remarkable dialectical expression to discuss the paradoxical situation in which Europe and European intellectuals find themselves today. On the one hand, I should critically assess the limits of Europe's capacity to influence and mediate conflicts and historical processes that are changing the structure of the world under our eyes. On the other hand, I should explore the possibilities for Europe to use its own fragilities and indeterminacies, its own 'transitory' character in a sense, as an effective mediation in a process that might bring about a new political culture, a national and international crisis. Or perhaps, even more paradoxically, I should explore the possibilities for Europe to offer itself as an instrument that other forces in the world, aiming at a transformation of politics, could use and shape to cope with the crisis.

The idea of the vanishing mediator is probably not so different from the idea of the *translator*, the *intermediary*, of the *traveller* that I have associated with the essential function of the intellectual. In 'our' case – we the people of Europe – the similitude becomes almost a fusion. As Umberto Eco has proposed, the only genuine 'idiom of Europe' (and we know that any political entity needs an idiom or a linguistic institution) *is the practice of translation*.³⁰ This might well be the 'exceptional' character of Europe, due to its specific history, in particular its global expansion and the past competition between its imperialist powers, followed by the 'striking back' of the empires. Europe is not the only region in the world where translations are made, where technologies, professional instructions, literary works and sacred texts continuously pass from one idiom to another. But nowhere – not even in India or China – was it necessary to organize to the same degree the political and pedagogical conditions of linguistic exchanges. It seems actually possible to imagine how this age-old institutional practice of translation, which is both typically 'European' and impossible to enclose in the 'borders of Europe' (since almost none of the great European idioms has remained a national 'property'), could be expanded, in two directions. It could be expanded by including new elements in the group of languages taught and practised for the sake of labour and culture, thus broadening the circle of legitimate translations (starting with Arabic, Turkic, Urdu and others that are already widely practised on European soil). It could be expanded also by stretching the idea of 'translation' from the merely linguistic task, one that involves acknowledging certain impossibilities ('nontranslatable' ideas and forms) *and* looking for equivalences: scientific, literary, legal and religious 'universals'.

We are thus led to an additional meaning of the idea of the 'vanishing mediator' – perhaps our utopia or our myth: Europe as the *interpreter of the world*, translating languages

30. Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language (The Making of Europe)* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 350–351.

and cultures in all directions. This is an attempt to restore the political function of intellectuals: notwithstanding other activities and commitments, intellectuals would continuously broaden the horizon of their translating capacities. It also points at a *broad*, 'organic', function of the intellectuals. Intellectuals would 'disappear into [their] own intervention', as Louis Althusser used to say.³¹ They would be necessary, but without monopoly. They would be border lines themselves.

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31. Louis Althusser, 'Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists' (1967), in *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists and Other Essays*, ed. Gregory Elliot (London: Verso, 1990), p. 78.

POST- COMMUNIST ART

ROBERT FLECK

A group of young Lithuanian girls, with long blonde hair, slowly turns around and around. They are dressed for the traditional coming of age celebration. However, their long blonde hair has been tied together by the artist behind this performance. Thus, they are obliged to rotate together, their faces turned towards the on-lookers. This performance took place in Vilnius, Lithuania during the first exhibition of the Soros Contemporary Art Center, entitled *Mundane Language*, in 1995. The artist appropriated this traditional dance in national costume, resembling so many of the village celebrations that represent proud liberty and independence for the former communist countries. Yet the young girls are bound together by their long blonde hair, the very element that represents the purity and sanctity of adolescence in traditional costumes. This ephemeral piece by a young artist existed only for the length of the dance. However, it formed a rich metaphor of the ambiguous cultural sentiment dominant in the former communist, or 'Transitional', countries: the girls express the intense pride of their youth, of the new found independence of their small country, and of a cultural liberty symbolized by the public display of a traditional dance with religious connotations. Nonetheless, they are 'chained', joined together by their traditional costume like convicts or prisoners, enacting a folk dance empty of meaning in the modern world. Thus showing that a culture interpreted in this way is as much a cage for the individual as the former communist regime, over-thrown by the people in 1989–1990. Their melancholic dance sums up the schizophrenic situation in Eastern Europe: in the aftermath of a prolonged dictatorship, a population's only reference is its former national traditions. Yet the people are more than aware that this culture is no longer relevant in our profoundly changing world.

The performance in question is called *Trap. Expulsion from Paradise*. This first remarkable work by Egle Rakauskaite, a young Lithuanian artist born in 1967, is one of the most beautiful performances of recent years. It can be compared to *Go-Go Dancing Platform* by Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1991) – a sculpture-performance consisting of a small rectangular stage trimmed with electric light-bulbs, made for a gay professional male model to dance on during the exhibition opening while listening to a walkman he is holding in his hand; the music he hears is inaudible to the public. Rakauskaite did not know of the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres when she created the performance in Vilnius. Nonetheless it is as modern, or postmodern, as the piece by her New York colleague. Like Gonzalez-Torres, she respects the formal vocabulary of the politically correct and develops a subjective and political metaphor of a social reality in which sexual and ethnic discriminations are examined. In other words, the piece by the Lithuanian artist belongs to the same anti-expressionist, political and individualist aesthetics as the performance by Felix

Gonzalez-Torres. Rakauskaite is neither provincial nor backward, manipulating the underside of the advertising and fashion world as much as the American artist to create a melancholic expression. While constituting a political gesture, her performance disregards the political notions of the Marxist or Humanist inheritance that the Soviet Union, where Rakauskaite grew up, tried to incarnate. The political engagement of this piece relates more to the idea of 'specific intelligence' proposed by Michel Foucault: in order to reconstruct political criticism, first deal with what one knows.

A work like Egle Rakauskaite's is not only a beautiful performance; its aesthetic features are almost indiscernible from contemporary work in New York or Berlin. The same can be said for a large number of paintings, installations, photographic work, video art, etc. currently produced in Eastern Europe. Ten years after the fall of communism, there no longer exists any major difference between the work of young artists in Eastern European countries and the West. The young generations of the Transitional countries are today just as interesting and evolve on the same level as their German, French, Scandinavian or English counterparts. This fact announces profound changes in the European cultural scene for years to come.

The majority of Western museum directors and curators still claim today: 'The situation is grim over there; I wouldn't mind showing artists from Eastern Europe – but are there any good ones?' It is true that no major star, capable of expressing in him or herself the contradictions of post-communist societies, has emerged since 1989. How could it have been any other way in a post-dictatorship situation? The previous generations had been entirely discredited in the eyes of the young artists in the Transitional countries: the former 'official regime' painters today sell realist paintings to Western tourists; the dissident artists of the communist period, such as Ilya Kabakov in the former Soviet Union and Braco Dimitrijević in the former Yugoslavia, have nearly all emigrated. The aesthetic approach of the 1980s bears no relation to the ideals of the younger generations in Central and Eastern Europe. In all the countries that over-threw the apparently 'eternal' Marxist-Leninist regimes between 1989 and 1991, artistic creation has evolved in a totally different way to how it is imagined in the West.

However, very few Western museum curators or art critics have ventured into the former communist states over the last ten years. Even fewer are those who really know the exhibitions and artist's studios in these countries. Until recently, certain Western mediators came to Prague or Budapest with the fear of landing in savage territory. But these cities have become entirely westernized. Today,

their standard of living is superior to that of Greece or Portugal. Unfortunately, attitudes don't evolve as rapidly as reality...

An assessment of this last post-communist decade cannot neglect the fact that Western Europe has more or less abandoned the former communist states on a cultural level. At best, the European Union has treated this zone as a subordinate colony to which they send second-rate exhibitions of video or graphic design. At worst, it has put up a new 'Iron Curtain' through a restrictive visa policy that has profoundly traumatized the populations and artists of the Transitional countries.

Let's look again at the example of Egle Rakauskaite: two years after the first display of her performance the artist was invited to the Istanbul Biennale, an important rendezvous for international museum curators and critics. She therefore went to Istanbul without any problems. However, that same summer of 1997, Germany refused her an individual visa in order to visit Documenta X in Kassel. Documenta was established in 1955, before the creation of the Iron Curtain by the countries under Soviet control, in order to diffuse modern art to the populations of Eastern Europe. Eight years after the overthrow of communism by the citizens, Western Germany is preventing Eastern European artists from coming to Documenta. Who would not begin to doubt the sincerity of Western countries in such circumstances? Yet the young artists in the Transitional countries are thick-skinned. Two years later, in 1999, Egle Rakauskaite represented her country at the Venice Biennale, in the same space furthermore as several Western stars of her generation, such as Maurizio Cattelan and Wim Delvoye. Let's take a look at the humiliating process that a Central European artist invited to the Venice Biennale has to go through to get an Italian visa. After the anti-communist revolutions of 1989-1990, France, Germany and most of the EU member states regularly awarded visas to young Eastern European artists. Thus, an entire generation lived and worked in Paris and Berlin before being expelled in 1992. Since then, visas have been awarded sparingly. Still today certain countries, including France, occasionally refuse visas to artists who are invited to major events if they cannot prove that their savings are equivalent to 1500 Euro per month of residency. Which young French artist would fit this criteria?

Since 1992, Western Europe has conscientiously constructed a new 'Iron Curtain' directed against the citizens of the Transitional countries. This wall is sometimes invisible, or purely administrative. Yet sometimes, like the border between Germany and Poland - that the Federal state protects by barbed wire and man-made ditches - it is very real. Thus, the established democracies prohibit the

freedom of circulation that the former communist countries thought they had acquired through their revolt against Soviet power. Based on ethnic and economic criteria, this postcolonial discrimination contributes to the continuation of the cultural gap that splits the continent in half. This is a division which should have already disappeared considering the current globalization of media, images and communication.

Today, the work of young artists in the Transitional countries displays three particular characteristics. First of all, one is surprised by the fact that 'Eastern European' aesthetics – a mix of expressionism, reclaimed materials and installations that became known in the West during the last two decades of the Soviet regime – has practically disappeared in the work of the most promising young artists, be this in the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria or former Yugoslavia. Ten years after the fall of communism, fundamental differences no longer exist between the work of young Western artists and that of their peers in Central and Eastern Europe. This rapid evolution can be logically explained: the 'Eastern European' aesthetics, that many critics continue to identify with the art of the Transitional countries, was born of a specific period and artistic need which today is in the past.

From the beginning of the 1970s onwards, the majority of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, including those of the Soviet Union, slowly transformed into 'post-totalitarian' systems according to the theory of Vaclav Havel. With the exception of Romania, and in some respects Czechoslovakia following the intervention of troops after the Warsaw Pact, these regimes evolved into 'loose dictatorships'. The official party in charge of administration, controlled in theory by the state of law, no longer tried to convert the population to the communist ideal. Its legitimacy was based on a regime that promised a good standard of living, while respecting relatively well the individual liberty of citizens. This paradoxical, 'post-utopian' atmosphere allowed the emergence, around 1970, of the first 'dissidents' and an art of 'non-conformity', which would become a veritable generational phenomenon from 1972 onwards. This rebellion was more or less linked to the hippy movement, particularly in the Soviet Union where LSD was sent on the back of stamps posted on letters from the USA. Ilya Kabakov and his artist friends from Moscow began consciously to use rubbish, installations and reclaimed materials in their sculptures to evoke the run-down apartments of Moscow. Kabakov was discovered by the West in 1985 thanks to this 'aesthetics of degradation', which appeared exotic compared to the technically perfect and spectacular creations in the Western art of the 1980s. From the perspective of Moscow, the theme of degradation carried only political significance. The artists showed the

reality of the socialist economy which resulted in a continued degradation of living conditions, while the regime continued to promise a standard of living equivalent to the capitalist West by the year 2000.

Today Ilya Kabakov lives between Paris and New York. He is probably the only artist to come from the communist world since 1945 who has seriously influenced Western artists, notably due to the physical force and poetic reality of his installations. Despite this, the younger generations of artists in the Transitional countries have never really taken an interest in this pre-1989 'dissident art'. Ten years on, contemporary art in the former communist states has changed profoundly. Unlike the clichés would have it, the young artists of Central and Eastern Europe rapidly rejected the 'Eastern European aesthetics' of the 1970s and 1980s dissidents. Throughout the 1990s, the same dominant themes – the body and the politically correct – simultaneously appear on both sides of the former Iron Curtain. The two communities share the same sober, sociological and highly conceptual aesthetics. The now commonplace use of video, video-projection, photography and cinematic history is apparent on both sides of the 'Curtain'. Barely ten years since the anti-communist revolutions, the aesthetic differences separating the East and West have practically vanished.

This can be easily explained considering the rapid evolution of the social and economic environment in the Transitional countries. Now, a young artist in Sophia, Cluj, Łodz, Warsaw or Tallinn is subjected to the same influences as his Western counterpart. During the months following the fall of communism, major multinational companies literally invaded Eastern Europe by posting enormous advertising billboards in strategic places in the public space. On the Alexanderplatz in East Berlin, as early as December 1989, huge neon signs for brands like Panasonic, Coca-Cola and Sony replaced the political slogans of the collapsed regime, declaring 'Let's build socialism together' in washed-out colours. Some five years later, all the city centres of the former communist capitals had come to resemble western cities: there are the same adverts as in the rest of the world; the same shop fronts as in Paris, Yves Saint Laurent or Paco Rabanne; the same television channels, such as Eurosport, MTV, CNN, BBC World, TV5, etc.. On the main square of every Central European city you will find a Benetton and a McDonald's diffusing the same design and attractive images that one finds in German, French and Scandinavian cities. Often the media environment is even more 'modern' in Eastern Europe than in the West. In the majority of EU countries, billboards are subject to particularly strict regulations which are often unknown to the general public (for example, large-scale billboards are prohibited in German city centres). Yet there are practically no billboard

regulations in the former communist states. Almost all the capitals of the Transitional countries experience a form of modernity from which the 'Old Europe' is excluded.

The evolution of public life and communications in the former Soviet hemisphere has been rapid, continuous and spectacular. Up until 1989, the journey between Vienna and Budapest was a sinuous route through regional roads. Westerners were subjected to serious controls on crossing the border into the Soviet hemisphere, while from the other direction, all traffic had been prohibited to Eastern European passport holders since 1956. Today, one can cross the border from the West to the East in a matter of seconds. The journey takes place on a brand new, much frequented motorway. Along this 280 km stretch of road, which separates Vienna from Budapest, there are no less than six McDonald's. In 1977 at Documenta XI in Kassel, Andy Warhol declared that one day we would see McDonald's signs in Moscow and Peking. At the time, the organizers criticized Warhol in the exhibition's catalogue for his naive and unrealistic comments...

Thus, since 1989, the young artists of Central and Eastern Europe have experienced something quite different to what is usually implied by the notion of 'post-communism'. Unlike their Western colleagues who evolve in a highly regulated economy, the artists on the other half of the continent have truly lived what the philosopher Gilles Deleuze described a decade earlier as 'the era of integral capitalism'. Through the George Soros Foundation, American capital has been used to furnish artists and critics in Central and Eastern Europe with computers and video equipment since 1991. Even in the domain of new technology, young artists from the Transitional countries work on an equal footing with Western artists. Use of the Internet and e-mail has spread through the former communist sphere at a comparable speed to that of the United States. Thanks to these new means of communication, young Romanian or Baltic artists can keep in touch with Western critics and curators on a daily basis.

This new reality, and the considerable impact that it has on social life and attitudes, is of particular interest to young artists in the post-communist countries. Furthermore, in 1995, we have seen the emergence of the first generation of artists who completed their higher education after the communist era. In 1997, a student from the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts told me during the graduate exhibition, 'I have never known communism. I have only heard my parents talking about it. I was seven years old in 1981, when *Solidarnosc* (Solidarity) took place. Afterwards, despite the state of siege, nobody took communism seriously. For us, it already no longer existed'. This

generation graduated from secondary school after 1989. Upon arrival at art school, there was no Socialist Realism. Like their Western counterparts, they see capitalism as the only model of society that governs the world today. When an international exhibition brings together artists from different parts of Europe, even a connoisseur would have difficulty identifying the country of origin of the artist based on his work alone.

The 'Eastern European' generation of the 1990s shares the same ideas, experiences and motivations as the young Western generation. Their art is just as much based on multimedia. In fact, the marginalisation of painting is sometimes even more evident than in the West. In Eastern Europe, painting is subjected to a double condemnation: political and artistic. Firstly, it is disregarded on the basis of being the official medium of the communist regime. Secondly, the Stalinist and post-Stalinist dogma of a realist didactic image, directly influenced by late-nineteenth century bourgeois art, froze the evolution of painting in these countries from the 1930s onwards. There are several very interesting painters in these countries, like Petr Kvíčala from Brno, Elian from Cluj and Uros Duric from Belgrade. However, other media permit a more immediate access and artistic assimilation, thus sidelining painting as a medium of 'slow evolution'. Between 1995 and 1999 the annual exhibitions of the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art were the main artistic events in the majority of the Transitional countries. These exhibitions principally promoted work similar to major Western exhibitions; photography, video or installations with a political and social resonance. This has not stopped numerous video, photographic and installation artists from being seduced by bourgeois and turn-of-the-century art. The sole difference is that this tradition is more recent in the former communist countries, as Socialist Realism was still being practised by the parents of certain young artists up until around twelve years ago.

This does not signify that individuality is being effaced by a uniform global culture. The other side of Europe proves somewhat the opposite. The first thing that strikes a traveller on arrival in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe is the extreme diversity of cultural and artistic environments. The removal of the ideological barrier which constituted the Marxist-Leninist philosophy provoked the rebirth of local differences, even more so than national ones. Similarly, it is misleading to think of 'Eastern Europe' as a homogenous zone. The art scenes in Prague, Cracow, Bratislava or Zagreb have practically nothing in common today, apart from the international aesthetics which the young artists of the 1990s share throughout the entire continent of Europe. Each local scene is formed from the modern art practice existing in the region before the arrival of communism and its more recent tradition of 'unorthodox' art of the 1960s and 1970s.

One often underestimates to what extent the modernist movement had developed a form of 'globalization' before the term even existed. Indeed, during the 1920s and 1930s many Baltic, Czech, Hungarian, Russian and Romanian painters played a central role in the adventure that was 'modern art'. Some settled in Paris or later in New York, like Constantine Brancusi or Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, while remaining in contact with their fellow countrymen. Others returned to their country in order to keep alive the modernist tradition under the fascist dictatorships of the 1920s and 1930s, and later under communism. For instance, Lajos Kassak, one of the principle inventors of Constructivism had a profound influence on Simon Hantaï before he moved to Paris. The communist putsch which followed would prevent him from going back to Budapest. On his return from Paris in 1932, the painter and critic Vladislav Strzemiński founded the first Museum of Modern Art in Europe in Łodz, the most important Jewish city in Poland. And this six years after the opening of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, but ten years before the creation of the Museum of Modern Art in Paris. The museum in Łodz has remained open, without any major interruption, to this day, showing works chosen by Fernand Leger, Piet Mondriaan, etc.. Theodor Pallady opened the Cluj-Napoca School of Modern Art in Romanian Transylvania under the artistic philosophy of his painter friend, Matisse. Several Russian collectors acquired some of the most important works of this artist before the Great War. After the October Revolution, these paintings were permanently on display in the public museums of the Soviet Union. And this was more than thirty years before Parisian museums acquired important works by Matisse for their permanent collections.

During the 1920s and 1930s modern artists, who were relatively marginalised in the artistic life of Western Europe and even openly threatened in Germany from 1933, had created a form of 'Sixth International' that would have ramifications throughout Europe, as well as in North and South America. This network allowed many artists to escape, at least provisionally, the often fatal trap which had formed around modern art since 1937. The famous exhibition *Degenerate Art* began in Munich in March 1937 at the current location of the Kunstverein, one of the most important contemporary art centres today. The exhibition was the most visited display of modern art in history until the popular success of Documenta X, organized in 1997 by Catherine David. Following the *Degenerate Art* exhibition, modern artists were declared a 'danger to the German people' by the Nazi government. Many painters and sculptors of the modernist movement felt the impending danger. A certain number of them left Paris in 1937 to return to their country of origin, notably to the numerous newly created Republics resulting from the romantic and

democratic movements of the nineteenth century, that Britain and France had created and protected since 1919. For these new countries – the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Poland – the triple liberation at the end of the Great War from the Habsburgs, the Tsars and the Ottomans constituted a new-found liberation. Once the real threat to modern artists became apparent due to the radicalization of Nazi power in Western Europe, a large number of them returned to their country of origin in Central and Eastern Europe in order to find refuge among their own people. Between 1937 and 1941, a frenetic period of creativity in modern art took place in Eastern Europe. These countries believed themselves to be protected by the formal guarantees on their existence and security made by Britain and France. The successive occupations by the Nazis and Stalin caught the populations and modern artists unawares. Despite the persecutions and massive deportations, profoundly inscribed in the memory of the people, modern art remained continuously active. There were 'smugglers' such as František Kupka who, while living in Puteaux, assembled from 1919 onwards one of the most important collections of modern art on the continent for the new Czechoslovakian state. He remained in contact with his country during the 'black years', and in 1948 showed work on both sides of post-Nazi Germany during the *Major Exhibition of French Abstract Painting*, which included artists such as Pierre Soulages and Hans Hartung. In the Soviet hemisphere, constructed between 1947 and 1948, modern paintings and sculptures were removed from the public eye by the regime, but they were not destroyed or sold abroad as the Nazis had done. Between 1948 and 1989, these works were shown and stored in unfavourable conditions, but conserved and thus accessible to the elite.

Since the anti-communist revolutions of 1989, these modern art collections are being shown again with particular attention. Today, they prove to the young artists in the Transitional countries that their culture is not archaic, and that a modernist tradition existed on a local level. From a historical point of view, the interruption of modern art was a relatively brief episode as the communist regimes only came to most of the countries in 1945 or 1948. Taking into account the modernist precursors of the period between the First and Second World Wars, an aesthetic reconciliation between Eastern and Western Europe is more or less a return to the norm: at the time of the Parisian school even an expert was incapable of guessing the geographical origins of artists such as Hans Arp, Sonia Delaunay, Andre Kretesz, Man Ray, Ossip Zadkine, Nicholas Pevsner, Tristan Tzara or Victor Vasarely, or even Pablo Picasso, by simply looking at their work. Today, it has become financially and physically impossible for contemporary artists to live in an area of one city, as was the case in the Parisian district of

Montparnasse until 1940. However, one has the impression that such a community – this time decentralized, yet just as close thanks to the Internet and mobile telephones – is coming together, notably in the wake of the massive emergence of non-Western artists.

A second local tradition has resurfaced today in the former communist countries, that of 'unorthodox' art. This movement experienced a rapid underground development during the last two decades of the communist regime. The communist world was much less homogenous than it is generally thought. A certain notion of a socialized state culture combined with popular realism imposed itself on the totalitarian system. However, the reality of the cultural conditions differed largely from one country to another. In Poland, for example, the cultural milieu was particularly open to Western avant-garde art during the 1960s and 1970s. Artists from Leipzig, Dresden and East Berlin spent their holidays in this sister country (in which they were under permanent surveillance) in order to visit contemporary art exhibitions, notably in the small Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, which showed artists such as Joseph Beuys, Daniel Buren, Laurence Weiner and Roman Opalka (a Polish artist living in the West).

Despite General Jaruzelski's putsch in 1981, Polish artists have always kept in contact with their Western colleagues. In the autumn of 1981, during the *Solidarnosc* crisis, Joseph Beuys came to Łódź with his family in a Volkswagen bus in order to give a complete collection of his editions to the museum, which he then installed himself. The Beuys donation in Łódź became a symbol of the resistance and a subject of study which had a major influence on the avant-garde aesthetics of Eastern Europe in the 1980s. In Czechoslovakia, people lived with the memory of the liberal period that ended in 1968. Pioneers of the avant-garde such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg had shown or performed in Prague in 1963. In Josip Tito's Yugoslavia, art was almost totally free, allowing the birth of abstract and minimal painting from the 1960s onwards through the Gorgona group and Julie Knifer. During the 1970s, the Conceptual and Body Art movements began to play a major role on the international circuit, notably through the figure of Marina Abramović, the daughter of one of Tito's generals, who would become one of the most remarkable artists of the end of the twentieth century. Under the reign of Milosevic from 1989 to 2000, Abramović played an important role in the protection of artistic freedom in Serbia that largely contributed to the overthrow of the dictatorship.

In the 1970s, a small-scale but well-structured, and more or less clandestine, 'non-conformist' scene spread throughout Eastern Europe. The Baltic States were part of the Soviet

Union until 1990. Non-conformist art developed there through the hippy movement. The annual assemblies of 'eccentric' Soviets in the Lithuanian forests led to open-air exhibitions, with Land Art pieces similar to those which were being created in the United States. In 1977, a catalogue of the work of Robert Smithson, a key American land artist, arrived in Riga by unknown means. This forty-page book inspired an important avant-garde movement around figures like Olegs Tillbergs and Ojars Petersons, who would become the intellectual leaders of the young generation. Paradoxically, it was quite easy to be an avant-garde artist, in the Western sense of the term, in the Soviet Union. It sufficed to show installations and other ephemeral pieces in the applied arts section of official exhibitions. Censorship was mainly concentrated on painting and sculpture. However, the representatives of the Communist Party intervened as soon as a Western art review spoke of such unorthodox art in terms of 'real' art.

Deimantas Narkevičius is a Lithuanian artist and critic who superbly represented his country at the last Venice Biennale. During the opening of his exhibition, organized at the off-site Lithuanian Pavilion in June 2001, he was visited by two legendary American artists, Joseph Kosuth and Bill Viola, who consider him to be one of their own. Narkevičius is thirty-seven years old. About twenty years ago he carried out his military service in the Red Army as a Soviet citizen. Since Lithuania gained its independence, he has forged a discrete but important position amongst the intellectuals of his country. His film and video pieces deal with the hidden traumas of the recent past, such as the extermination of the Lithuanian Jews by the Nazi and Soviet powers in collaboration with the local population, the survival of Soviet vestiges in the collective memory, the factories and the large painted frescos of Socialist Realism. The artist never states a personal opinion. This impressive body of work carries a political weight in his country that Western artists would currently have much difficulty in rivalling.

Young artists describe the communist regime as a 'system of generalized hypocrisy'. This can be applied also to the ferocious and un pitying dictatorship of the Romanian Communist Party under Ceaucescu. During the 1980s, the economic crisis – brought on by the absurd initiative to abolish all external debts in an industrial country – prevented the printing of posters for the official party parades. Painters and art students were requisitioned to create one-off, original posters on reclaimed wood. Only the political slogan was controlled. The artists seized this opportunity to create abstract paintings, which were officially prohibited, under the guise of decoration. Romania underwent a short liberal period from 1965 to 1972. Its artists were free to go to Paris or New York, where some of them met with the founders of the avant-garde movement,

such as Allan Kaprow, a major figure in American Happenings. Here they learned the formal vocabulary of the most advanced art. Following the reinforcement of the dictatorship in 1972, the situation descended into paranoia. People began to suspect even their closest relatives of spying for the secret police, the Securitate. Simply listening to Radio Luxembourg or Radio Free Europe, one ran the risk of being sent to a manual labour factory. From 1977 onwards, famine dominated daily life. The art schools could only recruit one single student by department every year as the regime wished to tightly restrict the number of intellectuals and cultivated citizens. Yet experimental art survived this trial. In 1988, the artists Gina Gerendi Aniko, Dan Perjovschi and Gaina G. Dorel from the city of Oradea on the border of Hungary, managed to obtain the tacit tolerance of the local political representative – a childhood friend – to present an exhibition of Performance and Conceptual art. One year later, the revolution against Ceaucescu and the reign of his party representatives began in this same city.

Aspects of these traditions, often unknown to the local public today, form the basis of more or less constant rediscoveries. In 1996, the Museum of Warsaw organized the first retrospective of modern and contemporary Baltic art. In 1997, under the title *Experiment*, the Soros Center in Bucharest presented impressive archives of 'unorthodox' art in Romania since 1960. It is regrettable that no major Western museum has undertaken an analysis of the little known Eastern European avant-garde, which would significantly rectify the official history of recent art.

The state of the arts is still fragile in the Transitional countries. Sometimes artists are the victims of spectacular regressions. Yugoslavia escaped state interventionism on aesthetics under Tito. Unfortunately in the Federal State, so dreamed of throughout the nineteenth century by the writers and artists of Slav nationalism, the end of communism was synonymous with the end of artistic liberty. In Serbia, independent art was under heavy surveillance by a brutal, totalitarian regime until the year 2000. The Tudjman dictatorship in Croatia obliged artists to adopt nationalist subject matter, in a context similar to the founding of Italian Fascism in the 1920s. While in Slovenia, Croatia's neighbour, art remained free and a dynamic cultural life existed. In many other post-communist countries, artists were faced with dictator-like conditions, such as in Slovakia, Belarus, Ukraine and parts of Romania. What is happening in Austria since February 2000 under the conservative and extreme-right government can be explained in this context, since all these countries formed part of the Habsburg Empire until 1918. Another phenomenon, which is perceptible from Iran to Latvia, is the constant, sometimes violent, pressure exercised by religious

fundamentalists – Catholic, Orthodox or Muslim – on artists to adopt religious subject matter, while tolerating the vocabulary of Western contemporary art.

Today, certain directors of American museums visit Baltic, Polish and Romanian artists' studios without stopping in Western Europe. The young artists of the former communist hemisphere are well-represented on the international exhibition circuit. At Documenta X in 1997, or the Venice Biennale of 1999, there were more than thirty artists from the Transitional countries. The itinerant biennial, Manifesta, created in 1996, gives the opportunity to the best talent from all over Europe to meet at what has become an unmissable bi-annual exhibition. Despite visa problems, an important number of Central European artists and critics live partially abroad, mainly in Berlin or the United States, while staying in close contact with their country of origin. Art critics such as Calin Dan, a member of the Romanian conceptual art group subREAL (active since 1984, under Ceaucescu's regime), Iara Boubnova from Sofia or her colleague, Maria Hlavajova in Bratislava, have become 'idea transmitters' through by-passing the complicated cultural administration in these countries. The artistic influence of artists from Transitional countries is beginning to take on an organized form; the only set back is the disappointing number of solo exhibitions of artists from the 'East' in Western galleries and museums. According to the Bulgarian artist Nedko Solakov, 'The art market does not yet have confidence in us, the off-spring of the dispossessed countries'. These same artists prove to be very critical of thematic exhibitions on 'The Art of Eastern Europe', organized by certain Western museums. This labelling does nothing but reinforce clichés, instead of promoting integration and exchanges.

The young artists of the Transitional countries are subjected to virtually the same influences today as their Western colleagues. Their aesthetic references are identical, henceforth they speak the same language. However, these artists continue to feel exclusion intensely. Three essential factors are at work here. The visa problem plays a key role. Unlike the declarations made by the cultural administrations of the EU countries, artists from outside the EU meet with serious discrimination. The second factor is, curiously, globalization. The Venice Biennale has never awarded the slightest prize to an artist from this part of Europe, despite some magnificent work, such as Nedko Solakov's in 2001. Today, thanks to the globalization of communication, it is actually simpler for an Asian or Latin American artist to make himself known in Western Europe, than a person unfortunate enough to have been born in Central or Eastern Europe. The third factor is linked to the decision by the currency speculator, George Soros, in 1999 to abandon financing of contemporary art in the Transitional

countries. Since the 1970s, George Soros, a Hungarian immigrant and friend of philosophers such as Karl Popper (an Austrian immigrant and initiator of the Neo-Liberal school of thought), has accumulated immense profits thanks to currency speculation. For instance, it was Soros who, in 1999, set off the Asian economic crisis by speculating on national currencies. Since 1990, George Soros has invested colossal sums in the reconstruction of post-communist countries. Between 1993 and 1998, a small part of this money was allocated to contemporary art through the Soros Contemporary Art Centers. The centres were founded in every Central and Eastern European country and directed by the Open Society Foundation, a name which is connected to Karl Popper's seminal work written in London during the Nazi regime, *The Open Society*. Equipped with budgets greater than that of the Ministries of Culture, the Soros Centers educated and presented several generations of artists and critics in the former communist countries. The functioning of these organizations for the financing of contemporary art respected the very intelligent practices proposed by experienced Western curators such as Bart de Baere and Peter Pakesch. Many artists in the post-communist countries thus began to gain recognition in the West, while almost all the young art critics and exhibition organizers received a professional education in the United States. The disillusionment began in 1999 when George Soros, from his New York headquarters, decided to stop financing contemporary art. He believed that the art scenes in the Transitional countries had sufficiently achieved their return to form, thanks to his money. Henceforth, they were obliged to get by alone financially, provoking a renewed feeling of abandonment.

This situation can globally be compared to that of German artists after 1950. During the Nazi regime from 1937 to 1945, modern art was entirely prohibited in Germany – much more strictly than in the Soviet hemisphere. From 1950 onwards, certain German painters, such as Willi Baumeister, Karl-Otto Götz, Emil Schumacher, Fritz Winter and K.H. Sonderborg regained a respectable standing, both in terms of creation and reputation. However, this newly reconstructed modern art scene could not shake off a feeling of inferiority in comparison to the Parisian school. The most gesture-based and extreme Parisian painters, such as Pierre Soulages, Hans Hartung and Wols – the last two notably being German immigrants – thus inspired a veritable phenomenon of imitation in Germany. A decade was necessary, after the fall of the dictatorship, in order to fully recapture the creative potential and to reconstruct the solidarity and effectiveness of the scene. From the 1960s, a particularly strong and original generation came to the fore who looked to no previous model and modified the future of contemporary creation itself. This great German generation of the 1960s was headed by Joseph Beuys,

Georg Baselitz, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke, artists who had nonetheless studied under the reconstruction and imitation artists. This generation continues to this day the particularly strong position of German art on an international level. The former communist countries are today in the same situation as the Germans in 1960. Enormous potential can be found in these far-from-superficial artists. They must liberate themselves from the pressure of the Western art scene in order to truly invent something which will take the world by surprise.

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THE DIALECTICS OF NORMALITY

BOJANA PEJIĆ

'We want to be a normal country, with a normal economy, a normal political system, with a normal lifestyle. Normal – one among many. Normal – that is something comprehensible, something in which you do not have to believe, but which you can live. No poetry, no sacrifice, no miracles. A normal country – that is a kind of place and a kind of time where not frantic and magnificent ideas, not absurdities nor utopias nor demi-gods, crazy monsters, wise leaders, rule any longer, but rather the one and indivisible world norm does. Because to be normal is promising. Because the future belongs to the normals. S/he who is normal is accountable. She is taken into account. S/he can be counted upon. S/he counts. S/he can be part of the normal world order of the global financial economy, s/he can take part in it. Normals of the world unite! This is the latest – already postmodern – version of abnormality in Russia. Fiat normalis, pereat mundus!'¹ Ákos Szilágyi

PC: GEO-LINGUISTIC NOTES

As curators and art historians we are 'authorized' by virtue of our professional positions to develop theories that express the ideas, needs and goals of others – the artists. However, when I write on the artists who take part in the *After the Wall* exhibition, am I speaking *about* others or rather *for* others? Immediately, the politics of representation comes into play: 'In both the practice of speaking for as well as the practice of speaking about others I am engaging in the act of representing the others needs, goals, situations and in fact, *who they are*. I am representing them *as* such and such, or in post-structuralist terms, I am participating in the construction of their subject-positions'.² Having spent a couple of years working on this project I realized that it may be useful (if not necessary) to commence my present writing with some terminological remarks as they embody the politics of representation. Naming and renaming has become a very sensitive issue in recently established PC (post-communist) discourses. A 'finding the words' has become as important as designing a geographical map which is expected to mirror the proper, that is, newly shaped borders. In today's geo-linguistics the abstract expression seems to create suspicion, and any metaphorical liberties appear to cause new distrusts.

The title of our project and exhibition is *After the Wall*, and it is subtitled 'Art and Culture in post-Communist Europe'. Initially, the project had a much longer subtitle: 'Art, film, photography and music from the former Soviet Union, the "Iron Curtain" countries and the Balkan Peninsula 1989–1999'. It was geographically correct, although it sounded awkward. Then we decided to rename it and opted for the predicament of 'post-communism', trying to suggest aspects of societal and artistic conditions in the reshaped geo-political scenery. By adding a prefix 'post' to the word 'modernism' or 'colonialism' we imply that we are speaking of that which came 'after' something which already existed. But when we talk today of 'post-communism', things look different: in

1. Ákos Szilágyi, 'The Raw' and the "Cooked": Russia's Mediatization', (abstract of a lecture held at the 6th International Vilém Flusser Symposium, Budapest, 15–19 March 1997) (www.c3.hu) in *Junction Skopje, selected texts from the V2-East/Syndicate mailing list 1997–1998*, ed. Inke Arns (Skopje: Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, 1998), p. 75, available online at <http://colossus.v2.nl/syndicate/synr2.html>

2. Linda Alcoff, 'The Problem of Speaking for Others', in *Cultural Critique*, no. 20 (Winter 1991–92), p. 9.

using this particular phrase it seems as though we are indicating that communism really existed as a *living praxis*. Did it?

In the early years of the Cold War Georges Bataille was prompted to write: 'In today's world nothing is more familiar than Communism. Everywhere in the world, Communism commanded attention as a fact or as a possibility of first importance; there are few human beings left who don't have some idea of it, sometimes associated with hatred, sometimes with devotion, more rarely with indifference'.³ In a footnote to this passage he clarified what he meant by communism: 'I speak of Communism considered in general a political doctrine in action, seeking to change the world, and not as the communist theoreticians speak of it when they envisage the final, communist stage of the world's transformation, in which each will receive according to his needs, contrasting it with the immediately preceding socialist stage, where production is completely taken over and organized by the collective'.⁴ Both comments outlined here by Bataille refer, as it were, to the ways in which communism was conceptualized on the two sides of the Wall. On the eastern side of it, the 'theoreticians' of (our) reality did not try to convince (us) that communism was a social formation in which we in fact lived. The ideology-in-action was directed more towards visions of the future usually formulated by members of Eastern 'gerocracies'. Some of us who lived in a communist country – a country in which the Leading Comrade was over seventy, in which a Communist Party was the Main Organ and in which the State took full care of the economy – may remember that we hardly ever called our state 'communist': we always nicknamed it 'socialist'. Since 'really existing socialism' collapsed around 1989, why then is the *After the Wall* project not subtitled, as some participating artists proposed, 'Art and Culture in post-Socialist Europe'?

Our language troubles did not end here. The next problem was the proper naming of the post-communist regions. Some colleagues proposed different geographical groupings such as the 'countries of Central and Eastern Europe' (CEE). This expression does not, however, embrace the Baltic countries which are situated neither in Central nor in Eastern Europe, but in the North. The same goes for the old German term which used to be spelled out in full earlier this century and which is today known as MOE (*Mittelosteuroopa*). But it seems, just because it was simple, the dualistic thinking which characterized the rhetoric of the Cold War has won out over all these alternatives. We have been left with: the West and the Rest.

The post-Soviet age in the case of the former Iron Curtain countries, and post-Titoist age in the case of former Yugoslavia (which had ceased to be part of the Eastern bloc already in 1948), have provided a fertile seedbed for the inception of the term 'post-colonial' into our current Eastern

3. Georges Bataille, 'What is the Meaning of Communism?', in *The Accused Share*, vols. 2 & 3 (New York: Zone Books, 1993), p. 262. (Originally published as *La Souveraineté* in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 8 (Paris: Gallimard, 1976). First published in 1953).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 443.

discourse(s). This term has obviously been borrowed from the Anglo-American dictionary and only timidly has penetrated German (art) theories. In the Western context it is understood as a means of disposing with the concept of the 'Rest', that is, the non-European colonial geo-scapes. Besides this the term has also been used in a discussion of issues concerning cultural and ethnic minorities which are surrounded or, 'framed' by a dominant culture or ethnic group. This side of post-colonialist critique is still to be elaborated in/by post-Wall art theory as it implies a politics of cultural difference. Western, or shall I say 'global', postcolonialist theory does not, however, embrace any discussion of Eastern Europe as the Rest. This Rest of Europe was '(self)liberated' only some ten years ago; over these ten years, however, the East Germans (*Ossis*) started to see themselves as 'colonized' by the West Germans (*Wessis*). And our Eastern, 'postcolonial' debates have related mainly to our present status with regard to the former Soviet 'colonialism', to our marginality in the European context, and finally to our sense of self-definition.

Bearing all these terminological dilemmas in mind, I have opted for the simplest possibility, bypassing such terms as CEE, MOE, ex-communist countries, post-communist and former-Soviet states or Balkan post-communist (or post-Titoist) states, or expressions like 'Deep Europe'⁵ to use an already existing term – *the East*. What can we today understand as the 'East'? The East, as one geo-linguistic convention among many, is a term which has many meanings. In this context the Moscow art critic, Ekaterina Dyogot, raises a crucial question: 'Speaking of the East we decide whether we will understand it geographically and technologically; or religiously, culturally and politically (consequently, we can include within its limits absolutely different countries)'.⁶

A NEW PARADIGM CALLED NORMALITY

I had intended to write an essay on Eastern post-Wall normality months before I read Ákos Szilágyi's essay. This *Discours de la normalité*, written by a Hungarian media theorist who specializes on Russia, is dedicated to the recently established social phenomenon of the 'new Russians'. Confronted by the anatomy of 'Russia's bourgeois blues'⁷ and by the convincing cynicism of his argument, I feel rather helpless. In my own discussion of normality I have nothing to surpass Szilágyi's eloquence or precision. Therefore, I will only suggest two further modifications to his brilliant comments on the post-Soviet age. First, let's try to understand his analysis beyond its geographical and national borders and apply it to all *nouveaux riches* East Europeans. Those who immediately after 1989 quickly picked up the good-old language of the market economy and established themselves as 'new' were, however, soon matched with another equally new phenomenon, the *nouveaux pauvres*. Among this latter group one may list intellectuals and artists

5. The term 'Deep Europe' was coined by Luchezar Boyadjiev who believes that 'Europe is at its deepest where there are a lot of overlapping identities'. Inke Arns defines this notion as follows: 'With the notion of Deep Europe, we refer to a new understanding of Europe, which leads away from the horizontal measurement of the size of the territory (thus including East/West, etc.), towards something that could be called a vertical mapping, or a vertical measuring, of the different cultural layers and identities in Europe'. In Tapio Mäkelä, 'Tales from Deep Europe', *Siksi*, vol. XII, no. 4 (Winter 1997), p. 30.

6. Ekaterina Dyogot, 'The way to obtain rights for postcolonial discourse', in *Moscow Art Magazine*, no. 22 (July 1998), p. 49. This issue was entirely dedicated to the theme, 'East is looking at the East, East is looking at the West'.

7. See Arkady Ostrovsky, 'Russia's bourgeois blues', *The Financial Times*, 26/27 September 1998.

as well. Second, let's try to divest ourselves from Szilágyi's 'cynical reason'. If we do so, we can then ask a simple question: is 'being normal' in the way described above a desire which is, in fact, shared by all those who live today between Tallinn and Tirana, Warsaw and Moscow, Vilnius and Skopje, Odessa and Ljubljana, Prenzlauerberg in Berlin and Prishtine (Pristina)?

What does 'being normal' in the geographical and mental territories of Eastern Europe really mean in an age which a businesswoman from Ljubljana describes as *Lumpen-kapitalism*? I do not intend to embrace here any clinical (psychoanalytic, Foucaultian, Lacanian or otherwise) discourses on normality. I would rather endeavour to make a distinction between two terms: normality and normalization. The latter is a notion – and political practice – with which the region in question, i.e. the Old Continent, has had a long-lasting experience. The implementation of the NEP in the Soviet Union during the 1920s was an attempt to 'normalize' the economy; the process of de-Nazification in Germany in the 1950s was also called 'normalization'; the de-Stalinization in Yugoslavia in the late 1940s and the same moves which took place in the Warsaw Pact countries during the Khrushchev era were labelled 'normalization' as well; and in the 1980s, even Ronald Reagan's visit to Bitburg cemetery which gave a shot in the arm to Helmut Kohl's agenda of forgetting the fascist past and renewing national pride was done in the name of 'normalization'.⁸

After Eastern Europe was 'liberated' at the end of the 1980s, the period of transition was more often than not referred to as 'normalization'. But were we really to recognize this transformation as normalization, we must notice that today, at the end of the 1990s, the process of becoming normal is over; lessons in democracy have started to show results, and not all of them are good. Already by the mid-1990s many intellectuals (let alone politicians) in Poland had claimed that their country was already transformed; Slovenians are now firmly convinced that the transformation is behind them;⁹ in Ukraine the process of transformation is now regarded as irrelevant as it has been completed to the government's satisfaction with minimal change; in Belarus politicians spread similar and even more conservative ideas while banning local NGOs. In most of the post-Yugoslav countries the process of 'normalization' has taken the form of four wars and the possibility of eventually becoming normal has been shifted to the (hopefully near) future. Some newly-born states, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, could start the process of 'transformation' only after the Dayton Agreement (December 1995) and their 'normalization' is still observed by the special UN forces: 'The High Representative, the Western official supervising Bosnia's young institutions, has passed thirty laws over the last two years; the Bosnian Parliament hasn't passed one'.¹⁰ The current state of affairs in FR

8. Andreas Huyssen, 'Anselm Kiefer – The Terror of History, the Temptation of Myth', in *Twilight Memories* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), p. 209.

9. See 'Slovenia – Going Nordic', *The Economist*, 31 July–6 August, 1999, pp. 25–26.

10. Zoran Cirjaković and Carla Power, 'What Money Can't Buy', in *Newsweek*, August 9, 1999, p. 21.

Yugoslavia is so far from 'normal' that there seems to be little possibility of normalization. In March 1999 the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined NATO which is surely an ultimate stage in Eastern 'normalization'; moreover, the leaders of the Red-Green coalition in Germany implied that the participation of German troops in NATO attacks on FR Yugoslavia was also a sign of Germany's 'normalization' as it proved that Germany today is as 'normal' as any other NATO member. And finally, after the bombing of FR Yugoslavia ended on 10 June 1999, NATO was able to install armed peace-keepers in Kosovo. Only in years to come will life (and death) in Kosovo show any appetite for 'normalization'. This may also imply a further 'balkanization' of the Balkans.

But if we accept that the 'normalization' of most of the East which started in the late 1980s is now almost over, this cannot but mean that life in the region – finally – has become normal. And this should have an impact on the art as well. The organizers of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, *Manifesta 1* (1996) put forward such a claim: 'The need for a new platform for artists was most keenly felt in 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It wasn't hard to see then that there would be a new need for information, for open discussion, for new infrastructures and alternative exhibition spaces. It was, however, difficult to create something different in the context of large scale international exhibitions. Things simply returned to normal too easily, and too quickly'.¹¹ But in the catalogue of *Manifesta 2* (1998), which took place at the very moment of the alleged completion of the 'normalization' of the East, Robert Fleck made the following bold statement: 'There is no typical "Eastern Art" anymore'. In the same essay entitled *Art after Communism?* he firmly concluded: 'Today's artists need no more [to] take positions in the ideological battle, which marched through the European landscape from 1917'.¹²

Faced by such a normality in the affairs of Eastern art, we – both Easterners and Westerners – find ourselves caught in a trap in which telling the same Truth is difficult if not impossible. There are two basic ways of approaching this: from the view *within* and the other from the *outside*. The former is the view of those who live(d) in the East and are/were engaged in the process of self-definition and who believe that the Truth about the East is so unique that it can be told only by the Easterners themselves, because no one else is able to penetrate 'our' art and its 'true' context. The view from outside is rather cooler and (with or without good intentions) attempts to construct an 'objective' and truthful model of what constitutes 'Easternness'. Both fail – fortunately – to provide any broad panorama of the East. As usual, the truth about the East and its art is, as any other myth, located someplace in between.

11. 'Manifesto of the Advisory Board of Manifesta', *Manifesta 1*, (ex. cat.) Rotterdam, 1996, pp. 12–13.

12. Robert Fleck, 'Art after Communism' in *Manifesta 2: The European Biennial of Contemporary Art* (Luxembourg: Agence luxembourgeoise d'action culturelle a.s.b.l. & Casino Luxembourg-Forum d'art contemporain a.s.b.l., 1998), pp. 193–194.

Being an art critic and historian who has acted *from within*, I have spent over twenty years trying to figure out what was, in fact, so *typically Eastern* about the East European art which was made *before* the demise of the Wall. Since the fall of the Wall, I have occupied the rather equivocal position of 'diasporic Second Worldist' (to paraphrase an expression of Gayatri Spivak) and have also tried hard during the past years to detect what is *typically Western* in the art of the East which has been made *after* the Wall. Was Katarzyna Kozyra not employing the typically 'Western' form of the *Bremerstadt-musikanten* (Bremen City Musicians) when she made the *Animal Pyramid* (1993)? Did not Maurizio Cattelan, in his sculptures *Love Saves Lives* (I and II, 1995) actually refer to Kozyra's installation? Or does he go directly to the original source and bypass unintentionally (?) Kozyra's work with all the long and painful processes which were connected with it? And in any case does it really matter? Is not this whole question purely a symptom of modernist rhetoric? We are still suffering from the who-did-it-first syndrome? Yes, we all seem to be suffering from the same symptoms here.

A FAILED ATTEMPT AT CURATING A NORMAL SHOW

Taking into account the current doxa according to which everything-is-finally-normal, I really imagined that *After the Wall* would be a rather normal looking exhibition which would bypass any need for the exotic. In today's Europe, communism, formerly known in the East as socialism, is (almost) dead and (almost) buried, ergo, there is no need to construct a *New Cabinet of (Eastern) Curiosities*. Lenin's statues have been removed from all over the East (and even from Addis Ababa); Sots art toilet-aesthetics have also finally reached (thank God) their zenith and have been properly 'musealized' in Western collections; the iconography of red stars, hammers-and-sickles, Soviet uniforms and military hats (over-exploited in the early post-Wall years) is finished; the artworks which rejoiced in such a visual repertoire are now safely stored in family cellars or covered in dust in artists' studios; the preoccupation with communist monuments, maps and national flags has also been exhausted. Already by the mid-1990s Eastern 'exoticism' and the nostalgia-cum-sarcasm adopted by many artists during the transformation years has demonstrated a serious fatigue. Nostalgia is neither a feeling nor an artistic attitude which has been adopted by the generation of 1990s – a generation which, however, does not shy away from the cynical spirit which also is regarded as so *typically Eastern*. Noticing this I naively believed that the moment for a normal exhibition was really possible. During the *glasnost* era it had been 'normal' to see Russian contemporary art all over the place. Then, during the siege of Sarajevo, Bosnian artists were 'normally' feted in every second western capital. When the bombing of FR Yugoslavia started suddenly many TV stations (Japanese included) wanted to contact Yugoslav artists and show their work, but without having worked out whether they

really wanted an artist born in Prishtine (Pristina) or Belgrade.

During the period of normalization many exhibitions of Eastern art were held in the West and in the East as well. If one disregards the interest in war art, one can claim, without irony, that today it has become rather normal to see contemporary Albanian art in Venice, Georgian art in Paris, Hungarian art in Berlin, Lithuanian art in Trieste, Bulgarian art in Munich, Latvian art in Stockholm. And it also became normal to see a show of Baltic art in Sarajevo, of Ukrainian art in Zagreb, of Slovenian art in Warsaw. A particularly impressive attempt at normality was the exhibition of contemporary art from Kosovo held in Belgrade in June 1997¹³ attended – as normal – by not so large a local art audience.

But if everything is so normal, why then did Deimantas Narkevičius tell me in Vilnius that, 'I am a bit tired of being a "Lithuanian artist". I would like to be just an artist'.¹⁴ Only seemingly is this an unpatriotic statement issued by someone whose country has become finally independent. It is a statement by an artist who needs to stop representing things, whether it be his native country, a national art institution or an 'active' local art scene. I may rephrase this observation differently. A French or British artist, an Australian or Swedish artist who shows with his or her gallery at an Art Fair in Cologne, Chicago or Berlin does not represent any country. On the contrary, he or she is represented by the gallery. After the period of normalization and in the age of newly discovered normality, Narkevičius's desire for being-just-an-artist indicates that the state of normality is not one you just reach and keep. Rather it has its own dialectics: it is a living and working condition invested with both inner and outer contradictions.

Part of this dialectic, pregnant with conflicts, differences, 'pink pessimism' and hopes is, I believe, the exhibition *After the Wall*. A number of dilemmas immediately arise out of this. *One*: Despite the intentions of the curators who wanted to make an exhibition of individual artistic positions which bypassed representational models of nationhood, many times I heard from colleagues: 'I am so pleased you selected so many artists to represent our country'. *Two*: We explained to every artist and colleague we have consulted that we intended to make a thematic exhibition which developed out of the issues that artists had been dealing with during the 1990s. They have not been particularly occupied by memories of communism, but at the same time most of them could have been members of the Pioneer organizations towards the end of the old system (known as High Communism) when such institutions had anyway lost their meaning. But when we asked the invited artists for particular works, however, then their comment sometimes was: 'I think that you have chosen good artists from our country/city, but this-or-that one would represent our art scene much better'.

13. The exhibition of four contemporary artists from Kosovo *Pertéj* (Beyond) was curated by Shkëlzen Maliqi who also wrote the catalogue introduction. Fund for an Open Society, Centre for Contemporary Art, CZKD Pavilion Veljković (Belgrade) and Dodona (Pristina), Belgrade, June 1997. Exhibiting artists: Ilir Bajri, Mehmet Behluli, Sokol Beqiri and Maksut Vezgishi.

14. Conversation with the artist while walking around 'downtown' Vilnius, 7 November 1998.

Three: Focusing on individuals rather than on the countries of their origin – and without any pretensions about telling the Truth about existing national/local/regional art scenes – have we, maybe, made a mistake? Have we tried, in fact, to apply a Western (say, capitalist) model of individualism, artistic subjectivity and uniqueness to the artists in the exhibition, even to the extent of re-activating an exalted and outmoded ideal of genius and the already mentioned and much dreaded who-did-it-first pattern? All these notions have been heavily exposed in the deconstructivist procedures that have characterized Western (art) theory over at least the past decade, and more recently have penetrated eastern theory as well. They represent little more than the residue of our (essentially) modernist tradition. This is a tradition full of hundreds of 'myths' accepted as truths about how art should look which have lived on into our postmodern, postcolonial and post-communist era. *And four:* If we, as curators, really respected Narkevičius's desire to be 'just-an-artist', why have we nevertheless invited him to take part in a project in which only artists (as well as art critics and theoreticians) from the East take part?¹⁵ We have, as it were, bypassed the national representational model to place him (though with his consent) into a context which is a representational matrix of a different kind: that of a Post-Communist, Politically Correct and, to some extent, a Personal Computer artculture. To put it simply, we have framed him as well as the other participating artists within a new paragon: that of PC Eastern Art.

Is *After the Wall* really going to be (seen as) as a kind of Eastern *Wunderkammer* for the 1990s? The exhibition does really fit into the 'East speaks unto East' cliché which is just another kind of ghetto. Regarding this a Berliner said to me last month: 'Oh, it's something just like an Eastern Documenta, isn't it?' It is perhaps, as Iara Boubnova remarked in Sofia, a kind of 'family show'.¹⁶ In this sense, it is an excessive, almost 'incestuous' enterprise. And this raises further dilemmas. A suspicion about this was expressed by a Bosnian artist who has lived the past twenty years in a Western capital having numerous solo exhibitions all over the place who murmured: 'After the Wall? It does not make sense to make an Eastern show these days. Why don't you include Western artists?' What he meant was that today, in the age of globalization, it is neither normal nor politically correct to have an *Eastern-clean* show. This may be true, since many of the participants in the exhibition have also said that the time of collective presentations of the East was (or should be) over in favour of solo (preferably museum) shows. Perhaps they are right. But let's just look at the context of some of today's international-cum-global shows. No one asked why Documenta X (1997) did not include more than three artists living and working either east of the Oder or west of the Caucasus. This omission is regarded as normal.¹⁷ Both the 1997 Documenta and the 1999 Venice Biennale

15. I am very grateful to Luchezar Boyadjiev, Zofia Kulik, Dan Perjovschi, and Tilo Schulz for discussing the concept of the exhibition with me. My special thanks go to Piotr Piotrowski whose inquisitiveness and comments were, as ever, invaluable for my understanding of the region's art dialectics.

16. Conversation with Iara Boubnova, ICA, Sofia, 13 January 1999.

17. See Luchezar Boyadjiev, 'Overlapping Identities', *Moscow Art Magazine*, no. 22 (July 1998), pp. 36–38.

were clearly engaged in challenging Eurocentrism by opening themselves up to the Other, Latin America and (communist) China, respectively.

So our Good Old Europe 'pays' today for the sins of her colonialist past and this *Trauerarbeit* (work of mourning) contains a mixture of masochism (a guilty conscience over the suppression of the far-away Other) with misgivings about our great 'gifts' to the world: namely, modernization, modernism and postmodernism as 'universal' languages. What Boris Groys has described as a *fremde Nahe* (a close Other) has been put firmly outside both the global and EU postcolonial narratives. Being busy with Europe's colonial 'margins', the global European art professional has somehow failed to notice that Europe has actually changed. The fact that since the reunification of *Wessis* and *Ossis*, for instance, an artist born in the GDR has not yet been given the opportunity of representing his/her country in the German pavilion in the Venice Biennale has not been exactly a hot cultural issue in the new Germany. On the other side of the coin, most of the young German artists (born in the GDR in the 1960s) included in the exhibition have expressed some difficulty in seeing themselves now in an Eastern context. Certainly the dialectic of normality has taken a different course in the reunited Germany but it seems that the concept of Germany's *Sonderweg* (special or middle way) has recently been invested with a new meaning.

Finally, during my visits to many Eastern countries I also realized that there was yet another aspect to the quest for normality in the region. Eastern artists themselves were not, it appeared, so keen on showing with their other colleagues from the East as, besides *Lumpenkapitalism*, they thought that they had little else in common; they are now more tempted to show together with artists from the West.

All of these dilemmas and doubts may seem to militate against any possibility of a normal exhibition. They are not, however, excluded from the exhibition, but have been incorporated as an integral part within it. This open and continuous dialectical process is something which makes, at least for me, *After the Wall* a normal show.

'FROM NOW ON FREEDOM WILL BE SPONSORED'

In his contribution to the catalogue *The Great Utopia* (1992) Paul Wood discussed the politics of the avant-garde of the 1920s and the 'normalization' of Soviet art which took place during the 1930s. The last paragraph of his essay reads: 'It was, though, a long way from October: closer, one must say, to the Berlin Wall than to Tatlin's Tower, both monuments in their own ways to communism and what became of it. Now when the Wall has come down, international socialism may mean something again. Whether it does so or not is an open, yet concrete question: "open" as the Tower, "concrete" as the Wall; and as real as the relation of art and politics'.¹⁸

18. Paul Wood, 'The Politics of the Avant-Garde', in *The Great Utopia* (ex. cat.) (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1992), p. 380.

Is it a pure coincidence that both of these monuments 'to' the dreams and nightmares of communism find some proximity to each other in Moderna Museet in Stockholm? The first reconstruction of the model of Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International* (1919) took place at the Museum in 1968. Then director Pontus Hulten and Danish curator Troels Andersen, had planned the reconstruction several years earlier in cooperation with a Russian partner, T.M. Schapiro who had been one of Tatlin's assistants when building the original model. The Swedish team consisted of Ulf Linde and Per-Olof Ultvedt, the professors at Stockholm's Academy of Fine Arts, Henrik Östberg who made the metal fixings and the carpenters Eskil Nandorf and Arne Holm.¹⁹ Although years of searching for original photographic sources had been invested in the work, in 1967 the project had come almost to a dead end.²⁰ It could be restarted only after a previously unknown photograph of the Tower had been published in the Czech magazine *Výtvarné Umění* (no. 8–9, 1967). Since that time until today the Tatlin Tower has been reconstructed almost ten times, but this first effort remained the basis of all further constructions.²¹ Nevertheless, all of these newly made models lack an essential ingredient which was in the original Tower. In 1921, Viktor Shklovsky described the components of Tatlin's Tower with these words: 'The monument is made of glass, iron and Revolution'.²²

Reflecting in the early 1980s upon the divided past, Gottfried Honneger, a German abstract artist, made an interesting remark. Without any irony, he reminded us that the Wall was built in a century of abstract art.²³ Built in an age of triumphant 'High Modernism', the Wall was (considered as) an anti-modernist device. Joseph Beuys had previously been much more ironical in this regard. In 1964 he had made the provocative comment that the Berlin Wall should be raised by 5 centimetres on aesthetic grounds because he contended that its proportions were wrong.²⁴ Such a view of the Wall as 'public art' highlights even more the connections between 'disinterested' modernism and the communist ideological enterprise.

The beginning of the construction of the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961 was not regarded as any kind of revolutionary event except when observed from within, that is, from within the GDR. The Eastern world was then much more occupied by Yuri Gagarin's space adventure which had occurred in March the same year: the first man in space was a Soviet comrade, and seen through Eastern spectacles, the conquest of space was more or less to 'our' advantage. In early September 1961 the Nonalignment (*Blokkfrei*) movement, which included a large part of postcolonial Third World, was founded in Belgrade (SFR Yugoslavia). Together with Presidents Nasser (Egypt) and Nehru (India), Tito formulated a 'third way' politics of 'peaceful coexistence'. In the GDR, particularly after 1963 when the Auschwitz legal action took place in

19. See Troels Andersen, *Vladimir Tatlin*, (ex. cat.) (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1968).

20. See Pontus Hulten, 'Die Stockholms Rekonstruktion des Denkmals der Dritten Internationale', in *Tatlin – Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (Ein Internationales Symposium), ed. Jürgen Harten (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1993), pp. 24–27. See also 'Moderna Museet – Forty Years', in *Moderna Museet*, ed. David Elliott et al. (London: Scala Books and Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1998), p. 17.

21. Valerie J. Fletcher, 'Tatlin's Turm, des Modell des Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,' in Jürgen Harten, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

22. Viktor Shklovski, 'The Monument to the Third International', in *Tatlin*, ed. Larissa Alekseevna Zhadova (Budapest: Corvina, 1984), p.170.

23. Gottfried Honneger, '...le plus français des Français', in *Yves Klein* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983), p. 276.

24. See Hans Dickel, 'Grenzüberschreitungen: Raumbezogene Kunst in Berlin 1960–1990 – Installationen und Kunst im öffentlichen Raum', in *Interferenzen: Kunst aus Westberlin 1960–1990* (ex. cat.), ed. Barbara Straka, Nischen and NGBK, Berlin, 1991, p. 89.

the Federal Republic, SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*) propaganda featured the Wall as a protection from 'clerical-fascist' Germany. In doing so, it shifted full responsibility and guilt-feelings for Nazi crimes to the capitalist brothers behind the Wall. This also meant that the *Trauerarbeit* (work of mourning), a key notion in German post-war history which implied the nation facing its 'negative past'²⁵ did not encounter its eastern counterpart. During 1950s and 1960s the FRG was confronted by fascist memories and nightmares and this was part of the process of atonement. In the GDR, on the other hand, the work of mourning was considered the privilege of their Western relatives because Nazism was regarded as a facet of capitalism and therefore had little to do with the New (and democratic) Germany.

In the very same decade all over Europe abstraction in art was accepted as a 'universal language' or 'world language' as it was called in Germany (*Weltsprache*). The opening of the first Documenta in Kassel in 1955 which showed the abstract art forbidden during the Third Reich was just one more indication which demonstrated Germany's new normality: it sent out a clear message that (West) Germany had been 'cleansed' of its ideological past, in particular of the ideas of Degenerate Art and Nazi (and Socialist) Realism. It also showed that Germany had succeeded in 'catching-up' with other normal countries in Europe. (The second Documenta in 1959 was the introduction of American-style Abstract Expressionism.) This collective 'cleansing' via abstract art was a social process which has been analysed by Katja von der Bey.²⁶ When comparing the abstract forms in German painting with advertising campaigns for washing detergents in the 1950s and 1960s, that is, during the *Wirtschaftswunder* or 'economic miracle', she came to a number of surprising conclusions concerning the role of abstraction in the collective process of a nation's 'cleansing' from its traumatic past.

During the time when the Wall still existed a number of artists living and/or showing in West Berlin took initiative by making copies, but these were always in a mocking sense, like with the Fluxus artists. The disembodiment of the Wall which was initiated on 9 November 1989 brought a new relationship towards it: this twenty-eight year old, much hated object now obtained the status of a fetish and became not an *objet trouvé*, but an *objet cherché*.²⁷ There have been, nevertheless, a couple of attempts at its reconstruction. Of these none of the many international projects later organized in the reunited Berlin managed to surpass an event held in 1990. It was an in-situ exhibition called *Die Endlichkeit der Freiheit* (The Finiteness of Freedom) which had been conceived by Rebecca Horn, Jannis Kounellis and Heiner Müller in 1988 when the Wall still existed.²⁸ The project included eleven international artists who were each invited

25. Jochen Getz in 'Jochen Gerz – Trafic d'origine et images de paix' (an interview), by Jean-Francois Chevrier, *Galleries Magazines*, no. 31 (June/July 1989), p. 70. See also Bojana Pejić, 'Jochen Gerz – Working with the 'Negative Past'', in *Where is Abel, thy brother* (ex. cat.) (Warsaw: Galerie Zachęta, 1995).

26. Katja von der Bey, 'Maler und Hausputz im deutschen Wirtschaftswunder: Künstlermythen der Nachkriegszeit zwischen "Kulturnation" und "Wirtschaftsnation"', in *Mythen von Autorschaft und Weiblichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius und Silke Wenk (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1997), pp. 234–244.

27. See Bojana Pejić, 'ars ex absentia – Human Absence and Art', in *Artforum*, vol. 28, no. 8 (April 1990), p. 144.

28. Wulf Herzogenrath, Joachim Sartorius and Christoph Tannert eds., *Die Endlichkeit der Freiheit* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1990).

to make two works in the city: one on the western and one of the eastern side of now almost-gone Wall. Ilya Kabakov made 'his' Wall of two parallel wooden fences and hung between them objects he found on Potsdamer Platz (then a meadow covered with grass) where the work was installed. On the same occasion Hans Haacke worked with a watch tower earlier occupied by a GDR border guard which was soon to be removed. On the top of it Haacke installed a Mercedes rotating sign in neon. He entitled his work *Die Freiheit wird jetzt einfach gesponsert – aus der Portokasse* (From now on freedom will be simply sponsored – out of petty cash).

Some five years later, a friend who used to work in an East Berlin theatre – and who lost his job during the *Sturm und Drang* of reunification – went home very late. In an empty street in Prenzlauerberg he met a drunk guy, one could say a kind of *Ossi* clochard, with whom he entered into a conversation about the 'old times'. My friend said in passing that now, when the Wall was gone, everything was so different. But the drunken man, astonished, asked: 'Did they really remove the Wall?' At approximately the same time, an exhibition was held in the *Deutsches Historisches Museum* (Museum of German History) in the centre of old East Berlin; it did not deal with the parallel realities of a unified Germany but with the past of the GDR: 1945–1961. Already in the early stages of the *Wende* (the Change) this GDR institution had been 'liberated' – Heiner Müller would, no doubt, have said 'colonized' – by the *Wessis*. It became the museum where, alongside international projects, the history of the reunited German lands was rewritten. The exhibition *Parteiauftrag: ein neues Deutschland* (Commissioned by the Party: A New Germany) presented the images, rituals and symbols of the early GDR, that is, it covered the period characterized by the hard-core propaganda which the SED had produced.²⁹ The exhibition was well-installed, but as the space used for the exhibition was rather corridor-like, there was the unavoidable suggestion that the *ancien régime* was claustrophobic in the same way. The exhibition ended with a very small space designed as a new corridor leading towards the outside. From this corridor/window one was able to see a white surface lit with a bright light. It looked like an empty, simple, modernist museum wall. But it was a reconstruction of a segment of the Berlin Wall: 1961. From this date on, this implied, the best propaganda was the Wall itself.

For *After the Wall* Moderna Museet will also reconstruct its own version of the Berlin Wall. But this reconstruction is not so much of the Wall itself but of its falling down. A German abstract artist and film-maker, Lutz Becker, has montaged a documentation from the archives of the West Berlin radio station, FRB (*Freies Radio Berlin*), of the sounds of people pulling down the Wall. This will be situated at the approaches to the exhibition. The hammers and the other

29. Dieter Vorsteher ed., *Parteiauftrag: Ein neues Deutschland* (ex.cat.), Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, 1996.

blunt instruments which were used to demolish the Wall are all part of this as well as the voices of those who did it. This immaterial 'wall' of sound escapes any visual (pictorial or sculptural) representation and follows, in a way, the ideal concept of *nonmaterial materialism*³⁰ which El Lissitzky dreamed about in the mid-1920s.

The reconstruction of those two man-made objects (Tatlin's Tower and Becker's Berlin 'Wall') which in such different ways relate to both our century's *Great Utopia* and its *Realpolitik* have both been made in Stockholm, Sweden. For most of the artists in the exhibition Sweden means the West. When Mikhail Gorbachev visited Sweden during the time of *glasnost*, he saw stores full of goods, good housing and social services, comfort and cleanliness. Back in Moscow he announced to the press: 'We should have more Swedish-like socialism in the Soviet Union'. Commenting upon this statement at that time, the film director, Nikita Mikhalkov, pointed to the core of the problem: 'There just aren't enough Swedes in Russia'.³¹

In contrast to our, Eastern, *red* socialism(s), the Swedish political system was often called *pink*. In spite of the fact that the country lies at the northern edge of Europe, when observed from the Eastern perspective it represents the 'West'. Sweden 'means' democracy, the EU, Ericsson, H&M, art more or less obsessed with nature, Bergman, ABBA, expensive alcohol, Moderna Museet, high standards... and IKEA. Daniel Birnbaum, a Stockholm art theoretician, questioned the well-established image of 'Swedishness': 'Is the world becoming more Swedish? No, quite the opposite. It is becoming "the same" everywhere: neither Swedish nor not-Swedish'.³² For most people, IKEA – which imports 30% of its wood and much of its pre-fabricated furniture from Poland and recently from Romania as well – stands 'for democracy, rationality and openness towards modern life'.³³ Imagined as a pure incarnation of the West, Sweden may indeed become a symbolic object of criticism from the outside. Since many Russians believe that today 'the Wall' has moved to the Polish-Russian border, rather than disappearing altogether, it comes as no surprise that Moscow art historian and critic Alexander Yakimovich questions the motives of the 'prestigious Moderna Museet' in organizing such an exhibition as *After the Wall*: 'Why on earth do they imagine to be obliged and called to improve life and living, to understand the non-West, to demonstrate their involvement and participation, the will to analyse, to improve, to help'?³⁴

A PEOPLE'S EUROPE

I personally find Yakimovich's question a rather normal non-Western question because the author has, for a long time, been engaged in reading and unmaking the cityscape he, or we altogether, imagine(d) as the First World. As the rhetorical systems of two separate worlds collapsed together

30. El Lissitzky, 'A.[Art] and Pangeomotry', in *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, eds. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 307. Originally published in German in *Europe Almanach*, eds. Carl Einstein and Paul Westheim, Potsdam, 1925.

31. Quoted in Edward Ball, 'Constructing Ethnicity', in *Visual Display*, eds. Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), p. 143.

32. Daniel Birnbaum, 'Lebensraum – or IKEA at the End of Metaphysics', in *Arkipelag* (ex. cat.), Stockholm, March–April 1998.

33. Ibid.

34. Alexander Yakimovich, 'The Magic Art of the West: An Analysis of the First World', a paper presented at the International Conference *Talking to the Wall – The East–West Divide in Contemporary European Culture* held in Moderna Museet on 12–13 December 1998, p. 10.

with the Berlin Wall (and most of the Second Worldists became today, as it were, Third Worldists) such a discontent appears understandable. It may be helpful here to examine the ways in which the First World itself, or rather the Euro(centric) part of it, defines itself. It is the story of the European Union (EU) and the Commission of European Community (CEC) trying to define the notion of 'Europeanness'.

In research from the mid-1990s, British anthropologist, Chris Shore, provided an analysis of the politics of EU language. He not only considered the visions of the 'new Europe' as formulated by the leaders of the EU states, but was also attentive to the metaphors used by some 28,000 or so bureaucrats, i.e., Eurocrats, those working as permanent officials in EU institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and the CEC. The author takes the metaphors of European integration pronounced in the 'heart of Europe' as central to the current process of imagining and conceptualizing Europe. Cultural differences, ideological rifts and disagreements between member states over the future shape of the 'People's Europe' appear. According to Shore: 'The vagueness in defining Europe arose from pragmatic as well as ideological factors. The problem of defining Europe became much more complicated during the late 1980s, particularly after the collapse of communism, German reunification and the liberation of Eastern Europe. These events had an unravelling effect on traditional conceptions of Europe. Having arrogated to itself the term "Europe", and having grown accustomed to equating "Europe" with Western Europe, the European Community now found itself without a clear eastern border. The disappearance of the old Communist adversary – which helped unify the countries of the European Community as bastions of liberal democracy – was gone. The absence of the "barbarian at the gate" left the European Union with an identity crisis'.³⁵

Shore noticed that EU officials constantly referred to European unification by using travelling metaphors although the documents and speeches given by politicians also included other types of comparison. Besides high-speed cars, motorways and naval convoys there are also architectural metaphors like pillars and temples as well as ones relating to human anatomy, geometry, gastronomy, restaurant menus, marriages, wedding-cakes and sport. Other metaphors also had a particular significance. First: the 'common European House'. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev referred to Europe using the Russian word *dom*,³⁶ but this loses its real meaning when translated into other languages (i.e. house, *maison*, *haus*) where there is an implication of cosiness or privacy which is not there in the original form which has associations with communal living and shared living space – the Russian *komunalka*. Second: The discourse about Europe has been dominated by metaphors which have featured the integration

35. Chris Shore, 'Metaphors of Europe: Integration and the Politics of Language', in *Anthropology and Cultural Studies*, eds. Stephen Nugent and Chris Shore (London and Chicago: Pluto Press, 1997), pp. 131–132.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

process as a journey, road or path leading 'forwards', away from the 'Europe of nation states', towards a post-nationalist future in which peace, progress and prosperity would be guaranteed by a more federal system of government. Thus, in contrast to the static and sedentary Gorbachev view of house/home, Helmut Kohl in 1996 envisaged integration as an image-in-movement. He constantly used railway metaphors, reinstating phrases such as 'keeping to the timetable', 'missing the train', or being 'left behind on the platform'.³⁷ In such metaphorical forms of speech some analysts pointed to connections between the expansion of railways and the spread of colonialism.³⁸

37. Ibid., p. 137.

38. Ibid., p. 153.

However, the main trait of EU discourse – and its practice – is its orientation towards the future. The Community, in fact, seems to be based on a 'myth of the future'. 'Europe' is seen as an 'evolving' organism, 'in the process of becoming'. Shore noticed: 'Like Christianity and Marxism, both of which subscribe to an eschatological vision of an idealized society in the distant future or at the "end of history", so the ideology of European integration envisages a future-oriented, "supranational" utopia based on a (so far undefined) "post-national citizenship"'.³⁹

39. Ibid., p. 131.

A closer reading of the metaphors used in the Maastricht Treaty (1992) suggests yet another symbolic pattern: here the language uses images of building or construction (blueprints, houses, pillars of the Treaty, the Community's complex architecture or building a fortress Europe). Why do the expressions such as *la construction européenne* or 'building a new Europe' sound somehow *déjà-entendu*? Shore supplies a curious comparison quoting a Russian linguist Mikhail Ilyin, who made a survey of the basic metaphors in the standard ideology handbook of his school years in the early 1960s. According to this author, 'nearly half of the total occurrences of structural metaphors involved the schemata of building, the preparing of ground, the placing of cornerstones, and so forth'.⁴⁰ From this Shore extrapolates: 'In short, the metaphor of "building communism" became the key political formula of the discourse and ideology of the Soviet system in all its years of existence. The same metaphor, it would seem, has become part of the ideological formula for the European Union'.⁴¹

40. Ibid., p. 139. See also Paul Chilton and Mikhail Ilyin, 'Metaphor in Political Discourse: The Case of the "Common European House"', in *Discourse and Society*, no.4, vol. 1, pp. 7–31.

41. Ibid., p. 139.

The catastrophic prognosis that may come about in case the Euro-sceptic overrules the Euro-optimist position is as follows: 'The alternative to European integration was typically construed as nationalism, barbarism and war (an argument often prefaced with the phrase, "Look what happened in the former Yugoslavia!")'.⁴² In passing, this was stated before the Kosovo War.

42. Ibid., p. 131.

The future conceptual shaping of Europe as well as the extension of EU membership will very soon include Eastern

states, namely those which completed the 'normalization' and may now be considered normal European countries. Some of these countries have not yet entered the EU but have joined another organization instead. It is of course questionable whether the CD-ROM game called *Natopoly* distributed free by McDonnell Douglas to libraries in Hungary helped the Hungarian Government win public support in a referendum on joining NATO. *Natopoly* (made in the USA) was described by *The Washington Post* as a 'piece of slick, unabashedly pro-NATO software'.⁴³ True or not, three decolonized and 'de-Sovietized' countries have now become Allies; on a purely linguistic level, it means that instead of the 'brotherly' Russian spoken by their fathers, the soldiers of today must hurry to learn 'friendly' English. In a speech given on the occasion of the entry of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, also used similarly metaphorical language. It is an open question whether she made a (c)overt reference to Gorbachev's terminology or not. However, on 12 March 1999, she addressed the Ministers Kavan, Martonyi and Geremek, this 'daughter of the region' (her own self-description) pronounced these words: 'Whether you are helping to revise the Alliance's Strategic concept or engaging in NATO's partnership with Russia, the promise of "nothing about you without you", is now formalized; you are truly allies; you are truly home'.⁴⁴ In their own speeches, two out of three Foreign Ministers of the countries freshly in the Alliance, also stated that they, i.e., their countries, were finally 'back home'.

A CATCHING-UP EUROPE

In contrast to a democratic 'People's Europe', which despite inner fractures shares a common myth of future (and the common market), the former People's Democracies appear to be wrestling with the myths of the past instead. The East was freed of Soviet imperialism, it consists now of many new countries out of which some have gained a statehood they have never had before. The term 'liberation', however, could cause some suspicion in the region itself. In Latvia, for example, people are always prompt to repeat the national wisdom which has been formed by the country's past: *they have never been occupied, but always liberated!*

From a particular Western perspective, German philosopher Jürgen Habermas had been distinctly underwhelmed by events in the East and, as early as 1990, had already coined the term *nachholende Revolution* (a catching-up revolution).⁴⁵ Commenting on this, the American cultural critic and Germanist, Andreas Huyssen, reminds us of the West German Left's (and, dare I add, most of the Western Lefts') long-standing failure to take either the Czech or Polish dissident movements seriously. Huyssen finds the notion of a 'catching-up revolution' much more applicable to events in the GDR. This was because there, more than in any

43. Quoted in 'Natopoly', distributed via the Syndicate mailing list on 3 June 1999. '1998CRS3739D EXECUTIVE SESSION', Author: noone <noone@senaie.gov> Date: 1998/04/30 Archive-Name: gov/us/fed/congress/record/1998/apr/29/1998CRS3739D. Congressional Record: April 29, 1998 (Senate), pp. S3739-S3744.

44. Madeleine K. Albright on the Occasion of the Accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to NATO, 12 March 1999, available online at <<http://www.usaemb.pl>>.

45. Jürgen Habermas, *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990).

other Eastern European country, the motif of catching-up in an economic rather than political sense was much stronger. Applied to any other Eastern context than that of the GDR, though, this term 'underestimates the ways in which the East European revolutions foregrounded civil rights', and this very notion, Huyssen continues, 'had to be offensive to the East European opposition movements, particularly as it was coupled with the argument that the East European revolutions lacked any innovative ideas pointing towards the future'.⁴⁶

Particularly during the first part of the 1990s, and to some extent still, the dynamics of political and/or cultural discourses in the East are invested with the idea of somehow 'getting finished' with the idea of lived history. Although situations differ from one country to another, one can claim that the 'catching-up Europe' has been experiencing two synchronous processes both relating to (the myths of) the past.⁴⁷ The first was/is the *construction of a collective amnesia regarding the period of communism*; Germany again is the exception here in that its collective amnesia with respect to the GDR has taken different forms. François Furet wrote about this general phenomenon in 1990: 'It appears that nothing positive or even usable will survive the historical communist experience. Not one idea or law has remained. The peoples who have been through the communist historical experience seem to be obsessed with completely negating the system in which they lived; obsessed, that is, with a passion for restoration: the restoration of the constitutional state, the restoration of freedom; the restoration of elections; the restoration of private property; and the restoration of the free market economy'.⁴⁸ The new times got a new name: *the Age of Lenin in Ruins*.⁴⁹ Part of this erasure of the past was also marked by a change in the eastern semantic and actual landscape: for example, the removal of the public sculptures which connoted the *ancien régime*.

The other process was/is the *recreation of a collective memory of pre-communist times*. In its extreme, nationalistic versions the discourse reads as follows: communism's greatest sin was neither its system of gulags, with its political 'cleansing' and absence of human rights, nor the collapse of the economy and the social misery which has ensued, but the suppression of a 'national being'. Observed from a PC perspective, the October Revolution was the disaster of the century, and such views have occasionally also been coloured by Eurocentric (as well as racist) overtones. In a speech at a meeting of 'Democratic Russia' on 1 June 1991, Boris Yeltsin stated: 'Our country has not been lucky. Indeed, it was decided to carry out this Marxist experiment on us – fate pushed us in precisely this direction. Instead of some country in Africa, they began this experiment with us. In the end we proved that there is no place for this idea. It has simply pushed us off the path the world's civilized countries have taken'.⁵⁰

46. Andreas Huyssen, 'After the Wall – The Failure of German Intellectuals', in *Twilight Memories*, op. cit., p. 45.

47. See Bojana Pejić, 'Post-communism and the Rewriting of (Art) History', in *Artpress* (international edition), no. 192 (June 1994), pp. 37-41.

48. François Furet, 'L'Énigme de la déségrégation communiste', *Le Débat*, no. 62 (1990), p. 169.

49. See Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds., *Ideology and Power in the Age of Lenin in Ruins* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1991).

50. Quoted in Krishan Kumar, 'The End of Socialism? The End of Utopia? The End of History?', in *Utopias and the Millennium*, eds. Krishan Kumar and Stephen Bann (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), p. 63.

The collective need to formulate who-we-were-before in order to define who-we-are-now was understandable in the early stage of independence and was usually marked by the over-circulation of the word 'identity' or rather 'our national identity'. By the late 1990s, however, most – though not all – of the new states had passed through this 'positive' nationalism⁵¹ without serious scars (or wars). Popular and alleged 'scientific' historical discourses which included the glorification, mystification and falsification of the national past and its religious traditions, has therefore coincided with other disputations which bore distinct signs of normality. In art historical writing, for instance, the relation towards the pre-communist period has been manifested on three levels. Firstly the re-invention of a national history which is now being re-told without censorship, that is, without the obligation to refer to the 'classics' of Marxism-Leninism and omit everything else. In the early 1990s, most of the catalogues of exhibitions of Eastern contemporary art held both in the West and in other Eastern countries (as these were produced for 'external use') did not limit themselves to texts on national art, but included national history as well. Most of the fifty or so such publications produced by ifa-Galerie in Berlin could be taken as typical examples of this. Secondly, although this re-writing of art history may embrace the time between the Renaissance and post-modernism, the art historians seem, nevertheless, to have been mostly challenged by the period of modernism. The Western European modernist mind-set (which differs slightly from the American version with its Kantian-Greenbergian bias) continued the ideas of Western humanism which were crystallized in the age of the Enlightenment. It is clear that such an ideology of modernism could not find any proper place within Eastern communist ideology; more often than not modernist and/or abstract art was regarded as a form of 'un-human art' (as art which was beyond any representation of the human face or figure) and as such did not fit within the image of the East's 'home grown' Humanism which was safely protected behind the anti-modernist device we call the Wall. The attempt to re-write now the history of *Socialist Modernism* appears crucial, as it is a void waiting to be filled. And about this Iara Boubnova has asked the most relevant question: 'Post-What? Neo-How? For Whom, Where and When?'.⁵² In many post-socialist countries postmodernism came immediately after the weakened but still existing (Socialist) Realism.

Were we to examine the East's relation to its new and sometimes 'free' present, we cannot but notice that, regardless of so many differences, the Easterners themselves have a number of beliefs, or rather myths, in common. Over the last years we have consumed library on library of catalogues, books, journals and magazines dedicated to contemporary and modernist art and have attended conference on conference on the subject of the 'time of

51. See Jelica Sumic and Edo Riha, 'The Reinvention of Democracy in Eastern Europe', in *Angelaki* 1:3 (issue on 'Reconsidering the Political'), (1994), pp. 143–156.

52. Iara Boubnova, 'Post-What? Neo-How? For Whom, Where and When?', a lecture held at the 2nd International Congress *Culture of the Time of Transformation*, Poznan, 11–14 March 1998. Reprinted in *Moscow Art Magazine*, no. 22 (July 1998), pp. 19–24.

transformation i.e. normalization'. And out of this a number of shared myths about the region have emerged. We do not share the same languages, religion or history, but we are all strongly convinced that we are and were always *in-between*. I have read this same phrase in Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Croatian and Georgian art catalogues and have seen it in cultural journals from Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania; I have heard it on CNN and ARTE programmes dedicated to 'the other Europe', and in, for example, Latvia, Ukraine and Belarus; the Russians have used it in reports on Eurasia; and from the Balkans, where they are between the Orient and the Occident, to the Baltic, where they are between Russia and the 'West'. We – Hungarians, Armenians, Latvians, Serbs, Moldavians, Poles, Albanian Kosovars and all the others have always lived *in-between*. The *myth* of in-betweenism embraces Eastern narratives of the past as well as reflections of different postmodern, post-Soviet, post-Titoist and postcolonial presents. Now, in the process of unpacking our own self-image, the question as to whether those who live in Northern, Southern and Western Europe are also equally in-between something else inevitably arises. But beside the copyright relating to our own *in-betweenism* we also like to cherish another myth: only ours have been cultures of interruption. Only We have had to deal with endless series of historical breaks (religions and languages included), with occupations and ensuing liberations, of which that from Soviet communism was only the last. Only We have always had to start again from point zero.

Finally, We hold dear one further 'home grown' myth: it is *our* 'myth of Europe'. There seems to be a general feeling about the presence and visibility of the East (and its art) in today's Europe. This 'obviously' differs from country to country, but ten years after the fall of the Wall there are, I think, still problems in imagining the East as a 'part' of Europe. On many occasions, at conferences, on TV programmes, in art criticism and artists' statements I have perceived the same desire: we *want to belong to Europe*. A young girl whom I heard in a TV programme on Latvia stated directly to the camera: 'We are still not Europe. In Europe people smile'.⁵³ In this case 'Europe' is little more than a screen on which various images have been projected: a democratic Europe; a capitalist Europe; a Western Europe; a Europe which did not experience communism; a Europe like it was before the Second World War (forgetting about Nazism); a Europe even like it was at the turn of the century. In other words a 'Europe' which is conceptualized as everything *We are not*.

53. Broadcast by ARTE, 9 March 1999.

The trauma of *not belonging to 'Europe'* – 'resolved' in the ex-GDR via reunification, and in Russia partly by its feeling of self-sufficiency because of its size and partly by the geographical advantage of belonging to Asia as well – is not simply a question of being geographically far away from the 'heart of Europe'. It is no 'consolation' when somebody names

you 'Europe's backyard', as Tony Blair called the Balkans during the Kosovo War. It is not even a question of size, since Poland is larger than many Western states but, I believe, something quite different. Historically, the Eastern European countries had never developed the practice (or theory) of Eurocentrism, which is a notion that belongs to the repertoire of colonialism. The East 'came back to Europe' at a moment when Europe was just about to engage itself in yet another self-produced myth – that of globalization. The Orwellian dictum may now be rephrased: we are all global, but some are more global than others. This raises the following questions: How can an East which has only recently de-colonialize itself from Soviet doctrine enter the postcolonial discourse when it has never had any practice in degrading, silencing, marginalising or ruling anyone outside the geographical boundaries of Good Old Europe? And because it has never been part of the Eurocentric discourse, and consequently has never had to feel guilty about it, how can the East start to consider itself global when it has never experienced the position or feeling of being central? Some kind of catching-up in this respect is likely to occur.

In contrast with Georges Bataille's earlier assertion that communism did not leave anybody indifferent, one cannot but conclude that ten years after the initial enthusiasm for the revolutions of 1989, the actual state of affairs in many parts of the East is neither hatred nor devotion but indifference. The East, many have claimed, has at last become normal.

REDEFINING THE POLITICAL

What can an artist living and working in the East in the late 1990s do with an obsession with the pre-communist past, both in terms of its negation and the 'new beginnings' started by the revolutions of 1989 which all happened when he or she was a teenager? Very little, I'm afraid. For most people an additional revolution now seems more relevant. Lev Manovich ironically remarked: 'There have been two big revolutions during this century – the end of communism and the beginning of the Internet'.⁵⁴ This generation has grown up in the age of virtual reality, simulation (theories), United Colors and McDonalds, it watches the same TV channels and listens to the same music,⁵⁵ it rushes to see Documenta and occasionally spends short times on grants in the 'West'. This is a generation that faces all the (dis)advantages of the 'new media' era. Geert Lovink critically stresses one aspect of the 'getting-global' paradigm: 'Between cold cynicism and overheated optimistic theodocies, a new belief system is on the rise: the blurry logic of communicative capitalism'.⁵⁶ This is, may I note, the only capitalism which functions well in post-communist Europe.

Do we expect their art to manifest an 'ideological critique' of the 'post-ideological' world around them? Do we expect these artists to start deconstructing capitalist *lebensraum*

54. With these words Lev Manovich, a university professor from San Diego, opened the International Electronic Media Forum, *Ostranenie*, held in Bauhaus-Dessau, 5–9 October 1997. Quoted in Tapio Mäkelä, 'Tales from Deep Europe', op. cit., p. 30.

55. See Sergei Bugaev and Viktor Mazin, 'Phonoterrorism and the Exploitation of the Unconscious', in *The Evolution of Image* (ex. cat.) (St. Petersburg: The State Russian Museum, 1996), pp. 65–74.

56. Geert Lovink, 'Media Pragmatism', *Index*, no. 2 (1998), p. 42.

when High Capitalism itself is not yet there, not even in the form of sponsorship or a developed art market? Their naivety and discontent are expressed in many videos, performances or installations featuring *Barbie* – standing in for both capitalism and Western femininity – and this is surely a weak sign of resistance to the New Ones. Artworks which deal critically with the art market and gallery/museum system, a serious preoccupation of German artists (as they act within the system they are undoing), only occasionally appear in other Eastern countries. When they do, the artists' understanding of the gallery or museum goes more in the direction of working-with-space rather than in that of working with an institutional parergon. All these expectations may be expressed in the very simple question as to whether we are waiting for the (young) Easterners to make political art? Well, yes and no. And is this maybe the same request which was formerly addressed to the Eastern dissident artists who only seemed interesting (to the Western market and to the Western Left) when they shunned the modernist universalia to make art which 'confirmed' that the context in which they lived and worked was unbearable? The masochism which was elaborated in many Eastern performances in the 1970s usually fulfilled such expectations.⁵⁷

The issue of political art arose on many occasions during our research for *After the Wall*. Many artists hesitated to join a project which they thought was about 'political art'; some art critics expressed a similar hesitation. It took a lot of energy to explain that the exhibition is not one of political and representational art but simply one of art which has been produced over the last ten years in Eastern Europe. An art that is 'about' today and which is made today. In doing this a number of theoretical issues have necessarily been raised. Instead of talking about 'political', 'apolitical' and 'non-political' art, we should, I believe, try to define what the term 'political' means in Eastern Europe today.

After the Second World War until the fall of the Iron Curtain, the East was not only exposed to well-known ideological confinements but also to the mystification of these constraints: every third artist who survived communism claims today that *He was a Political Dissident* (and a modernist) in the past, a phenomenon known as 'retroactive martyrhood'.⁵⁸ The notion of power in the entire socialist/communist region was usually based on the idea of 'something' which comes from 'above', from a remote centre, namely the Kremlin. In Titoist Yugoslavia such a centre was Belgrade which vacillated between Kremlin and Washington D.C.. (The Vatican and various Eastern Orthodox Churches were in that period imagined as wishful centres.) In a fully politicized socialist society ruled by a Communist Party, any political art was seen as an 'anti-communist' act. The first steps on the road to democratic and civil society could not bring immediately a different understanding of power, say, in

57. See Zdenka Badovinac et al., *Body and the East – From the 1960s to the Present* (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 1998).

58. Predrag Marković, *Beograd izmedju istoka i zapada* (Belgrade Between East and West), Sluzbeni list, Belgrade, 1996, p. 464.

the Foucaultian sense. Despite changed circumstances after the fall of the Wall, the very term 'political' still carries its old burden as it keeps on connoting an artistic activity aimed at endangering, i.e., dismantling, the regime.

In Poland, for instance, the issue of morality in/of art has been widely discussed,⁵⁹ probably as much as the issue of political/critical practice in Hungarian art theory. Unmasking the modernist (and old socialist) formulas which have survived into contemporary Hungarian art (theory), the art historian from Budapest, Edit András has struck at the heart of the issue: 'In our part of the world the notion of power still tended to refer only to the currently governing political power. While later on all over the world the analysis of the mechanism of power was being extended to all kinds of everyday power relations – the private sphere included – to questions of dominance, to issues of sub- and super-ordination and to the revelation and discussion of the mental and psychological modes of adjustment related to these, we still continued to interpret the concept of politics as being equivalent to nothing but high politics, to the mechanism of governmental political power and to reflections thereon'.⁶⁰

Were we to accept this redefinition of the concept of the political, we can easily claim that all of the art works shown in *After the Wall* are political. But such a (curator's) observation may well go against the artists' own understanding of their work. Many male and female artists taking part in the exhibition have dealt with the politics of gender, that is, with social constructions of femininity and masculinity as well as with the genders 'in-between'. Most of the female photographers and painters, however, do not see their work as feminist and tend to distance themselves from Western feminist practice(s);⁶¹ perhaps because of this, feminism in the East has occasionally been called 'echo feminism'.⁶² Most women artists have not regarded this as important because they have been engaged in making a 'universal' – and therefore 'genderless' art.⁶³ The male artists, on the other hand, who have approached these issues, have either dismissed the idea of woman as an object or have referred directly to the condition of women in the contemporary (Eastern) world – to issues of prostitution, domestic violence or abortion – and accordingly have had serious difficulties in being regarded as 'political artists'.

One last question related to the 'political' may now be raised. Bearing in mind that most of the post-communist East follows the concept of the nation state and that this concept often appears as a 'ethnically clean' democracy, the presence of the 'Other' among us (the other nation or the other ethnic entity like the Roma, for example) is a political issue: 'The politics of cultural difference is not about a pluralism cleansed of the discourse of power, struggle, and equity: instead, it contains all of the problems that make democracy

59. See Aneta Szylak, 'Report on the Polish Debates on Morality in Art', *EXIT*, no.3 (31) (1997), pp. 1532–1534.

60. Edit András, 'A Painful Farewell to Modernism (Difficulties in the Period of Transition)', in *Omnia Mutantur*, (ex. cat.), 47th Venice Biennale, Hungarian Pavilion, 1997, p. 27. [This text is reprinted in the catalogue to the exhibition *After the Wall* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999).]

61. See Inga Šteimane, 'An Alternative to Cynicism', in *Mare Articum* (The Baltic art magazine) no.1 (June 1998), pp. 79–81; also Irina Aktuganova, 'Feminism is This Word', in *n.paradoxa*, vol. 2 (1998), available online at <<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/index.htm>>

62. Discussion with the video artist Marilena Preda Sanc, Bucharest, 17 January 1999.

63. I am grateful to Božena Czubak, art critic and curator based in Gdansk, and Leonida Kovač, art theorist and curator from Zagreb, for discussing this subject with me.

messy, vibrant, and dangerous to those who believe that social criticism and social justice are inimical to...the lived experience of democratic public life'.⁶⁴ There are many works in *After the Wall* which are oriented towards such a politics of difference. Should we call the installations, videos or photographs which deal with the subjects of nationalism, ethnocentricity and ethnic minorities (who have been marginalised by the Grand Narratives of OUR Nation) 'political'? Or should we rather use a term which became popular in the 1990s: 'art in reality'? And we again have to face the issue of (re)naming.

AFTER THE WALL(S), ARE YOU KIDDING?

At the time of Cultural Revolution, El Lissitzky targeted the *rappel à l'ordre* in Soviet Russia's visual arts and addressed conservative (and/or 'leftist') painters with these lines: 'New space neither needs nor demands pictures – it is not a picture transported on a surface. This explains the painters' hostility towards us: we are destroying the wall as the resting place for their pictures'.⁶⁵ In course of later history, the Revolution in the East depended primarily on painters and walls were needed again. Western modernist practice required a White Cube. The post-1968 generation went outside the Cube into the landscape or garages, and showed its 'video-tape' art in galleries as well as in non-art spaces. In this, now archaeological age, the screening of video images needed a monitor and a home TV set or special (and clumsy) video beams, but not a wall. Then, in the 1980s painting came back in its full glamour, and conquered the museums in both West and East. In the 1990s, it became clear that the White Cube was out, the Dark Cube was in.

This means walls again. Although many artists, painters or not, still need White Walls, most of the works in *After the Wall* need a separate room. This has little to do with the desire of artists to have solo shows in the 'West', but with the fact that most of the works in the exhibition consist of unstable images: video and slide projections. Since the different spaces in which this exhibition will be seen tend to be large and open plan, these have had to be designed around the selected artworks. When presented with the provisional installation plan of the project in Stockholm, Harry Nahkala, chief technician at Moderna Museet, murmured disconsolately: 'Your exhibition *After the Wall* is really going to be nothing but walls.'⁶⁶

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64. Henry A. Giroux, 'Post-Colonial Ruptures and Democratic Possibilities: Multiculturalism as Anti-Racist Pedagogy', in *Cultural Critique*, no. 21 (Spring 1992), p. 17.

65. El Lissitzky, 'Proun Space', in *Russia: An Architecture for World Revolution* (London: Lund Humphries, 1970), p. 138.

66. Discussions with Harry Nahkala held in the Moderna Museet, early March 1999.

CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE FACE OF UNIFICATION

PIOTR PIOTROWSKI

When speaking about European unification, or the incorporation of Central Europe into the European Union structures after 1989, we should focus on Central European exhibitions held in the West after the Fall of Nations in 1989. The answer to the question 'what was the core of the (Western) interest in newly discovered lands in the East?' is very simple: there were political reasons so obvious that they are not even worth mentioning. A much more complicated and even important question is about the interest of the East in organizing such exhibitions. To start, however, it is worth considering what the word 'exhibition' means, and whether it tells us something about the exhibition itself.¹ It comes, as most things do, from the Greek and, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, means, among others, 'submitting for inspection, a public examination'. We can go further and say that the word implies a sort of supervision or, more precisely, submitting to supervision. What is exhibited, first of all, is allowed to be publicly seen, to be on the scene, to be on the agora, and then, as a consequence, to be inspected, examined and evaluated. In other words, such an understanding of the question of exhibition has something to do with the question of power. The power is located, of course, on the side of inspectors, who supervise what is submitted for supervision and what is exhibited. It would then mean that post-1989 Central European exhibitions were a sort of inspection of art from the 'other' side of the continent; knocking unexpectedly on the doors of the 'right' side of Europe.

There is no doubt that exhibition is the most crucial means of communication in contemporary art. Without exhibition what should be shown cannot be seen. As Jean-Marc Poinot has argued, 'contemporary art [maybe any art, and any cultural production – P.P.] comes to us through the medium of the exhibition'.² On the other hand however, exhibition faces a dependence on the power system. The question, then is not to challenge the exhibition system as such, but rather to deconstruct a curator's strategies in the context of lost or gained identity in what has been exhibited, namely of Central European culture. The focus on identity should be examined both in terms of reconstructing its history of art, as well as its cultural ambitions for a new, post-communist world. In other words, we can say that the question is: In what way did the curators of exhibitions want the art from Central Europe to be inspected, examined, or supervised by the West; in what way did they want it to be presented on the agora, to be shown to the public, or – conversely – not to be neglected by the West in the process of European unification? Thus, the problems I would like to emphasize are not the Western strategies that allow the East to be on the scene, but rather the Eastern (or Central European) strategies in submitting its art to be inspected.

1. I am very thankful to Dr. Ewa Domanska for her discussion, critical remarks as well as suggestions that helped to write this paper.

2. Jean-Marc Poinot, 'Large Exhibitions. A Sketch of a typology', in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 39.

Even though Central Europe is nearby, the West did not reveal any serious interest in the art of its close neighbours before 1989. The West looked instead at the 'real other' of postcolonial studies, or at least at Russia, which occupies a special role in Western imaginary and cultural politics. This observation applies not only to the exhibitions themselves, but also to the exhibition scholarship and scholarly discourses. Krisztina Passuth, studying a history of avant-garde exhibitions, could not find any expressed interest in that field among Western scholars.³ Not even Bruce Altshuler's famous book on avant-garde exhibitions mentioned them.⁴ One can say the same in the case of other studies, such as *Thinking about Exhibitions*, where no Central European show was analysed, or even mentioned.⁵ This does not mean that the Central European exhibition discourse does not exist in the West at all. Milena Kalinovska, a pioneer among Western curators in that field, has written one of the few studies summarizing Central European exhibitions held in the West before 1989.⁶

To be honest, there have been some comparative Central European art exhibitions organized before 1989. There was the exhibition *Expressiv. Mitteleuropäische Kunst seit 1960*, shown in 1987 in Vienna, and a year later in Washington D.C.,⁷ and again for another year in Vienna. A short time later, the exhibition *Reduktivismus* appeared just after the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁸ The paradigmatic exhibition dealing not only with Central Europe, but also with Eastern (Russian) culture, was the *Europa, Europa* exhibition set in 1994 by Ryszard Stanislawski and Christoph Brockhaus in the Bonn Kunst- und Ausstesslungshalle.⁹ The task faced by the organizers of the exhibition was extremely difficult, particularly from a theoretical and psychological perspective. The rise of the 'Iron Curtain' and the fall of the Berlin Wall allowed them to ask questions about the identity of Europe shaped by the Yalta Agreement. Their ambition, however, was also to change the Yalta order.

The political context of the exhibition was quite obvious. Somewhat less obvious were its artistic premises: the eastern part of the continent was defined in a retrospective manner, because it was distinguished not just in reference to the aftermath of the Yalta conference, but also to the pre-Yalta years. Moreover, the typical Central European trends, such as the Czech Cubism that developed among local historical tensions, referred to the far metropolis (Paris) and simultaneously to the closer one (Vienna). These tensions were combined, perhaps for the first time, within the same geographical area as the art of the Russian avant-garde. The art of Austria and Germany, no doubt the historical points of reference for Central European artists (at least in the first half of the century, not to mention around the turn of the nineteenth century), were not included. The art of the German Democratic Republic, a fragment of German

3. Krisztina Passuth, 'The Exhibition as a Work of Art: Avant-Garde Exhibitions in East-Central Europe', in *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson (Boston, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).

4. Bruce Altshuler, *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994).

5. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne eds., *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

6. Milena Kalinovska, 'Exhibition as Dialogue: The "Other" Europe', in *Carnegie International*, ed. J. Caldwell (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: The Carnegie Museum of Art, 1988).

7. D. Ronte, M. Mladek eds., *Expressiv. Mitteleuropäische Kunst seit 1960/Central European Art since 1960* (Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst, 1987).

8. Lorand Hegyi ed., *Reduktivismus. Abstraction in Polen, der Tschechoslowakei, Ungarn, 1950–1980* (Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst / Stiftung Ludwig, 1992).

9. Ryszard Stanislawski and Christoph Brockhaus eds., *Europa, Europa. Das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Bonn: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1994).

territory that was incorporated after 1945 into the political sphere of the East (i.e. the Soviet bloc) was excluded as well. If the threshold of World War II justified the geographical division of Europe into two parts, there were indeed few convincing arguments to apply it retrospectively to all of the twentieth century.

At this point, however, this crucial question does not refer to historical divisions, but rather to the identity or historical significance of the art produced in this region. Of course, the organizers of the exhibition were quite aware of this issue. In fact, Stanislawski admitted that his basic intention was to show the universal character of the art of the eastern part of the continent.¹⁰ Reading between the lines, and sometimes even listening to the curator himself, one could realize that the primary objective of this undertaking was to valorise the art of the 'other Europe' in the context of its absence from art history textbooks. The same intent was expressed through the exhibition itself as well as in its monumental catalogue. Of course, such a strategy is quite obvious. Quoting Jean-Marc Poinsoot once more, we can say that indeed organizing exhibitions is writing art history.¹¹

I really believe that the Bonn exhibition showed the dimensions of Central/Eastern European art on an unprecedented scale. Regardless of all the particular objections raised in various countries from mostly Central Europe, its effects remain beyond dispute. The actual problem lies elsewhere. As a matter of fact, *Europa, Europa* did not put forth any new theoretical and methodological categories applicable to the discussion of European art in the twentieth century. Though it expanded the range of material, it did not modify the paradigm of artistic geography, and even worse, did not even articulate such possibilities.

To provoke the deconstruction of universalism, the exhibition inscribed itself in the perspective of its mythology: into the myth of European universalism as a neutral tool of writing art history. Moreover, to challenge European art history, and – perhaps more importantly – art geography, the *Europa-Europa* exhibition submitted Central European art for Western inspection using the supervisors value system and showed that there was no 'other Europe', just Europe.

Let me briefly discuss how the other exhibitions have been trying to avoid the geographical and historical traps seen in the case of the Bonn show. Let me begin from the present, from the exhibition *Exchange and Transformation: Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*, which was shown in March 2003 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). The point of departure of the exhibition is an unspoken critique of the *Europa, Europa* show. The structure of *Exchange and Transformation* was, therefore, entirely different. Likewise, the curator's strategy went towards

10. Among many statements of the exhibition curator, see the interview: 'Europa, Europa: an Interview with Ryszard Stanislawski by Bożena Czubak', in *Magazyn Sztuki*, no. 5 (1995) pp. 223–237.

11. Jean-Marc Poinsoot, 'Large Exhibitions. A Sketch of a typology', in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, op. cit., p. 41.

a very concrete definition of its subject. It was neither the art itself as an exhibition, as in *Europa, Europa*, nor an attempt to valorise art production from the region in the context of European art history. Rather the exhibition attempted to focus on the formative processes constructing local art communities, namely international, mutual cultural exchange between several Central European art centres transforming classical avant-garde imagery. There was no twentieth-century art history of Central Europe that is more or less parallel to the canonical (Western) one, as it was in the previous exhibition. Instead it focused on a geography of art: dynamic geographical processes reconstructed by focusing on particular places (cities), and events (exhibitions and publications).

The same unspoken critique of the *Europa, Europa* show may also be seen in the case of two other exhibitions: *Der Riss im Raum* held in Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin in 1994, and the next year in Warsaw, as well as *Aspekte/Positionen. 50 Jahre Kunst aus Mitteleuropa, 1949–1999*, shown for the first time in Vienna.¹² The subjects of these shows were defined not through formative and constructive processes, but rather through geographical and historical boundaries. The first carefully presented show focused on three or four countries: Germany, or West and East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, or the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The second show, less carefully organized, gathered material from more Central European countries (with the exception of Germany and Bulgaria, but including all former Yugoslav countries). Even if the catalogues employed were used to present historical material in a country-to-country manner, the exhibitions themselves tried to avoid such a schematic presentation. Instead, they stressed a comparative perspective of the history of the last forty to fifty years. However, while the Berlin show focused on the artists themselves, the Vienna show concentrated more on historical processes. It is worth mentioning that both shows were localized in a very specific historical moment, namely the post-Second World War period, which was rather less problematic. What was problematic was the instrumentalization of historico-artistic geography. If the ambition of those exhibitions was to represent post-Yalta Central European culture, why was West Germany included in the Berlin show and Austrian art given an important role in the Vienna show? What's more, if the exhibitions focused on the post-war period, why were the Czech Republic and Slovakia separated in the first show, and included with all former Yugoslav countries in the second? In both cases they were each single countries during this period – namely Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The answer is obvious. As *Europa, Europa* was involved in a political agenda, the same was true in the latter exhibitions. Politics intervened in the curators' strategies, changing their more or less clear historical premises.

12. Respectively: Matthias Flugge ed., *Der Riss im Raum. Positionen der Kunst seit 1945 in Deutschland, Polen, der Slowakei und Tschechien* (Berlin: Guardini Stiftung, 1994); Lorand Hegyi ed., *Aspekte/Positionen. 50 Jahre Kunst aus Mitteleuropa, 1949–1999* (Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst / Stiftung Ludwig, 1999).

Whereas the above-mentioned exhibitions could be seen in a more or less ambiguous historical and geographical framework, the last ones I will mention have been defined much more precisely – at least as far as history and geography are concerned. What I have in mind here are the *Beyond Belief* exhibition in Chicago (1995) and the *After the Wall* exhibition in Stockholm (1999).¹³ Both exhibitions concentrated on the post-communist period. However, while the first show exhibited art from Central Europe (i.e. the eastern part of the continent except the former Soviet countries), the latter presented material from the whole former Soviet bloc. The first show collected material on a country-by-country basis, and focused on particular cultural developments among mostly young artists. The second show, on the other hand, focused on young artists (not exclusively however) and their individual art productions, and tried to avoid – as Bojana Pejić once pointed out – exhibiting the 'stars' from the region who are working mainly in the West (e.g. Marina Abramović, Ilya Kabakov, Krzysztof Wodiczko). This difference in focus constituted the main difference between the two shows. To elaborate, while the first exhibition was executed in the mid-1990s, and not at the beginning of the decade, it just tested the water. The second exhibition, on the other hand, offered a kind of closure to the post-Soviet period in European culture.

After the Wall was organized, as I said, not according to countries, but rather around the particular issues in which artists were involved. It dealt with social critique, recent history, questions of an artist's subjectivity and identity, and questions of body and gender. This last theme even had a special place since art related to that topic was shown in Stockholm in a separate space. However, the frame of the entire exhibition was a historical background, namely the post-communist point of reference. That was precisely the last moment when such a show was possible, simply because the post-Soviet world is disappearing, as – notably – one of the curators of the exhibition expressed very clearly.¹⁴ Would we be able to find similarities in the near future between the former GDR and Armenia, or Slovenia and Ukraine, Poland and Belarus? That would be very difficult – indeed this was something that was not so easy to accomplish during the communist period. What is even more complicated is that the previously 'cohabitating nations', such as the Czechs and Slovaks, or the Slovenians and Croats, have been split into separate countries. One of them is even seeking EU membership, while the others have less of a chance to do so. But due to EU regulations their citizens would even face difficulties on the level of free travel, as well as economic trade. Will we be able to draw any common background between those countries in the near future? Not any more. Except of course, for historical background. The political geography of the post-Soviet world is disappearing and would make such exhibitions as *After the Wall* very problematic in the future.

13. Respectively: Laura Hoptman ed., *Beyond Belief. Contemporary Art from East Central Europe* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995); Bojana Pejić and David Elliott eds., *After the Wall. Art and Culture in post-Communist Europe* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999).

14. David Elliott, 'Introduction', in *After the Wall. Art and Culture in post-Communist Europe*, eds. Bojana Pejić and David Elliott (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1999), p.11.

Thus, the end of the last decade of the twentieth century was really the last moment such a show was possible.

If *After the Wall* is closing the post-war history of Central European art, it does at the same time open a new discussion. Let me raise an odd question: what really is Central Europe? Is it something real, or just a phantasmagoric projection? Is the 'otherness' of Central Europe contained within the context of European culture? Of course, looking to the distant past we find a Polish/Lithuanian Kingdom, not as the centre of the European continent, but rather as its Eastern border – facing the 'real others' (the Turks). Central Europe, however, has been born as an ideological construction expressed in German political discourses, both in Vienna, the capital of the Habsburg Empire, and a little bit later in Berlin by Otto von Bismarck leading the newborn Germany. While the first discourse and political practice was relatively open to the multi-ethnic communities living there, Prussian society, on the other hand, was not only oppressive, but also aggressive. This is an important point to note, since this oppression is the reason for a sort of nostalgia in the post-war Central Europe that emerged from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A good example of the expression of such sentiment is the famous essay written by Czech writer Milan Kundera, *The Stolen West or the Tragedy of Central Europe*, which can be seen exactly in the context of such nostalgia. However, even though the discourse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was less oppressive than the Prussian one, Central Europe still expressed an ideology of political domination over the nations in the East.

This is, however, not the only point of reference of such a discourse, since it aims not only at the East, but also at the West. Central Europe as a political doctrine has been constructing German identity both in opposition to the East (mostly the Slavs and Hungarians), as well as Western Europe – particularly with regard to France. The philosophical discourse justifying such an ideology was of course Nietzsche's concept of the antagonism between 'culture' and 'civilization'. This opposition influenced a particularly more German than Austrian way of thinking,¹⁵ and determined the idea of Central Europe as a defence of 'culture' against Western 'civilization,' while at the same time bearing (German) 'culture' to the East.

The above-mentioned political and historical background was the source of discouraging new Central European countries just after World War I, rather than encouraging them to identify themselves in such a context. However, the situation changed radically after 1945, when a large part of the European continent was incorporated into the Soviet Empire. For the most part, both cultural societies and the so-called 'ordinary people' did not want to be identified with Eastern Europe, which actually meant the Soviet bloc.

15. Eckhart Gillen, 'Tabula Rasa and Inwardness. German Images before and after 1945', in *German Art from Beckmann to Richter. Images of a Divided Country*, ed. Eckhart Gillen (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1997), pp. 17–18.

Timothy Garton Ash has noted that the tragedy of Central Europe was that after World War II it was incorporated into the Soviet bloc; it disappeared in order to be replaced by the concept of the Soviet bloc.¹⁶ He is certainly correct that it was a tragedy for this part of Europe that its cultural, social, economic and political ambitions and development were damaged. But at the same time he is incorrect, since this was precisely the moment when Central Europe had a chance to re-emerge as a discursive construction. To avoid being identified with the Soviet Union, the idea of Central Europe has been revived in the region, yet with a totally different meaning. This was the time when the above-mentioned nostalgia for the Habsburg Empire emerged, particularly in countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary, which previously belonged to the Empire. Nevertheless, in almost all of these countries Central European identity worked as a sort of reaction to the political situation, but did not produce any cultural unity between them – at least not in terms of art. Modernist and neo-avant-garde artists identified themselves more with the international, rather than the Central European.¹⁷ In actual fact, it was the dissidents and intellectuals involved in political opposition who revived the concept of Central Europe, rather than the artists.

Central European identification seemed to be very useful, both on the political as well as the cultural level just after 1989. It was at this particular moment when a series of Central European art exhibitions came to be. I am afraid that 1989 was perhaps the last, and perhaps the only moment, when these exhibitions were possible. Now, when some of the Central European countries are facing unification within the EU, while other countries will apparently be excluded from that process (at least in the near future), the concept of Central Europe can no longer work as an identifying discourse. Moreover, it could even be perceived as something that would disturb the unification process. Therefore, in what way could the concept of Central Europe now work in order to create the identity of the region? Central European countries are in a very different economic and political situation. This is one reason for losing their former regional identity. The other is after being liberated from communism, all of these countries want to forget the recent past – which actually created their regional identity in the past. If a revival of Central European discourse was a product of such a past, it means that it should be forgotten as if it were a child who experienced a traumatic experience. In other words, it means that the regional identity understood as a reaction to Soviet expansion could be forgotten. Furthermore, if nostalgia for the multiethnic Habsburg Empire used to fulfil cultural ambitions suppressed by the Soviets, the now united Europe can offer those countries a much more attractive identification associated with belonging to Europe. This is precisely where the region always wanted to be. This is particularly visible in the

16. Timothy Garton Ash, 'The Puzzle of Central Europe', in *New York Review of Books* (18 March 1999), pp. 19–23.

17. László Beke, 'Conceptual Tendencies in Eastern European Art', in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s*, Jane Farver et. al. (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), p. 43.

Czech Republic, which perceives itself as quite Western, both in political and cultural discourses.

What has been said above does not mean that there is no space for organizing exhibitions of Central European art in today's society. Certainly, there is such a space and it is even a necessity, particularly for historical reasons. The above-mentioned LACMA show concentrates on some geographical and historical points, which I hope proves its necessity. It reveals that there is still an interest as far as the post-war period is concerned. For example, in the Central European history of art between 1945 and 1989 we would be able to find many common points of reference that could be the subject of many exhibitions. One of them could be, for example, a horizontal comparison around some particular key dates in both a history of art and politics, such as 1956, 1968–1970 and 1980. There are many topics still waiting to be discovered. In a word, I will argue that history is not problematic; the problem is with contemporary culture. In other words, Central European culture (as a discursive concept) is the historical, rather than present day point of reference. As far as contemporary culture is concerned, and particularly a future culture of the region, we should perhaps find a different discourse to describe the relation between the West and East, or the West and the so-called centre of the continent.

Now, I presume, we are approaching the crucial question dealing with contemporary European culture: the relationship between its centres – almost the same historical centres – and its radically different margins, one of which used to be Central and Eastern Europe. The crucial question, therefore, is the distance between these two factors: space and geography. The critical geography would be aimed at disclosing the centre of power, and – like feminist, postcolonial and other deconstructive practices – would produce a discourse of a pluralistic, non-hierarchical concept of the subject, or to be more exact, on the multi-subjectivity of European dimensions.¹⁸ Such a study would provide a critical approach to the question of similarities and differences between the centres and margins, but also – and this is perhaps the most interesting challenge of 'after the wall' European culture – between many geographical margins themselves. In addition, these studies would provide a critical approach to the question concerning a new context of Central European identity in new European cultural and political relations. What I mean here is dealing not only with the relation between the centres (Berlin, London, Paris) and peripheries (Bratislava, Warsaw, Zagreb), which used to be a subject of art historical studies in previous decades, but also the relation with other peripheries (Athens, Dublin, Lisbon, Stockholm).

To conclude, I would say that the new European political and cultural geography would make Central European

18. See Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma. Geography's Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 14–35.

contemporary art exhibitions more problematic. Many relations between the centres and margins, different margins and different centres, and margins themselves, produce diversity. What does diversity really mean? What is the necessary condition in order to realize diversity? That is the border; borders between many spaces, the centres and the margins, the margins themselves, and borders between the 'new' margins emerging from post-communist Europe. Jacques Derrida writing on the *aporetic* character of borders and on the 'double concept of the border' refers to the question of Europe, or – more precisely – European borders. Such an *aporia* tells us of the 'passage', and at the same time 'non-passage' of the border. If the border is something to cross, it also means that it would be something not-to-cross. These are not opposite figures, as he argues, but rather illustrates the plural logic of *aporia*, which installs the haunting of the one in the other.¹⁹ Let us note two examples of non-passage (or *aporia*) mentioned by Derrida, and adopt them for our consideration. Derrida perfectly describes the European situation before and after the Wall's demolition, particularly in the very heart of Europe where the Wall physically and symbolically existed, namely in Berlin. This was an experience especially and exclusively expressed from its Eastern perspective. In one case, writes Derrida, 'the nonpassage resembles an impermeability; it would stem from the opaque existence of an uncrossable border'. This is the case, let us add, of the Wall before demolition, when everyone knew that a few steps away there was the border, however, no one (or almost no one) was allowed to cross it. That was precisely the aim of power strategies, particularly in East Germany, but also in other Central European countries, in which citizens, although not welcome, were allowed to cross the border, under a strictly controlled passport policy. In another case, Derrida continues, 'the nonpassage...stems from the fact that there is no limit. There is not yet or there is no longer a border'.²⁰ This is precisely what East Germans experience right now, after the unification – and, presumably, what the other Central European nations will experience soon in the space of the EU. This *aporetic* character of European borders was the precise reason for Central European curatorial strategies in submitting the local art for Western (supervisors') inspection, and vice versa. That was also the precise reason for Western interest in seeing such exhibitions. Even now if we observe vanishing European borders, or because of them, such *aporias* are still at stake. Not only because we do not remember our European experience, but above all because we know that there are invisible borders between the centres and the margins, such as the invisible Wall in Berlin and the margins themselves. There are also invisible borders inside the 'new' margins, which have an even more *aporetic* character. Since such borders are not stable: they exist, and at the same time do not exist. We can cross them, and at the same time cannot cross. They are very flexible, dynamic,

19. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 19.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

unstable and much more multi-faced in relation to the other margins, such as geographical and cultural margins.

More than ten years after the demolition of the Berlin Wall we are facing a challenge to see the former Central Europe, and Eastern Europe as well, in a different context. This concept is much more complicated than Central Europe or the West. If the former Central Europe is much more diverse in its relations with the EU with regard to historical cultural centres, as well as its relations to the other margins of European culture, we shall not put our curatorial practices to submitting/supervising or surveillance/submission strategies. It is necessary to express a critical and deconstructive strategy, aiming at both the margins and the centres themselves in order to generate a new, more complex image.

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THE (FORMER) EAST AND ITS IDENTITY

IGOR ZABEL

Since the division of Europe into two opposing parts has been completed in mid-century, the West-East opposition has never been merely an outer circumstance of artistic or cultural production. The systems of differences, which function essentially as systems of power and domination, have determined (and they still do) the structure of the field of art, the production of works as well as their specific meanings and understanding.

Art in Central and Eastern Europe in the last half of the century was related to political and ideological issues in a much more immediate way than in the West; and if we want to speak about it as a whole, or about its different phenomena, we simply have to take into consideration its specific context, which ultimately means the political and cultural division of Europe. The mere use of an artistic language, even a 'universal' one, such as constructivism or conceptualism, resulted in a specific function, role and meaning of a work in given conditions. An abstract work of art, for example, could mean a clear challenge to the models of Socialist Realism and thus a direct oppositional political statement. On the other hand, communist parties in certain countries (or their 'liberal' factions) could also use such art for their own purposes; in such cases, the formalist and apolitical character of abstract art could serve as legitimization of the system. Even the use of the most universal and autonomous visual languages obtained very specific meanings in specific contexts, and such works simply cannot be properly understood without taking into account these circumstances. But we have to keep in mind that the form of the ideological, political and cultural division of Europe into its eastern and western part was not given once and for all; the concept of difference and the attitude of artists towards it were changing, and this changeable form needs to be taken into consideration as well.

One often meets people – above all cosmopolitan intellectuals coming, as a matter of fact, more often from the East than from the West – who complain about the endless discussions about Eastern Europe and its art and find them boring and even out-of-date. One can easily understand these people. They are tired of articles, polemics and art shows dealing with this subject; tired of the fact that continuous debates about the geopolitical circumstances of artistic production prevent them from dealing with art itself; tired of the expectations that they will play the role of representatives of an alien Eastern culture, broach typical Eastern topics and speak about their memories of the communist times and about the contradictions of today's post-communism.

Indeed, wasn't the fall of the Berlin Wall a symbol of a new time when the decades-old geopolitical divisions were overcome and Europe was finally united, culturally as well

as politically? And isn't it now essential to get rid of the old ideological, cultural and political dualisms and to speak about art and culture as such, liberated from their former ideological tasks? Why should we endlessly keep returning to the former divisions and obsessively repeat and re-enact the traumas of the past?

A lot of circumstances speak in favour of such a position. It is an obvious fact that we now live in a world which is fundamentally different from the world of the Cold War era. The representatives of today's young art have grown up in a world where the opposition between the communist East and the capitalist West is history, in a world which is often called – and in many essential aspects indeed is – global. The experience of such a world is obviously present in their works. Why should they be burdened with contradictions that belong to the past?

Nevertheless, several texts in the recently published issue of the *Moscow Art Magazine* (July 1998), entitled *East is Looking at the East, East is Looking at the West*, display a painful feeling of being trapped in a radically divided world where the West-East opposition still fatally determines them. Reading these texts, one gets the feeling that their authors think that the division of Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall has not disappeared, but merely changed its character and forms of appearance. It seems that the divisions in Europe have not been overcome yet; after the radical changes of the geopolitical situation in Europe they have only been transformed and rearranged. It should be further noted that the writers of the *Moscow Art Magazine* describe these differences and divisions as part of the strategies of power and dominance in contemporary Europe – a game in which they themselves obviously play the role of the weaker party.

The rearranged structure of differences and power in Europe today is reflected in the politically correct use of the words East and West, as they currently appear in the jargon of art. Writers often speak about the 'former East', intending to stress that they speak about a region which used to be a different world, while now this difference is abolished. They never, however, speak about the 'former West'; in this discourse, the West remains a firm cultural and political entity, while the 'former East' has somehow lost its difference from the West without becoming identical with it. The expression 'former East' denies and re-establishes the difference at the same time. This relationship is roughly parallel to the use of the term 'post-communism'. Both terms, 'post-communism' and 'former East', are similar in that they designate a situation which is more complicated and more difficult to grasp than the neat symmetrical dualism of the Cold War times: a situation where the dualism is abolished, the economic, political and cultural systems ('free market', 'democracy'

and 'international style') equalized, but a radical difference is still preserved.

This system of hidden difference between the West and the former East, between capitalism and post-communism, is connected to the systems of power and domination. The non-symmetrical character of the new order is clearly related to the fact that, as we often hear, 'the West won the Cold War'. One cannot overlook the fact – especially if one comes from the East and experiences it directly – that economic as well as the cultural power is concentrated in the West. As far as the world of contemporary art is concerned, this means that one can find there the majority of the institutions and mechanisms that constitute and define this world and determine what is and what is not its part: galleries, museums, collectors, magazines, critics; art (and theory) produced in the former East has to be confirmed by this system to be accepted as relevant.

There is no doubt that many galleries, museums, curators and critics in the West exhibit and promote Eastern art out of genuine interest and enthusiasm; nevertheless, the general mechanisms of legitimizing art production from the former East through the institutions of the world of contemporary art operate, to a great extent, in such a way as to achieve cultural hegemony, as we could call it.

In such a system of differences, which is also a system of domination, a certain universal cultural form – the 'international style' included – cannot be neutral. It has specific, and sometimes ambiguous functions inside an actual social context; also, it has different meanings, according to the circumstances into which it enters.

On the other hand, the East-West relationship, which could be described as postmodern, is characterized by a strong discourse of difference. This difference is not just an external circumstance of a universal human nature, it has become a cultural difference rooted deeply in one's self. The postmodern discourse implies that in the East and in the West individuals are determined by completely different sets of experiences and values. The language of art simply cannot be universal any more; to be able to grasp the specific message of a work of art we need to share with the artist certain knowledge and experiences. The same work read from two different cultural positions conveys two very different meanings. Communication between two different cultures has thus become almost impossible: the meanings which are discovered in a work from the other culture might be something completely different from the meanings intended by the artist.

This position indicates a change of the power strategies in the field of culture. The idea of a universally valid modernist visual language was replaced by the relationship of

a developed language of Western art and the exotic artistic production of the East. The deep exotic contents of this production are only attainable for the audience in the West (which implicitly means they can enter the world of contemporary art) if the artist is capable of using the language of Western art.

In such a situation, when an artist from the East (or from the Third World, for that matter) is in advance, if he wants (or knows) it or not, in the position of an exotic 'other' who first has to learn the international (Western) language of contemporary art to be able to apply to the institution of contemporary art and talk there about the particular experiences and deep wisdom from a different world, it is only natural that artists began to behave in a more consciously strategic way. Strategic behaviour became unavoidable in a situation where it became clear that artists and their works were caught in the system of cultural differences in advance.

The basis of such strategic behaviour was, in the first place, the awareness of one's own position, which means the awareness of the mechanisms of the system one enters and which predetermine one's position, i.e. the production and reception of one's works. One of the most essential questions which have appeared through such reflection was the question of Eastern European identity. Since the art system determined these artists, regardless of how they themselves felt, as Easterners, it was of course essential to reflect upon this position and actually use it as a kind of starting point. Still, the idea of rethinking and reaffirming Eastern identity is not so very obvious as it may seem. Very often, artists and intellectuals from Central and Eastern European countries, especially the so-called dissidents, considered themselves to belong essentially to the Western culture. Being more or less openly in opposition to the communist totalitarian systems and their (essentially 'Eastern') structures, they naturally felt that they represented the West. But inside the system of art as described above, one's identity is not determined by one's feeling of belonging to the Western cultural tradition, but by one's relationship towards the West as the dominant part of the system and its power to accept or exclude. An Eastern European artist now understands his position and identity through the relationship of otherness and exclusion from the phantasmal West. (If the West is, in these relationships, essentially a phantasm, that does not mean that it is not real; on the contrary, it is exactly through such phantasms that the power operates.)

The starting point is, therefore, the recognition of the fact that, in the present system of art and culture, one is predetermined with Eastern identity. The essential shift implied in the idea of a particular Eastern identity, as presented, for example, in the *Moscow Declaration* (a statement formulated and signed by a group of Russian and Slovene artists and

writers in 1992), is that this identity is not determined simply through the relationship towards the West as the determining other anymore, but that it attempts to develop a positive basis for such an identity. This basis is understood as a special quality, as something that is different from the Western structures but no less universal. This is, therefore, not an idea of a special mystical and spiritual mission of the East, but rather an attempt to start and develop an alternative system, based on the difference from the Western one, yet compatible with it.

It means that the conscious development of an Eastern European identity and a new infrastructure based on it could, at least partially, balance the asymmetry of the dominant West and its relationship towards the exotic 'other' cultures. This would be achieved on the level of symbolic structures and their relations which could affect the real position of the East. In this respect, the very idea of the East and a specific Eastern identity is strategic in a similar way as the phantasm of a special identity of the West (which is used in the effort to preserve its unity and its dominant position); it would be impossible to rearrange the symbolic field without a very real potential as the basis for such a rearrangement.

Such a project, of course, is developing *inside* the context of contemporary art, which means through the conditions and institutions dominated by the West. In these circumstances, one of the possibilities is to develop artistic production as a deconstruction of the conceptual and institutional framework of this same production. It means to work in the awareness of the actual circumstances of work (i.e. awareness of the constitutive relationships inside the art system and the structure of dominance which operates through them) and to make them visible in the work itself. Somewhat paradoxically it also means to show the phantasmal nature of the ideas of identity and cultural differences.

To speak about 'strategic behaviour' inside the symbolic field of the art system (and about the art system as a specific aspect of the structure of power and dominance) implies the idea that, inside the field of art, one can establish a position of active resistance. For example, making use of the symbolic character of art and of its connections with very different cultural and social systems, one cannot only disclose the systems of power and the way they operate in different social areas and fields, but also interfere with them and perhaps even form and suggest possible alternative social models.

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Prym, Gallery BWA (Zielona Gora, 2004); *So gennante Wellen und andere Phaenomene des Geistes*, Kunstverein Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, 2003); *Hidden in a Daylight* (Cieszyn, 2003); and *Nova Popularna* (Warsaw, 2003).

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Princeton, NJ (2000). He also was a Visiting Professor at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York in 2001 and Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2003. Forthcoming book: *Avant-Garde in the Shadow of Yalta. Art and Politics in Central-Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*.

BORUT VOGELNIK (IRWIN), the IRWIN group was founded in Ljubljana in 1983 and consists of Dušan Mandić, born 1954; Miran Mohar, born 1958; Andrej Savski, born 1961; Roman Uranjek, born 1961; and Borut Vogelник, born 1959. IRWIN, along with music group Laibach (est. 1980), the performance group Gledališče Sester Scipion Nasice (est. 1983), later known as the Kozmokinetični Kabinet Noordung, and the design department Novi Kolektivizem, comprises one of the core groups within the artists' collective Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK), established in 1984 in the Slovenian republic of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. At the beginning of the 1990s the artistic collective NSK transformed from an organization to a State in Time, in the framework of which IRWIN played the role of protagonist as well as chronologist by analysing and recording the processes which had started in Europe after the fall of socialism. IRWIN is currently working on the project *East Art Map* in which they create, together with collaborators, a history of contemporary art in Eastern Europe.

JILL WINDER, born 1975, is an independent writer and editor with a particular interest in post-communist culture and contemporary art. In 1998–1999, she conducted independent research on the cultural politics of transition and post-communist art in Central and Eastern Europe as a Thomas J. Watson Fellow. Winder studied Political Theory, and was awarded an M.A. in Curatorial Studies from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York in 2002. Recent essays include: *Fischer & el Sani: Palast der Republik*, in ex. cat. *Die Aufgabe der Zeit* (2003) and *Irwin: Retroprincip 1983–2003* review (ARTMargins, 2004). She is currently a writing fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs and is based in Berlin.

IGOR ZABEL, born 1958, graduated from the University of Ljubljana (studied Comparative Literature, Art History and Philosophy) and was awarded an M.A. from the University of Ljubljana in 1989. He is Senior Curator at the Moderna Galerija (Museum of Modern Art), Ljubljana. Zabel has curated a number of solo and group exhibitions with Slovene and international artists. He has also

published two books of essays on contemporary art and a number of essays and articles in catalogues and magazines (i.e. *Art Journal*, *Art Press*, *Flash Art*, *Index*, *Moscow Art Magazine* and others). He was the Coordinator of Manifesta 3 (Ljubljana, 2000), and is Co-Editor (with Viktor Misiano) of the *Manifesta Journal*. He was one of the curators of *Cream 3* (2003). In 2003, he curated *Individual Systems* as a part of the 50th Venice Biennale.

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK, born 1949, Ljubljana, completed a Ph. D. in Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana in 1981 and in Psychoanalysis at the Université Paris-VIII in 1985. Since 1979, he has been a researcher at the Institute for Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana and has been a Visiting Professor at numerous US universities in Buffalo and New York, New York; Minnesota; New Orleans, Louisiana; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Princeton, New Jersey. In 1990 he was a candidate for the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia. Many of his writings examine phenomena of popular culture, film and new media by means of psychoanalytic theory. Žižek's most recent books include: *Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates* (2002), *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (2003) and *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (2004).

SURFACING / EPISODE 1

17 September–24 October 2004,
opening 16 September 2004
Curator: Lívia Páldi
Ludwig Museum Budapest – Museum
of Contemporary Art, Royal Palace,
Building 'A', Szent György tér. 2,
Budapest, t + 36 1 3759175,
www.ludwigmuseum.hu
Participating Artists: Yael Bartana,
Rineke Dijkstra, Gerard Holthuis, Rob
Johannesma, Johan van der Keuken,
Sebastian Diaz Morales, Aernout Mik,
Jeroen de Rijke/Willem de Rooij,
Joke Robaard and Barbara Visser

TIME AND AGAIN / EPISODE 2

23 October 2004–30 January 2005,
opening 22 October 2004 (a conference
developed by *Who if not we...?* and
Stedelijk Museum will be held
on 22–23 October 2004)
Curators: Leontine Coelewijn
and Geurt Imanse
Stedelijk Museum CS, Oosterdokskade
5, Amsterdam, t + 31 20 5732911,
www.stedelijk.nl
Participating Artists: Little Warsaw
(Bálint Havas and András Gálik),
Ján Mančuška, Deimantas Narkevičius,
Paulina Ołowska, Roman Ondák,
Tadej Pogačar and Wilhelm Sasnal

CORDIALLY INVITED / EPISODE 3

31 October–31 December 2004,
opening 30 October 2004
Curators: Maria Hlavajova
and Gerardo Mosquera
BAK, basis voor actuele kunst,
Lange Nieuwstraat 4, Utrecht,
t + 31 30 2316125, www.bak-utrecht.nl
Centraal Museum, Utrecht
(additional venue): Post CM,
Agnietenstraat 2, Utrecht
Participating artists: Academic Training
Group, Francis Alÿs, Jože Barši, Otto
Berchem, Monica Bonvicini, Mona
Hatoum, Július Koller, Jiří Kovanda,
Denisa Lehecká, Mapping Worlds,
Nomads & Residents and Bik van der
Pol, Roman Ondák, Boris Ondreička,
Amalia Pica, Wilfriedo Prieto García,
Marko Raat, Mindaugas RataVICIUS/
Giedrius Kumetaitis, Jeroen de Rijke/
Willem de Rooij, Ene-Liis Semper,
Monika Sosnowska and Felix Gonzalez-
Torres

OUT OF THE SHADOWS / EPISODE 4

7 November 2004–9 January 2005,
opening 6 November 2004
Curator: Catherine David
A Project by Peter Friedl
Witte de With, Center for Contemporary
Art, Witte de Withstraat 50, Rotterdam,
t + 31 10 4110144, www.wdw.nl

SAFETY AND PEACE! ORDER AND
FREEDOM! / EPISODE 5

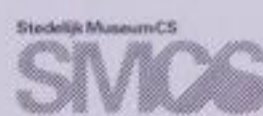
8 November–5 December 2004,
opening 7 November 2004
Curator: Igor Zabel
Moderna Galerija, Tomšičeva 14,
Ljubljana, t + 386 1 2416800,
www.mg-lj.si
Participating Artists: Atelier Van
Lieshout, Joost Conijn, Job Koelewijn,
John Körmeling, Maria Pask and
Edwin Zwakman

OLANDU BIURAS – VILNIUS / EPISODE 6

20 November 2004–9 January 2005,
opening 19 November 2004
Curator: Kestutis Kuizinas
Contemporary Art Centre (CAC),
Vokiečiu 2, Vilnius, t + 370 52629891,
www.cac.lt
Participating artists: Atelier Van
Lieshout, Hendrik-Jan Hunneman,
Lucas Lenglet, Gabriel Lester, Job
Koelewijn, Maria Pask, Jennifer Tee,
Dré Wapenaar and Edwin Zwakman

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI'S STUDIO /
EPISODE 7

December 2004
Curators: Joanna Mytkowska and
Andrzej Przywara, in collaboration with
BAR architecture studio, Rotterdam
and Marcin Kwietowicz, Warsaw
Foksal Gallery Foundation, ul.
Gorskiego 10, Warsaw, t + 48 228265081;
KraSIŃSKI'S studio, Aleje Solidarności 64
118, Warsaw (contact Foksal Gallery
Foundation for visiting information),
www.fgf.com.pl



BAK basis voor actuele kunst



MODERNA GALERIJA LJUBLJANA

SMC / CAC

Foksal Gallery Foundation

The RSVP event *Going East* is organized by *Archis*, a magazine on architecture, city and visual culture and AMO in collaboration with *Who if not we...?*. Three events take place in November 2004 in Vienna–Bratislava (4–6 November), Ljubljana–Zagreb (7–8 November), coinciding with the opening of *Safety and Peace! Order and Freedom!* at Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana) and Vilnius–Moscow (19–20 November, coinciding with the opening of *Olandu biuras – Vilnius* at CAC, Vilnius). The events focus on issues explored in *Who if not we...?* such as European borders, migration, citizenship and cultural and national identity. Moving these topics from the theoretical realm into a practical and experiential one, the events involve crossing borders between 'old' and 'new' Europe, new Europe and not (yet?) Europe. Researching the 'edges' of Europe, the potentials and possibilities of exchange and cooperation within new Europe are discussed. Participants physically experience differences in crossing the borders within or outside Europe in order to explore cultural borderline energies that may contribute to a new formulation of Europe's challenges in a global shift eastward. For more detailed information, please visit www.archis.org.

ARCHIS

Metropolis M bimonthly art magazine presents a special international edition (5/2004) on history/nostalgia. A new generation of artists and critics from East and West Europe discuss their attitude toward the past. Contributing artists are Roman Ondák, Matthew Buckingham, Paulina Ołowska, Amelie von Wulffen, Marcel van Eeden, Zbyněk Baladrán and many more.

METROPOLIS M

On the occasion of the opening of *Time and Again* at the Stedelijk Museum CS in Amsterdam, a series of discussions takes place on 22–23 October 2004. Themes include: the 'blind spot' in Western art historiography with regard to art from Central and Eastern Europe; a consideration of ideologically-charged 'immortal buildings' in former communist countries whose meanings and functions have evolved with the political changes of the last fifteen years; and the 'hero factor' – throughout the communist era, iconic images of the 'worker' or other archetypes were used as symbols of morality to promote the development of socialism – after the dissolution of this symbolic order, who might be the new 'heros' of our times?

There are a large number of additional projects being developed within the framework of *Who if not we...?*, but given that this book went to print before the opening of the exhibitions and due to the fact that the programme is continually evolving, the contents are subject to change and expand. We kindly request the reader's understanding and note that the most up-to-date information on all activities can be accessed through the website of *Thinking Forward*: www.thinkingforward.nl.

We would like to thank all the participating artists, curators, authors and other professionals who have contributed their work, ideas and visions to *Who if not we...?*. In addition, we wish to specifically thank the following individuals:

Pawel Althamer; Zdenka Badovinac; Han Bakker, intendant, *Thinking Forward*; Peter Baren; Barnabas Benczik; Hans van Beers and Stedelijk Museum; Ole Bouman; Lilet Breddels; Aveline de Bruin; Yara Cavalcanti Araujo; Odile Chenal and European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam; Catherine David, Bregje Deben, Hedwig Fijen and International Foundation Manifesta, Amsterdam; Roos Gortzak; Ben Hurkmans and Fund for Amateur Art and Performing Arts, The Hague; Indofin; Thomas Keenan; Dragan Klaić; Lucinda Lax; Gitta Luiten and Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam; Thomas Michelin; Mirjam Moll; Kyra Müller; Annette Mullink; Julia van Mourik; Joanna Mytkowska and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw; Katalin Néray; Klaus de Rijk; Domeniek Ruyters; Henk Scholten; János Szoboszlai; Pelin Uran; Tanja Wallroth and Igor Zabel.

SURFACING / EPISODE 1

Livia Páldi wishes to thank all the artists in the exhibition as well as Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam; Galerie Zürcher, Paris; Carine Gauguin – Ideale Audience International, Paris; Paul Andriess Gallery, Amsterdam; carlier/gebauer, Berlin; Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne; Noshka van der Lely; Tanya Rumpff and Judit Angel.

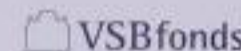
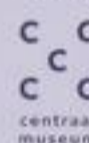
TIME AND AGAIN / EPISODE 2

Leontine Coelewij and Geurt Imanse wish to thank their colleagues and co-curators Dorine Mignot, Martijn van Nieuwenhuyzen and Hripsimé Visser, the galleries Sadie Coles, London; Cabinet, London; Johnen + Schöttle, Cologne; Jan Mot, Brussels; Akinci Amsterdam; Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw and all the people who shared their information with us during our research trips and assisted us in the organization of the exhibition, all the artists in the exhibition and Dominic van den Boogerd for support.

CORDIALLY INVITED / EPISODE 3

The exhibition *Cordially Invited* has been realized in cooperation with Centraal Museum, Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development and IDFA – International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam. The exhibition has been supported by additional financial contributions from Treaty of Utrecht 2013 and VSB fonds. Maria Hlavajova also wishes to thank Marcia Acita

and Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York; Lisa ter Berg; Alex Bradley; Iveta Boiko; Ted Bonin and Alexander and Bonin Gallery, New York; Fariba de Bruin-Derakhshani; Marylis Downey; Danila Cahen; Centraal Museum, Utrecht; The Cranford Collection, London; The Czech Center, The Hague; Daros-Latinamerica Collection, Zürich; Helena Demakova; Ally Derks and IDFA – International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam; Colleen Egan; Silvia Eiblmayr; Charles Esche; The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, New York; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne; Solène Guillier and gb agency, Paris; Sirje Helme; Lolita Jablonskiene; Jay Jopling/White Cube Gallery, London; kurimanzutto gallery, Mexico City; Lisson Gallery, London; Lumen Travo Gallery, Amsterdam; Arjan van Meeuwen; Gerardo Mosquera; Joanna Mytkowska and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Adriek van Nieuwenhuyzen; Ernestina van de Noort; Nordic Council of Ministers Information Office, Lithuania; Solvej Helweg Ovesen; Peter Blum Gallery, New York; Els van der Plas and Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development; Michelle Reyes; Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam; Marion Ritter and Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; Adrienne Samos; Arthur Schoonderwal; Siebe Tettero; Pelin Uran; Rudi van der Valk; George Yudice; Andrej Zmeček and Ida van Zijl.



SAFETY AND PEACE! ORDER AND FREEDOM! / EPISODE 5

The exhibition *Safety and peace! Order and freedom!* has been supported by additional financial contributions from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia. Igor Zabel also wishes to thank all of the artists in the exhibition as well as Zdenka Badovinac, Petra Berrevoets and Charlotte Martens of Atelier Van Lieshout; Gallery Akinci, Amsterdam; Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam; Roosje Klap; and the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Ljubljana.

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI'S STUDIO / EPISODE 7

Joanna Mytkowska and Andrzej Przywara wish to thank Paulina Krasińska, Anka Ptazkowska, Joost Glissenaar, Klaas van der Molen, Marcin Kwietowicz and Maria Hlavajova.

EPISODE 1

SURFACING

Ludwig Museum Budapest –
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Hungary

EPISODE 2

TIME AND AGAIN

Stedelijk Museum CS,
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

EPISODE 3

CORDIALLY INVITED

BAK, basis voor actuele kunst,
Utrecht, The Netherlands

EPISODE 4

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art,
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

EPISODE 5

SAFETY AND PEACE! ORDER AND FREEDOM!

Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana,
Slovenia

EPISODE 6

OLANDU BIURAS – VILNIUS

Contemporary Art Centre (CAC),
Vilnius, Lithuania

EPISODE 7

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI'S STUDIO

Foksal Gallery Foundation,
Warsaw, Poland
