Displayer 03

HfG Karlsruhe
Ausstellungsdesign und kuratorische Praxis

Foreword

The points of departure for **Displayer 03** are the demands, the challenges, and the potentialities as well as the impossibilities of exhibiting space itself. Certainly in this context space is not considered a mere geometric entity but a conflictual field of relations, situations and events.

Starting the research with 'spatial models' like the agora, the garden, the desert, the castle, the film set, the urban grid, the magazine and the pavilion, the editorial process leading up to **Displayer 03** quickly established that exhibiting space is closely related to strategies of re-enactment and performance, i.e. to the temporality of such appearances in space. Hence, the exhibition of space is strongly connected to performative acts in addition to questions about the requirements of constructions in space. Space is the fabric in which events occur, and events, in turn, activate space culturally, socially, politically and geographically. Moreover, exhibiting space means transferring space, which entails the careful consideration of overarching spatial configurations. The particularities of the pathways, visual axes and surrounding environment of the exhibition as well as the inscriptions of history, temporary markings and contextual shifts provide a set to frame space. It then becomes possible to draw a distinction between the sites of 'origin' and 'exhibition.' It also becomes an arena where the boundaries between the 'real' and the 'fictitious' ultimately dissolve.

The third issue of the publication series **Displayer** represents the work of both a one-year research project and the seminars of the Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice program at the University of Art and Design, Karlsruhe. More than 20 interviews, statements and essays were produced exclusively for this issue of **Displayer**. For the most part, the contributions are based on intensive several-day workshops, but they also have been developed from panels, email and phone conversations, dialogic talks, public presentations, debates and seminar projects that were initiated through the program's curriculum. The printed matter in hand embodies a spatial transfer in and of itself: conversations are taken from the non-public seminar room into a presentation format with broad public distribution. Yet beyond merely functioning as an exhibition format, **Displayer** has involved a process of post-production; editing the program's projects and research thus becomes a most necessary part of both the printed publication itself and a course of teaching and study. This process also suspends the distinction between theory and practice and implements the constitutive tools of both.

While the last two **Displayer** issues respectively investigated the activation of space and presentation strategies, primarily of collections, **Displayer 03** forgoes a separation between spatial analysis and curatorial concept. This issue allows us to think through the implications of the historic, thematic and political factors impacting the design of exhibiting (in) space: neither architecture, exhibition design nor curatorial practice can individually negotiate this complex interface of exhibition, building and history. For now, our projects and research conclude in an approach of 'curatorial design,' or, a form of design as temporary spatial models that not only configure the spectator's selective gaze in space but also establish criteria for selecting content.

Not surprisingly, the Russian theoretician Mikhail M. Bakhtin has attracted the interest of contemporary architects, artists and curators. In **The Dialogic Imagination** he suggests the term 'chronotope'—it provides a helpful concept 'in which spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out concrete

whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to movements of time, and history.' It situates our understanding of space within a sphere of endless coexisting trajectories, which create a state of constant becoming: space is never finalized. Having said that, exhibiting space thus implies a constant actualization of this framed space—the exhibit—under certain conditions. 'To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. This is the apparent paradox of festivals: they repeat an "unrepeatable."' (Gilles Deleuze, 'Introduction,' **Difference and Repetition**).

Thinking through exhibiting space leads to questions like: what are the means of recording space in order to perform it at other times, in other places and other institutional settings? Which conceptual approaches are at our disposal in order to remember, repeat and re-access space? What are the limits of reconstructing the built space of historic architecture? The unique written and visual contributions of **Displayer 03** mirror the diversity of attitudes towards examining the exhibition of space, i.e. the performance of space.

Rather than merely republishing the historic facts about exhibitions like **Art of This Century** (1942) and **Salle de Superstition** (1947), the first contribution of **Displayer 03** investigates the relevance of the visionary spatial practice of Friedrich Kiesler. Learning from Kiesler, historian Eva Kraus and artist Tilo Schulz pursue the question of what it means today to generate space as it emerges through 'coordinated correlation' and 'realism.' In contrast to the architect, artist and writer Friedrich Kiesler, the U.S. American industrial designer George Nelson invented Struc-Tube towards the end of the 1940s, a display system that offered a flexible solution for the growing industrialization of exhibition practice. For many years the artist Martin Beck has been analyzing design practices like Nelson's Struc-Tube with a particular focus on labor relations, social conflicts and ideologies that still have currency today.

While Nelson and Kiesler in particular developed display systems for use in environments dictated by modernity, the architect Charles Jencks pursues the opposite in his **Garden of Cosmic Speculation**. He departs from normative disciplines (histories and theories of art, architecture and design) in favor of amateur science. The composition of his garden follows a so-called 'double-design' that presents our world as a 'pluriverse.' The architectural language of post-modernism provides material for a younger generation of artists. For example, Pablo Bronstein's interest in the representational codification of space through ornamental design extends beyond architecture into the field of ballet: the dance performance signifies the behavioral conditioning of bodies. His contribution has parallels with Katrin Mayer's often gender-related investigations into the historical and contextual strata of the buildings in which she is invited to work. Her space-specific research results in an interwoven fabric of found images, displays and existing spatial configurations that exhibit the plurality of the particular space.

Artist and theoretician Stefan Römer elaborates on the question: how is it possible to talk about the 'fake' or 'forgery' in architecture? Based on his research in visual art, his critical inspection not only illustrates the set of problems accompanying the reconstruction of a building like the Berliner Stadtschloss but also reveals the general lack of differentiated argument in architectural debates in how they use historical references. While historian Ines Katenhusen reports about the bizarre voyage of a box of paintings by Kasimir Malevich, the

project **Kabinett der Abstrakten** by the Museum of American Art for **Displayer 03** applies the contemporary reconstruction of El Lissitzky's famous cabinet of 1927 as a tool for unveiling the Western construction and meta-narration of art history. The contribution by the artist Milica Tomić about the politics of memory in ex-Yugoslavia is informed by the question, 'how can the traumas of war be detected?' The contribution points out that space and the violence of political events are inherently connected; the particular reconstruction of a space can provide analytical methods for the present.

The sign 'This house is not a re-enactment' could be said to summarize the blurring of the line between the 'real' and the 'fictitious.' Discovered by Omer Fast near his film set at the Living History Museum in Colonial Williamsburg, this homeowner's statement could serve as a veritable subtitle to Fast's interest in the concurrence of fact and fiction, past and present. **Cabinetlandia** is a fictional state that was co-founded by Sina Najafi, Editor-in-Chief of the Brooklyn-based magazine **Cabinet**, which relocates the space of printed matter to the desert of New Mexico and also to Mars. Architect Hans Hollein's designs for various exhibitions, such as the Milan Triennale (1968), **Death** (1970, Mönchengladbach), and **MAN transFORMS** (1976, New York), are characterized by a curatorial stance that extends the exhibition space into everyday life. The **Media Lines** that he constructed for Munich's Olympic Village in 1972 are the architectural articulation of his curatorial concerns.

Some of the work of the artist Josef Dabernig could be interpreted as the performance of a score. His contribution to the Brussels Biennale (2008), titled **Once is Nothing**, resulted from an extremely precise study of the exhibition **Individual Systems** (2003, Venice Biennale), the spatial structure of which he transposes into the space of a former postal building. **Two New Models for Rehearsing the Script** takes as a starting point a single gesture in the film **Wild Child** by François Truffaut: a workshop with the artist Achim Lengerer and the graphic designer Paul Gangloff yielded the script for the performance of gesture which could be considered as 'the exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such.' (Giorgio Agamben, **Means without Ends**)

Ever since the birth of the English Garden, the park has served as an exhibition model par excellence. However, instead of creating sites of illusion, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's sculptural work in parks generates places of imagination. Drawing on the idea of the chronotope, her work is close to storytelling, novel writing and even an itinerary in which the wandering viewer is an actor performing his or her own travel story. Both the construction of the hitherto unbuilt Baker-House by Adolf Loos in the Inner Mongolian area of China and the Belgian Pavilion of the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2008 present different ways of updating a historic building. While the architect and critic Ines Weizman includes critical archival material in her plans for the former, the architects Kersten Geers and David van Severen work with the tangible context of the building in situ for the latter. A workshop with the architects and the curator of the Belgian pavilion, Moritz Küng, also activated a fundamental debate about the architect's authorship in the reconstruction of buildings.

'Precisely because of the project's questionable nature, the competition to rebuild the facades of the "Schloss" in Berlin has had a highly clarifying effect. It allows us to see the central nature of the historical, thematic and political factors surrounding the design of a museum which is simultaneously a display, an exhibit, a discourse and a kind of souvenir.' So reads the announcement for our seminar in the Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice program. Since an essential part of **Displayer** entails posing seminar questions to protagonists of the researched projects, the architect Giorgio Grassi, a member of the jury of the Berlin Schloss competition, responds to the

criteria, demands and limits of the reconstruction of a castle. The philosopher Guillaume Paoli refers to other sites of reconstruction, such as the Goethehaus in Frankfurt, the caves of Lascaux, Walter Gropius' Direktor-enhaus and the Frauenkirche of Dresden.

From the perspective of mnemonics, cultural theorist Heiner Mühlmann and architecture theorist Stephan Trüby see reconstructions as a dual-channel evolutionary process. One channel is concerned with technical categories and the other with the attempt to preserve a certain degree of cultural rootedness. As a laureate of the Berlin Schloss competition, architect Wilfried Kuehn traces the antagonism between the contemporary needs of architecture and the competition mandate. As one of the clearest examples of the topics pertinent to **Displayer 03**, the Berlin Schloss reveals that space as an exhibit is a double bind: a cultural artifact can evidence a range of interest lobbies. It becomes clear: the performance of space is an act of politicizing it.

Doreen Mende

Correrealism

Ed Harris as Jackson Pollock in front of a reconstruction of the Abstract Gallery, Art of This Century Gallery. Screenshot taken from the movie **Pollock** (2000) directed by Ed Harris, produced by Brant-Allen.

What role does the relation between artists, designers and architects play with regard to the production of presence in an exhibition? How do we organize the three-way reference between the work of art, the spectator, and the passage through a show? How do we activate movement in space as itself a generative part of the exhibition? Frederick J. Kiesler (1890–1965) is an outstanding personality of the historical avant-garde: he was at once architect, stage designer, manager of exhibitions, designer, and author of many manifestos. Not only did he bring together two of the most contradictory artistic movements of the time (Constructivism and Surrealism) in his own work, but he subscribed to their common goal of bringing art and life closer together and developed a strong model for this by his practice. He managed to communicate not only a staging, but a 'feeling' for the room in his exhibitions that opened up an unprecedented immediacy in the relation of the visitors to the artworks.. Impressive examples of his work are the Peggy Guggenheim Gallery show **Art of This Century** from 1942 and the **Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme** at the Gallery Maeght in Paris from 1947. His essay **Correalist Instrument** concretizes his ideal of a perception that is in constant movement. His vision was a world of things that do not alienate themselves from the inhabitants of this world, but that are able to constantly adapt to emerging needs and challenges via interaction and reference. The following dialogue between the former director of the Kiesler Privatstiftung in Vienna, Eva Kraus, and the artist Tilo Schulz, provides an opportunity to review Kiesler's thinking and practice.

Eva Kraus, Tilo Schulz

Exhibition Design

DISPLAYER Friedrich Kiesler can be considered a curator/designer who worked more on the side of the artists and their production. Do we know what instructions he gave to artists? Did they have to work with the space he gave them, or did this emerge in collaboration?

EVA KRAUS Kiesler designed exhibitions in which he was a contributor to the overall curatorial strategies. For the exhibitions of 1942 and 1947, he developed overall designs which dominated space and where the artwork formed part of that space. It was an extremely authoritarian attitude: for the artists, it meant their works had to be integrated into the space. In 1947, Kiesler invited artists to create objects directly for his overall design for the Salle de Superstition**. He insisted on artworks that did not need a base or a plinth, and which did not come in a rectangular frame. He wanted, he said, spherical objects which could be integrated into spherical space. He was interested in the expansion of classical artistic media, in the commingling of object and space.**

Already in the exhibition **Art of This Century**, the visitor had numerous possibilities to get closer to the artworks. In the Surrealist Gallery, hinging systems were used to present paintings at the best angle of observation, and in the Daylight Gallery, they could be touched and rearranged. In the **Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme**, there was even indoor rain. What are we to make of this kind of loose, open interaction between spectator and artwork?

EK At the time, this was very much part of the whole production. It was also part of contemporary art's provocation.

TILO SCHULZ There was a view that modern art could only be presented with modern means. For new art, new and different forms of presentations

had to be deployed. The general mood was in favor of this: artists as well as audiences overwhelmingly approved of the change in the exhibition space. Of course, there was a counter-opinion too, which saw Kiesler's work as 'over-staged.'

Did people in 1947 appreciate Kiesler's development of a radically new exhibition concept?

EK No, not really. It was generally seen as exciting, but the rupture introduced by its radical presentation strategies was not really recognized as such. The 1947 triumvirate of Breton, Duchamp and Kiesler was a highly unusual one, quite special. Breton designed the thematic 'course' which ran through the exhibition, laid out as a sort of initiation rite. Duchamp made it rain, Kiesler created rooms which were 'Gesamtkunstwerke' in themselves. The three complemented each other very well, in a quite complex way.

Cooperation

But didn't Kiesler's treatment of others' authorship play a decisive role in the creation of his 'Gesamtkunstwerke?' You could say that in these famous exhibition designs, Kiesler shamelessly appropriated artworks…

TS There are a lot of different kinds of authorship: there are the instructions of the commissioners, there are the various artistic concepts and then there is Kiesler himself, as designer and as artist. So authorship only exists in cooperation and you can't reduce all these aspects to a single element.

Yes, exactly: to understand it as a kind of game. But in an exhibition situation, it's a game on a large scale and it is not clear anymore who is the author, exactly. This doesn't just apply to the exhibition design or the artworks, but also the observer, i.e. the audience. To some degree, they themselves become part of the process.

TS But remember all this was taking place at a time when the white cube had not yet emerged as the dominant form. Kiesler allowed for a dynamic interaction between presentation, reception and authorship. There were still alternatives to the

development of the white cube doctrine, and to the idea of authorship it represents.

Of course, things could have developed quite differently: instead of artist-as-author, we might have moved towards an idea of group-representation, where it is unclear what or who is curator, theoretician, designer and artist—all these concepts are blurred in Kiesler's work. This might be a possible praxis even today, although on the whole it is not.

TS In some respects, these ideas have been repeatedly revisited. There are at least two recent examples of successful exhibitions of this kind: Eric Troncy's Dramatically Different **(1997) in Le Magasin in Grenoble and** Weather Everything **(1998) in the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst in Leipzig. In this latter exhibition the autonomous artwork in its usual form just wasn't present any more. Troncy developed an argument about the artwork, from its meaning and function, and from this the exhibition develops as a subtext, as narration.**

These days works in this kind of context are sometimes treated with a lack of sensitivity, they are really hammered into a curatorial concept.

TS Yes, everything depends on the sensibility of whoever is doing the organizing, whoever is developing the subtext. A purely formal approach doesn't work, and neither does the demotion of the artwork to a point where it just illustrates a particular theoretical position. You have to know the individual artwork and how it functions in the exhibition and both of these things have to be comprehensible within the context of the exhibition. Unfortunately, these days, this is very rarely the case. Just mixing together art works and aesthetic positions doesn't necessarily bring an increase in knowledge or a new kind of experience.

Perception in Motion

But the question is—how sensitive was Kiesler in this regard? By appropriating artworks to turn them into the building blocks of his 'Gesamtkunstwerk,' isn't

something forced onto the works in a way that isn't really fair to them? In this respect, wasn't a possible negative reception of Kiesler's exhibition architecture watered down by his theoretical formulations?

EK Of course in the context of Kiesler's exhibitions, artists' works take on different connotations—but this happens anyway, whenever a work is exhibited. For example, in his catalog entry in 1947, Kiesler says there were no misunderstandings at all between him and the artists. (A statement which I would interpret as ambiguous, incidentally.) He said he invited the artists to complete, to perfect the space, since he had already created the whole thing—as form and as content—specifically with them in mind. But the totally new thing was the relationship with the 'recipients' of the work: Kiesler really did offer the visitor the possibility of an enabling or an intensification of perception. To do so, he made the works much more directly accessible. But the setting he made for this new accessibility also had other qualities, including aesthetic and artistic ones. Kiesler staged space, and so in his work it remains, to some extent, a kind of scenery, a kind of decoration. This is the case, no matter how often it is denied.

But it's quite subjective, all the same.

EK Staging is always subjective, there is no neutrality—discussions about the white cube have shown this. But I want to emphasize again that the main characteristic of Kiesler's work is the way in which the artwork became part of the space in which the spectator moved. The spectator could touch the artwork and interact with it. This direct contact with the observer was essentially what it was all about. The work is precisely not made in order to hang on a white wall, at a distance from the observer. Kiesler repeatedly tried to take the work off the wall and bring it into the space of the observer.

TS But Kiesler, in spite of his sympathy with artists, broke, on the one hand, with the authority of the artist, and on the other hand, with the authority of the work. It was like he drowned them out with his

design, and then moved everything in the direction of the spectator.

So what changed exactly as a result of this shift towards the spectator? Does the spectator get more authority, something like that?

EK **'Authority' is not the right word here, I think. It's more like the spectator becomes part of the whole. This is made very clear in an early project of Kiesler's, the** Raumbühne **in Vienna in 1924. For this project, Kiesler broke with the usual, frontal, 'picture-frame' stage—instead, he designed a theatrical space in the round, where there is a unity between a centrally-located stage and the surrounding, circular seating plan. Kiesler's design made the boundaries between actors and audience fluid; this contrasts with the proscenium stage, where the spectator sits on one side and observes events taking place on the other side. Events could take place on either side, and so improvisational theater became possible and the spectator could become an active participant. In a similar way, the spectator in the gallery—for Kiesler and also for Duchamp—becomes, in a sense, the figure who completes the artwork.**

Does Kiesler's exhibition design enforce particular viewpoints too strongly? It seems unlikely that Kiesler's fundamental idea was one of an emancipated, independent spectator who could just come in and decide for himself how he wanted to look at a picture. I'm skeptical as to whether there is any real liberation going on here, since the nature of looking is laid down very strongly, albeit in a slightly different way than what had gone before. Shouldn't we actually be revealing these strong pre-determinations for people, showing them how the practice of exhibiting often contains authoritarian gestures—in display, in formalizations, in the way movement is captured in space?

EK **In this context, Kiesler was much more interested in the total effect of the physical space, with all its elements and perceptual aspects. He wasn't so much interested in individual elements or in the**

autarchic artwork. But having said that, the artwork was at the center of his design, and he tried to create a kind of directness, a proximity between works and observer. It was all about physical experience as a vehicle for reception. So Kiesler's work is a physical encounter, you might even say there is a kind of holistic perception which goes beyond the activation of basic retinal stimuli. We can see this clearly in his** Vision Machines**.

This is why Kiesler's manifestos don't describe fixed conditions, but instead changes and transitions between one state and another. We might also understand his exhibitions in this context, see them as a kind of arrangement through which one moves, whereby stasis is dissolved as one is moved from one state to the next. That also happens, Tilo, in your exhibition in the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig in 2007—there is a path through the exhibition and then at the end you have to go back in the other direction. It's almost a path of initiation: you go in and you come back out along the same course, but each time you see everything differently. In your exhibitions and your works, the role time plays in relation to space seems very interesting. Can the construction of space, with all its passages and thresholds, ultimately be understood as a question of time?

TS **In his texts of the 1930s and 1940s, Kiesler seized on the image of a society in permanent motion, and then he brought this image onto the theatrical stage. The mobility which is dominant outside must also be dominant inside, whether that is in the theater, in a window display or in an exhibition. Kiesler's focus on the window display has also to do with the fact that more and more people were passing display windows at a faster and faster pace. This feeds in a certain way into artspaces, in the attempt to bring a kind of slowness into the artspace, allowing more concentrated work and a re-focusing on the exemplary and the essential. There is something really decisive about this dislocation from everyday life—you can work in a concentrated way, you can force people to**

concentrate and to decelerate, to let reflection take over. It really works.

But doesn't this contradict Kiesler himself, to an extent? If you think of his apparently pragmatic technical solutions or of **Vision Machines**, you can't help thinking that these are not only playing with ideas of art, but ultimately also with the spectator. Isn't the kind of experience produced ultimately an oppressive one which forces the recipient into predetermined reactions, making him or her experience space in a very specific way? How do you both understand the use of speed and of perceptual experiments in today's curatorial design?

EK **With Kiesler, it is not about bringing speed into the exhibition space; it's about slowness. His designs included places to sit, so you could take your time in there. In one of his great sketches, the spectator is sitting on a swing. That is exactly what Kiesler wanted to achieve: a kind of lasciviousness, a pleasure in art, in contemplation … Deceleration is something that has been repeatedly striven for in exhibition contexts, right up to the present day. 'Reading rooms' and 'lounges' in exhibitions offer a place to linger. In 1947 in Paris, there was a library attached to the exhibition space, where visitors could read literature on the exhibition's themes.**

Between Theory and Practice

To raise another question: on the one hand, Kiesler wrote manifestos—texts saying what the world should look like—but on the other hand, his designs for chairs, or for his **Correalist Instrument** were done more spontaneously. How does his scholarly-scientific attitude fit together with these more intuitive gestures?

EK **His publications are manifestos, they not scholarly research in an ordinary sense. Kiesler used his interdisciplinary research in an associative and inspirational way. He was interested in filtering things down to their essences, and in communicating a vision. You can see this in the way one of his fundamental preoccupations—that human beings develop in the womb and that primitive man lived**

in caves—leads to his interest in spherical spaces. He was striving for fundamental forms, for basic human situations—and in this way calling attention to the most basic human needs.

How might we understand the relation of theory and practice in Kiesler's work? Did he need the manifestos for his creations to be fully functional?

EK **The visionary can express himself much more strongly and radically in a text or a manifesto than in an exhibition. But, for Kiesler, exhibition spaces were also model spaces for his thoughts on architectonics. They allowed him to test and to visualize his manifestos. For the most part, his vision was reduced by this transposition—this is why Kiesler put such emphasis on his texts, since there he could communicate more clearly and forcefully.**

TS **With Kiesler, there is always a mixture of analysis and intuition. There are points in his work where attempts at explanation just don't get you any further.**

How do you relate to Kiesler in your own projects, Tilo? In particular the exhibition **Formschön** (2007) in Leipzig, as well as your recent space-covering installation **Stage Diver** (2008) at the Secession in Vienna, carefully articulates the balances between display, space and parts of the exhibition—in Vienna the viewer becomes even more an actor in space. What can we learn from Kiesler today?

TS **When, back in 2003 the Kiesler-Stiftung gave me a research scholarship, in the next exhibition I held,** rebel inside (displaying Friedrich Kiesler), **I addressed in very concrete terms Kiesler's view of shop windows. By contrast,** Formschön **and** Stage Diver **are full of Kiesler's ideas, work with and through Kiesler, but do not talk about him. The physical experience of walking through, of penetrating** Formschön **focuses on giving food for thought, not on providing a themed experience. In** Stage Diver **the built architecture becomes the display, and it is this that first creates the context for the abstract drawings on**

the inside. The installation consists of three different forms of presentation: stage, cabinet, catwalk. In this way, I create a clear frame for the representation and not only activate the visitor in Kiesler's sense, but make them inseparable parts of the image, the idea and the exhibition.

If we look more closely at winners of the Kiesler Prize, it is striking that their approach generally comes from a single clear direction. This was not the case with Kiesler. How do you, Eva, explain this discrepancy?
EK The Kiesler Prize is awarded to architects and artists whose specific combination of theory and vision corresponds to Kiesler's interdisciplinary abilities. But there really just aren't that many of those kind of people any more. One person who occurs to me just now (and who is connected with the university here) is Peter Weibel—he is a good example of someone who doesn't confine his creativity within disciplinary boundaries. He has worked as an artist and as a curator, and in both areas, he has worked on a very wide range of themes. In his very active personality, too, he's quite similar to Kiesler. There aren't many people who cover the spectrum as broadly as that.

Did Kiesler's utopian demands change over time? Do the documents we have show a change in his viewpoints over the years?
EK Kiesler was constantly building new castles in the air. He was in tune with his time and so of course his visions changed over time. But he didn't call himself or his work into question, and he never substantially revised or revisited what he had previously said.

Correalism

What do you understand by the concept 'correalism?'
EK It's hard to pin down. In his creation and design, Kiesler was less concerned with surfaces than with continuities of interconnecting forces, a kind of field of energies. For the Art of This Century **in 1942, Kiesler designed the** Correalist Instrument**, a piece**

meant to be used both as a seat and as a device for presenting artworks. It was primarily a sculptural form, but it had many functions—these developed both in its design and in its later use. It could be sat on, laid down on, used as a platform. My son even used it as a slide. There are so many possibilities embodied in one simple object—there is a tension created by this multiplicity, but it also satisfies many basic human needs, whether for communication or for play. I think Kiesler's 'correalism' is ultimately best understood by means of this kind of object.

Kiesler was once asked the question what the **Correalist Instrument** actually was, and answered by saying: it could be a lot more than it already is. This seems to mean that in the end it is nothing specific, it does nothing specific. This unspecific specificity is ultimately what generates value for the object and makes it autonomous. Because the object does not have to fulfill any particular function, its sculptural qualities come to the fore and it really becomes an artwork.
TS That is what Kiesler is all about: he is a generalist, not a specialist. That meant he could be savagely criticized by specialists in every field he worked in. Ultimately he's a generalist who is just making structures which connect together all these different things and of course, as a generalist working in a specialist field, you're liable to be criticized by those already in that field. Kiesler is not a specialist and so in some ways he can't go so deeply into things. But in linking different things together, he revealed interconnections of meaning and function. This piece of furniture, the Correalist Instrument**, is a wonderful example of what Kiesler is all about. If you sit on it, at some point your back starts to hurt because it is definitely not a perfectly designed chair in ergonomic terms. And if you use it as a plinth, and put things on it, they don't rest very solidly on it. So in one way its possibilities are limited, but at the same time Kiesler brings these things together here in a living way, although without ever achieving the optimum in any one area.**

What about the thematization of movement in the **Correalist Instrument**? It seems like **Correalist Furniture** only becomes an instrument after it has been removed from the strongly narrativized context of an exhibition. Isn't it at this point that human beings become involved, whereas in the exhibition situation, the possibilities of interaction, and of relating to art, are much more strongly limited and regulated?
EK Well, like I already said, with Kiesler, there is a holistic approach, he affects the observer by means of images, sounds, light, haptic relations—the observer is always affected in some way, you can't shut it out completely. Here, you cannot separate interaction and involvement …

A final question: Very little of Kiesler's work has been preserved in its original form. Many things were meant to be temporary, or were simply never built. However, there was a reconstruction of his **City in Space** at the 10th Architecture Biennale in Venice. Among those seriously working on Kiesler, is there any interest in this kind of reconstruction, or is it just kitsch as far as you're concerned?
EK The Shrine of the Book **in Jerusalem is the only surviving testament to Kiesler's work in built form, but the** Endless House**, which was never built, was extremely influential in architectural history. The reconstruction of the 1925** City in Space **was an artistic-curatorial action started by the architects Wolf Prix, Hans Hollein and Gregor Eichinger. It is actually very important for research into Kiesler, because it forms part of a more general investiga-**

tion into his contemporary relevance. In this broad context, there are great similarities between writing, research and reconstruction. The Wittmann Möbelwerkstätten, for example, has made a re-edition of Kiesler's Party Lounge, a large sofa designed for numerous people. Kiesler's original was in black leather, but last year at an art fair, I saw an adaptation of the piece by Bjarne Melgaard, with radical drawings on the material. Kiesler's desire that his ideas would maintain a contemporary relevance—that they would be taken up and reworked again—is realized in this kind of project. I'm sure he would be very pleased that his designs have been picked up and further developed by subsequent generations. His ideas continue to have an effect on coming generations, they serve as inspiration to young people—this is something he valued very highly!**

Bruce Altshuler: The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century, New York 1994.

Dieter Bogner, Peter Noever (Eds.): Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space, Ostfildern-Ruit 2001.

Susan Davidson, Philip Rylands (Eds.): Peggy Guggenheim & Frederick Kiesler: The Story of Art of This Century, Ostfildern-Ruit 2004.

Barbara Lesák: Die Kulisse explodiert: Friedrich Kieslers Theaterexperimente und Architekturprojekte 1923–1925, Wien 1988.

Ilina Koralova/Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Tilo Schulz (Eds.): Formschön, Leipzig 2007.

Secession, Tilo Schulz (Eds.): Stage Diver, Wien 2008.

01 Photoshoot for a fashion magazine at the Surrealist Gallery, Art of This Century Gallery, 1942. Scan of an original page as published in 'Short Dresses ... Long Season,' Vogue, January 1, 1943.

02 Exhibition shot of the entrance at Tilo Schulz's 2007 solo exhibition Formschön at the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst in Leipzig. Fahne/Flag, 2007, wall painting, steel tube.

03 Presentation of ceramics by Ursula Fesca, 2007, with wall painting, wall text, steel tube. These draw a connection between the exhibition space and the entrance space.

Struc-Tube

George Nelson, Struc-Tube assembled set-up of the exhibition system, 1948. Struc-Tube was originally developed for the 'Prize-winning Work of Well-Known Contemporary Artists as Expressed in Greeting Card Design' exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, 1948.

In addition to using the Struc-Tube system developed by George Nelson in 1948 as a display system for the exhibition of his own works, the artist Martin Beck also assumes the role of service provider by offering to rent his reconstruction of the system for other exhibitions. He addresses this theme directly in his 2007 video (loop) **About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe**, which records a man and a woman assembling and dis-assembling the display system. The video depicts the relation of working conditions—both the easy-assembly Fordism of the Struc-Tube, and the contemporary precarity of the installers too busy to attend a union meeting—to the formal and aesthetic parameters of the exhibition system, as it was and in the present. This display system was constructed using the principles of simple and flexible structures built with simple, repetitive labour. This was still several decades before rubrics like 'post-Fordism' or 'post-Taylorism' came on the scene to describe changing working techniques. By using the Struc-Tube reconstruction as a tool, Beck makes the paradigms of contemporary work and modes of production visible—not just through the reconstruction but, to a greater extent, through the actual use of the system. Is a specific form of work determined by the system and are working conditions inscribed in specific technical or aesthetic structures?

Martin Beck

The Industrialization of Display Systems

DISPLAYER At the time of the Struc-Tube system's invention, exhibitions were a medium for mass communication. How do you understand the role of the designer within this system of communication and mediation?

MARTIN BECK In the case of George Nelson, the role is clearly that of an industrial designer whose job profile is defined by facilitating activities, enabling processes, or defining situations. Here, design is a tool for a contextual economy that is based on the functionalist credo of modernity. Within this economy, there is no difference between an exhibition system and a chair.

How much creative leeway can a designer have when he is dependent on a range of parameters and has to plan and design for a concrete context? In the 1940s and 50s, what conditions and demands affected exhibitions based on a specific display system?

This question can only be answered in relation to specific examples. Herbert Bayer's work on Road to Victory **or Paul Rudolph's on** Family of Man **are much more than just contract work. In these cases, the creative role was combined with a curatorial one. To a degree, the designer had an authorial role, beyond simply fulfilling commissioned tasks. In the case of Struc-Tube, there was, presumably, a very clear design briefing, which would have emphasized spatial independence, weight, flexibility and simplicity in assembly. But then, the Nelson office's interest in systemic questions of exhibition practice went beyond the immediate requirements of the greeting card company which originally commissioned Struc-Tube. Nelson's designs for the** Good Design **exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art immediately after the war attest to taking pleasure in experimentation and to a dynamic exchange** between commercial exhibitions, information exhibitions and the museum's curatorial ambition in regard to the design field.

What kind of contextual relationship is created when a designer prefixes the phrase 'in social communication' with 'the artist,' and presents the two concepts on a postcard which is reconfigured as an aesthetic object? Did Nelson expect a 'social activity' from the artist which he himself could not deliver, and which he in fact presented as a commodity? Is this a form of 'social communication' as exhibit, as commodity?

One has to distinguish very clearly between different functions and meanings of 'the social.' A temporal distinction as well as a discursive one is necessary—one has to keep in mind that modern theories of communication were systematically advanced only in the early 1950s. One also has to bear in mind the differences between fields of production. Nelson was an industrial designer, not an artist. Unlike other modern icons, who worked both in design and in art (Herbert Bayer comes to mind), Nelson defined his field very clearly and had no ambitions to cross its boundaries. Nelson came from a genuine American design tradition (that of Walter Dorwin Teague, Raymond Loewy, etc.), which understood modern thought and action as an industrial challenge. As far as I can tell, Nelson was not trying to address the artist vs. designer question. This question only arises when the Struc-Tube communication model is transposed into the present. Only then is a rupture inscribed within the discourse of 'social communication.' It is not present at the historical moment itself. This transposition, and the consequent rupture, produces a transhistorical discourse that is dependent on historical precision as well as on the friction that emerges in the process of translating from one period to another. It is at this point that the notion of 'social communication' begins to speak differently; it is at this point that roles become negotiable, and a new discourse becomes possible. None of this is 'contained within' the exhibition system itself, these things are activated by present-day artistic praxis. I don't see how this discourse could be projected back into history. Why should it be?

Given its flexibility, simplicity and modularity, can we understand the Struc-Tube system as a kind of democratization of the exhibition? This democratization would be on two levels: first, the system's simplification of the administration of exhibitions, which takes them out of the hands of privileged institutions, and second, the creation of a kind of equivalence between the objects within an exhibition.

One has to distinguish between the exhibition system itself and its conceptual effects. These are quite different things that easily get mixed up. The pragmatic approach of the Struc-Tube system improved on the logistics of exhibiting. So, in a sense, it made the system autonomous. In this way, exhibitions could become a 'modern agent,' liberated from earlier conventions. However, I am skeptical as to whether one can understand this as democratization. Liberating the exhibition from the spatial constraints of the physical space comes at a price: the system is a typical product of Taylorist work organization and its drive for increased efficiency. This dynamic cannot be disregarded or hidden. If there is something like a democratization, it is a paradoxical one, constituted simultaneously by utopian and dystopian moments. Exhibition systems liberate by regulating, and they regulate by liberating. The emancipated spectator is the guided consumer and the guided consumer is the emancipated spectator.

Although in the end the system did not make a commercial breakthrough, it did have an impact on the spatial organization of exhibitions. Its promise of flexibility and mobility freed the exhibition from pre-existing spatial parameters. What ambitions did Nelson have for the system and why did it not become more widely established?

Nelson's ambition, inasmuch as one can speculate about it, was definitely focused on the notion of flexibility; a flexibility demanded by the client as the exhibition for which Struc-Tube was originally developed was intended to travel to department stores and exhibition spaces all over the United States. Similarly, we can only speculate as to why Struc-Tube did not become a commercial success. It may have been cost factors, technical problems such as lacking surface hardness (due to the basic anodizing techniques of the late 1940s), the panel format's 'flattening out' of the exhibition content, or perhaps simply lack of interest on the client's end. But what was established nevertheless was the conceptual logic of the system: a Cartesian spatial model built on the basis of connector joints. This logic would pervade all exhibition systems of the 1950s and culminate in Konrad Wachsmann's 'universal joint.' Nelson himself successfully used the Cartesian connector joint logic in a furniture system as well as in his 'jungle gym' display at the American National Exhibition **in Moscow in 1959.**

At first, the system appears to enable a spatially infinite information organization, but on closer inspection, the massive limitations built into the system are all too apparent. Is this why the system is seen differently today than at the time of its invention? What position did Nelson himself have on this problem?

Today, the system can be understood by means of its historical context: one can see it as a model which, in today's language, submits the exhibition to a geometric grid. Within that logic, a certain performativity is encouraged, but others are excluded; this is exactly how systems-based thought works. Historically, Struc-Tube should also be understood in the context of architectural debates of the time, debates related to so-called 'pattern science' and, more concretely, to what is ironically called 'filing cabinet modernism.' Perhaps the clearest illustration of what such systems can do—and what they can't do—was put forth thirty years later in the work of the Italian

design collective Superstudio: in their projects, the image of the grid contains both the utopia of liberation and the scenario of the prison. Another example of this logic is Archizoom Associati's No-Stop City. In this project, the paradoxical consequences of an all-encompassing grid appear at the level of an ironic infrastructure: a toilet every few hundred meters.

Conditions of Work

The Struc-Tube system allows only very limited choice and action, both to the 'worker' and the 'exhibition.' But in your video **About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe**, there is a rupture within this systemically-determined realm of action, when the appearance of a trade union organizer seems to hold out the possibility of changing current conditions. How do you regard the possibility of workers' emancipation, both at the moment of Struc-Tube's invention, and today?

I don't think I'm qualified to answer a question about the emancipation of the worker. You'd have to ask a labor historian for that. With regard to the video work, I understand, of course, the activist's appearance during installation and de-installation labor as the irruption of the social into the well-oiled Taylorist production machine. What's important to me is that the intervention happens twice in precisely the same way, as if the first time had never taken place. This doubling has a certain absurdity, but it also complicates the whole thing: it raises it from the level of activism to that of metaphor. For me, this is the moment at which it becomes exciting from an artistic perspective, because here the social can be negotiated as a form, and vice versa.

There is a 1956 film by Ray and Charles Eames in which their 'lounge chair' is put together and then dismantled. That film has a similar structure to **About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe**, for example in the symmetry of construction and dismantling. In the Eames film, there is also an interruption of work, but it is a

moment of 'leisure time' and does not—as in your work—suggest the possibility of political action.

The consumption of leisure time can also be a political action. In my video work, one does not see what the two workers do between installation and de-installation. Maybe they relax in Eames Lounge Chairs? The Eames film is great, of course, and has a beautiful relation to my work. But there is one important difference: the basic distinction between an armchair and an exhibition. Although the chair in the Eames film is dismantled, that is not what you normally do with furniture. Furniture generally remains in its assembled form, whereas the exhibition is a temporary form. So the movement of assembly and de-assembly has a different dynamic here as well as a different meaning.

The title **About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe** is also taken from an Eames film, **Powers of Ten**. What is the connection between your work and this film? Both of them seem to be about measurements and models, about evaluating viewpoints and standpoints.

I took the title of my video work from the subtitle of Powers of Ten**, a film which was a great inspiration for me, along with another film from that period, Michael Snow's** Wavelength**. The movement of the camera in the Eames film, the way it measures, is closely connected with vision and perception. The film shows how scale impacts our construction and understanding of the world. What interested me was the question whether these shifts in vision and perception could be transferred to the relation between history and the present: the movement from detail to overview and back as movement in time, as a motif within a reorganization of time.**

You also investigate the administrative and bureaucratic level—the hidden side—of an exhibition: your work asks questions about spatial relations, but also reveals the relations of work which help create this space. Why does Nelson's Struc-Tube system demonstrate these kind of relations in such an exemplary way?

Nelson's Struc-Tube is important for this debate because it was a prototype for many kinds of modularized exhibition systems and thus is emblematic for broader trends in the development of systems of display. In my work, it functions as a kind of homogeneous sign that is capable of translating a historical paradox into a visual form—the paradox being the way emancipatory scenarios and control apparatuses mutually produce and condition each other. This paradox continues to be of fundamental importance today.

Today, we would probably call these kind of work relations 'post-Fordist.' So is Nelson's system a prefiguration of post-Fordism? At the time of the Struc-Tube system, were dispositifs already emerging for which there was, as yet, no concept? Is there a certain belatedness and dis-simultaneity at work here?

On principle, I don't believe in 'prefigurings' in terms of historical development. That would be audacious. What interests me more is, to put it in Foucauldian terms, the way that history is invented on the basis of a political reality, and then in turn a new politics can be invented on the basis of historical truth. This, one could also translate into the fields of economy and administration. Foucault's writing contains the concept of 'rupture,' but also the idea of the 'rumor' or of murmuring. They accumulate within periods of apparent temporal continuity, as events gradually form into utterances and utterances thicken into discourses. These are slow processes that can only be perceived in retrospect. This is what Foucault calls the rumor of, or in, the archive. The things that become apparent through the Struc-Tube exhibition model—the things that find their form in this system—are first, the latent reorganization of work and work relations, and second, the modern dream of unleashing the communicative potential of the exhibition for the purpose of commerce.

Which developments can be concretely discerned here and how are they inscribed in, and made visible by, the Struc-Tube system?

Most concretely Taylorism, a management theory which aims at the optimization of work processes. Struc-Tube's great advantage—and this is why the system is so important—is not only that it can be constructed without tools but that it can be constructed without any previous knowledge. This fact changes work and work relations, with considerable consequences.

Reconstruction as a Tool

Does the transposition and reconstruction of this system in the circumstances of our own time allow us to perceive typical arrangements of labor in the present day?

Well, the term 'reconstruction' always makes me a bit nervous. In the field of art, 'the praxis of reconstruction' often leads to methodological confusions, which, as re-creation of historical artifacts or costume dramas, always seem to have an audience. But I don't think much is gained by this, except maybe a nostalgic moment. For my work on Struc-Tube, reconstruction was only a tool that does not mean much when taken by itself. The interesting thing is what you do with it. This is a key distinction: reconstruction is an important concept, but only as a tool, not as a method. Tools enable you to do something—if I 'reconstruct' a hammer, I am less interested in what it looks like, but more in the fact that I am able to hammer in a nail. One frequent problem in the art world is that people assume the reconstruction of historical objects (especially design objects) and events can tell you something per se. I don't agree with that. It may look intriguing, but I think art can do more than that. Form is central, but it is not an end in itself. Struc-Tube as an exhibition system doesn't have inherent contemporary relevance—it's usable, absolutely, but it does not have that kind of actuality. If we consider the labor relations inscribed into the system, then the system becomes interesting, because we can see how

social changes become manifest in form and, vice versa, how an apparently abstract form can generate social relations. This is the point where it becomes exciting for me from an artistic point of view. Here the engagement with Struc-Tube goes beyond the field of design history; it becomes a methodological apparatus within a broader framework of artistic practice. It is an apparatus that allows for thinking anew the relationship between past and present, for seeing it afresh, and for generating new images for how to think about this relationship.

What does this recourse to history then make possible? Like I said, historical reference is a tool which helps in articulating something about the construction of the present. Of course I do also have a certain interest in this 'as a historian'—although I am not an expert in that field. My historical interest focuses on a specific moment in the history of industrialization of display systems. I am interested in how, at this historical moment, two apparently contradictory movements interact—on the one hand, the utopian

vision of infinite dissemination of information (expandability, portability) and, on the other, the administration of this utopia by means of a rigid geometry (with all its discursive connotations). Struc-Tube is the system which set off the modularization of exhibitions; the system which liberated the exhibition from physical space; the system that is based on a single 'thing.' This 'thing'—which is also a form—is the connecting element, the connector joint. The connector joint is a perfect manifestation of social utopia, administrative control, and formal knowledge.

E-mail interview, November and December 2008.

Julie Ault, Martin Beck: Critical Condition: Selected Texts in Dialogue, Essen 2003.

Martin Beck: About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe, London 2007.

Martin Beck: an Exhibit viewed played populated, Frankfurt am Main 2005.

Charles & Ray Eames: Eames Lounge Chair, documentary film, 2 min, 1965.

Charles & Ray Eames: Powers of Ten, documentary film, 9 min, distribution: IBM, 1977.
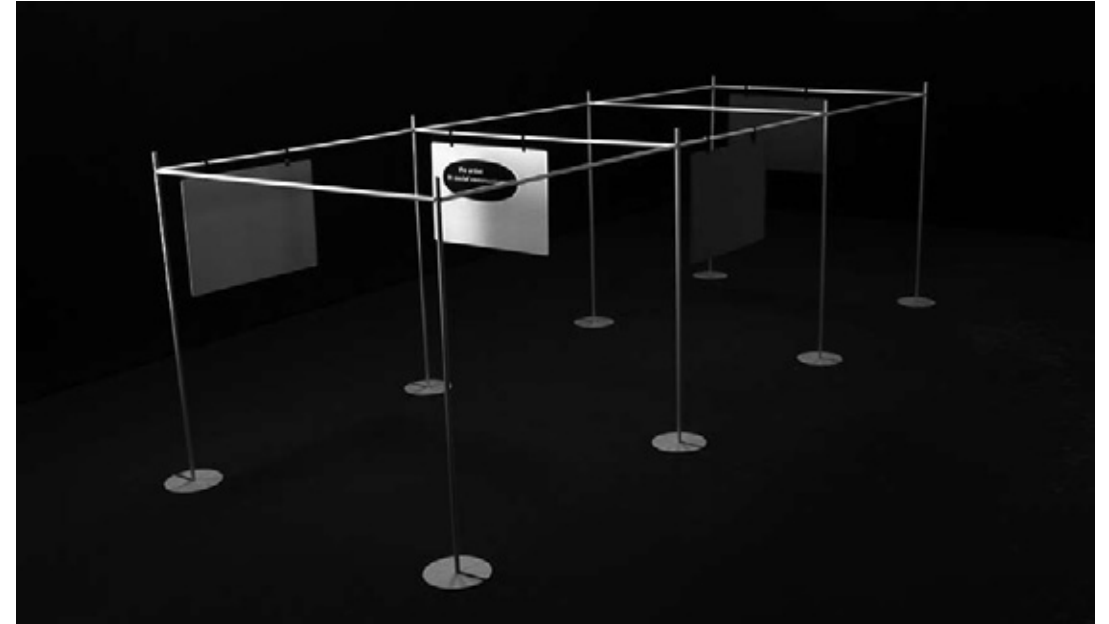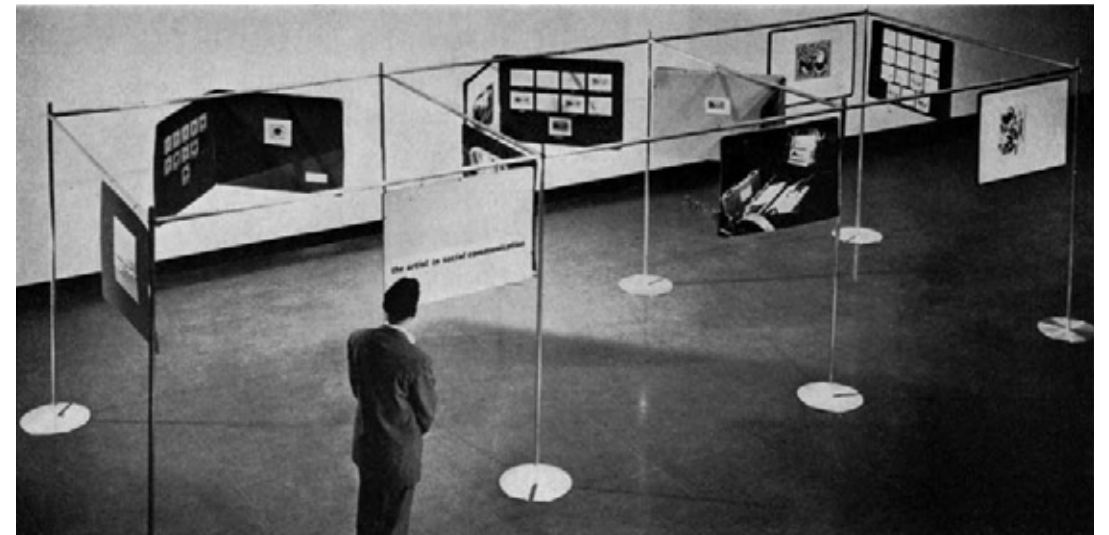
George Nelson: Display, New York 1953.

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01 George Nelson, Struc-Tube exhibition system, 1948. Components of a basic set-up.
02–03 Martin Beck, stills from About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe, HD Video, 2007.

04 Martin Beck, stills from About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe, HD Video, 2007.
05 George Nelson, Struc-Tube exhibition system, 1948. Photograph of a basic set-up assembled

Garden of Cosmic Speculation

Charles Jencks showing The Garden Of Cosmic Speculation, Portrack, Scotland, in March 2009. View of his Snail Mound and Snake Mound.

Originating from his critique of a Modernist movement grown reductive and minor, positioning himself as its revisionist, Charles Jencks kept up the one and only defiant attitude one can have towards architectural, artistic and natural science dogmas since his undergraduate days: that of an eagerly interested amateur (note: 'amateur' is derived from the French for 'lover'). Informed by his biographical pathway, Jencks' theories could be situated within the oscillation between humanities and natural sciences, letting the following questions emerge: does the interest in the natural sciences evolve directly out of the critique of modernism? Is the amateur-role a perceptual framing, one that is advantageous for a designer? Is the **Garden of Cosmic Speculation** a sculpture of a postmodern mind? The garden design is constantly challenged by nature, which in turn forms a genuine part of its design. How does the garden art relate to the speed of the evolution of scientific knowledge, the decline and birth of new scientific hypotheses? To what extent is the garden a criticism of science? An amateur—or one could say a 'perceptual gardener' in regard to Jencks—wants to be in constant interaction with the objects of his fascination. What follows is a snapshot of Charles Jencks' cultivation of all his beloved matter. The following talk was already out of date the day it was recorded: Jencks is keenly aware of the temptation to cover objects of knowledge and living practices with academic dust, and is determined to resist this process.

Charles Jencks

'I am an amateur of science.'

DISPLAYER Charles, I suggest we begin with your biography: You started studying literature and then you moved on to architecture. Nowadays it seems as if your theoretical engagement is mainly focused on physics. Can your biography be described as a move from Humanities to Natural Sciences?

CHARLES JENCKS Not quite, but maybe it looks like that. I started studying literature at Harvard—undergraduate—and then changed to architecture. I graduated from Harvard Graduate School of Design as an architect. Harvard at that moment was too divided into specializations and that fragmentation was dampening the students' spirit. It was a sad situation. Walter Gropius was still in the background in 1961 and he was an unhappy-looking man, something that didn't square with the early Bauhaus spirit of play and creative energy.

So Gropius wasn't Paul Klee's 'Silver Prince' anymore?
No, he was more a Frozen Prince speaking and writing clichés. He led The Architects Collaborative (TAC) which was not a very progressive architectural firm. He designed the Pan Am Building in New York and the Playboy Club in London—second-rate work from a formerly first-rate mind. He was in his Late American period, something I criticized, and out of this critique emerged, later, my books on post-modernism and critical modernism. These came because I experienced, first-hand, modernism in its death-throes. When I arrived, the modern movement was over the hill. Gropius had educated a series of American formalists: Victor Lundy, Paul Rudolph, Philip Johnson, I.M. Pei, Ulrich Franzen, etc.—maybe seven of the ten top American practitioners. But, however famous, they produced minor and reductive work. One decline of the modern movement starts from within Harvard, and I could see and feel it. Then I came to London in 1965, got a PhD and stayed.

Did your interest in Natural Sciences evolve directly out of your critique of modernism?
No, science came later. In the Sixties I was just highly critical of the modern movement for its bigness and bureaucratic smugness. Like Team 10 [a group of architects, existing from 1953 to 1981], which I admired, I was a revisionist of modernism at that time—Aldo van Eyck became a friend later. He and Charles Correa, for example, also questioned modern architecture at Harvard when I was there. Charles was a young Bombay architect, highly critical of Le Corbusier's work in India, and his heavy concrete architecture (although he was also following it). Correa could see how this kind of architecture was a thermal nightmare. You heat it up during the day, and then at night it roasts the inhabitants.

It is astonishing that your interest in Natural Sciences didn't evolve out of your theoretical engagement with modernism and not—as it happened—post-modernism.
If you look at early modernism from 1895 to 1920 it was really interested in cosmology and in a creative, poetic response to science (as you can see with early Kandinsky, Mondrian, the Constructivists and Expressionists, not to mention the Theosophists). Although I am highly critical of high- and late-modernism, I have never impugned the early modern movement. I became more focused on science in the early 1980s, when designing our house in London with my late wife, Maggie Keswick Jencks. This house is called The Cosmic House or The Thematic House or The Time House. The aim was to deal with what happens to design and architecture when religion declines—and other things disappear with it. Architects are thrown into confusion about representation, ornament, metaphor—all the preoccupations of post-modernism at that moment. So my book Towards a Symbolic Architecture **posed a big question that still exists. What should architecture be about in a period when religion is over, or has lost its creative credibility? Since the arts always have this freedom to present content—and**

cannot escape representation even when they try—what can it be about? The cosmos was what was left after 'the long withdrawing roar' of religion. The London house has a cosmic plot, an early version of the** Garden of Cosmic Speculation**, but carried out with architecture. The central spiral stairs are the sun well (with 52 steps, each with 7 divisions, etc). Opposite is the moon well, and then a black hole and all that. These cosmic universals, or icons, are there, but in their first stage of development. The book argues that we need a new cosmology, a new science, to root us in the universe and give us an iconology; historically, architecture has always played this role.**

Do you think your interest in cosmology is a by-product of Lyotard's famous slogan about the 'end of all metanarratives?'
Yes and no. In another book I wrote—Adhocism (1972)—**I have a chapter called 'The Pluralist Universe or Pluriverse' (one of the first expressions of the 'multiverse,' but of course only a guess on my part). There you can see a collage of reports on cosmology ('Doubts About the Big Bang' contain my ideas of the Steady Bang, etc). I always had an interest in science but I am, according to the French derivation, an amateur: a 'lover' of science. I am certainly not a professional scientist, although I work with and respect them. The problem with professionals is that they get locked into the prison of the whole system, (by tenure, by peer review and the necessary controls). They have trouble thinking outside the box of their paradigms. I had a little discussion with Lyotard, a horribly sad but funny meeting—a BBC Radio interview. We had been trying to meet for twenty years, but failed. And so I started with the question: 'How post-modern to meet you on the radio!' And continued: 'You say, that post-modernism is the end of meta-narratives, whereas for me it is their proliferation. Not their end, but their runaway plurality. Furthermore, I believe that we have a new meta-narrative: the story of the universe, over 14 billion years.' He did not disagree**

with this, but also did not see how it had any cultural implication or could orient a global culture. The meta-narratives he was questioning concerned progress, growing scientific power, the meta-narrative of the West and super-modernism. Our interview was becoming a good dialogue when—after only ten minutes—there was a knock on the door. A BBC reporter said 'Sorry, we have rented this cabin to someone else, you will have to leave.' And so we never continued our discussion—broken by the media-circus at just the high point—a very post-modern frustration.**

What, as a designer, could be the advantage for you of being an amateur of science?
Design for me has to be double-design. You have to design the thing functionally and formally, of course, and then have to design the critique of the representation. In the garden here, for instance, there is a Black Hole Terrace for eating on, sitting on, and oriented north, etc. Beyond these concerns, if you are designing with such a metaphor as a black hole, you have to question what it really is, in the universe, and not just accept the representations of scientists. Are the metaphors for blackness and hole-ness pertinent? Final? Complete? The answers I came to were yes and no. Thus there are little black 'rips in space-time' that radiate from this terrace and go through the garden (the hole-ness). And the distortions and warps of gravity pull you in. But also I conceived black holes in new images and tropes, as 'Invisibilia.' They can be thought of as invisible bodies that pull galaxies together and unite all space-time—creating stars, planets and us—not just destructive and devouring 'holes.' So you see design is also a symbolic critique and creativity. Form follows double-design.

When we entered this room you said that you need to write books to know what you think.
Yes. In that respect Le Corbusier is a very interesting case. We now know that he would give a lecture before he knew what he meant, and work it out

on his feet. Actually Rem Koolhaas does this, and maybe most people? In a way you do not fully know what you mean until you have to say it, or write it down. You have half-baked ideas, embryonic ones that develop when you give a lecture or write or justify what you do. When you are interacting with an audience you are pushed several steps forward. This certainly happened with my thoughts on post-modernism. In the beginning I said: post-modernism is like defining women as non-men, absurd. It does not tell you anything positive, or where you are going: it is an evasive term. In 1975, when I gave lectures on post-modernism around the world, the audience was ahead of me, pulling words out of my mouth. In dialogue you say things which you do not say in monologue. This is not my theory; it is from Mikhail Bakhtin's thoughts on The Dialogic Imagination.

Your dialogue with physics, how was that structured—which people did you meet, which books did you read? **Since 1986 I started becoming more systematic about physics, and very much interested in the Santa Fe Institute. It was set up by three Nobel prize winners, among them Murray Gell-Mann and Phil Anderson: not Mies' 'less is more' but Anderson's 'more is different.' They successfully theorized and described what they called 'the sciences of the 21st Century.' These are basically the complexity sciences, nonlinear dynamics, the sciences of self-organizing systems.**

Could it be what you described with metaphysics? **Yes, it is meta-physics—quite literally. It is about interpreting the object-level of physics as being one of the most important of contemporary pursuits. What do they (contemporary pursuits) mean? What is the significance of quantum and chaos theories—for us especially? But physics is not the preeminent science anymore, as it has been, for so long under modernism. If architecture was the mother of the arts [laughs], then physics was the daddy of sciences. That led to what is called physics-envy by** other scientists, like biologists. But now it is clear that the sciences are truly multi-layered to each other, and semi-autonomous. There is no mother, there is no real 'Theory of Everything.' That phrase is old-hat (to mix a metaphor) penis-envy. Martin Rees, a friend and head of the Royal Society, has just written about that. The 'Theory of Everything' is hubristic and, if discovered, will only be the theory of one percent of the sciences. It would not determine the others, which emerge from physics. Basically I believe the sciences do hang together and that the new sciences of complexity and self-organizing systems are the post-modern ones, because they come historically on the scene after the modern Newtonian 'sciences of simplicity' (Physics preceding Complexity II as coined by the Santa Fe Institute). That is what I argue in The Jumping Universe, **but of course in the end there is only one science, and one universe, and it is the latter not the former which is the referent.**

This is probably the reason why your **Garden of Cosmic Speculation** has to be called a post-modern garden. **Yes, absolutely. But because during the last couple of years there was a problem with the word 'post-modern,' I have left it at the door. As you might know, for the seventh edition of** The Language of Post-Modern Architecture, **2002, I changed the name of the book to** The New Paradigm in Architecture. **Now, with the revival of post-modernism in orna-mented and iconic building, I may go back to the term post-modernism. And even drop the hyphen, which I have kept to underline the pluralism.**

Maybe your **Garden of Cosmic Speculation** is not only a post-modern garden but a sculptured post-modern mind, represented in that garden structure. **I have no objection to that. I have not thought about it in that way, but I do not disagree.**

And maybe your garden is a PPS: a Personal Positioning System.

I like that, too. That is very good. Yes to both, but there is only one thing that I want to point out. When I do a work, I have to research like mad what the subject is about. Not just the formal and functional possibilities of the project, but the referent of the underlying metaphor. Thus with the Cell and Life project at Bonnington, I have to understand life at the cutting edge. Peter Eisenman once said to me: 'Charles, I like what you do, but can't you get rid of all that cosmology rubbish?' I laughed—just like you guys laugh now—and said: 'Peter, give me a break.' There are some people who think my double-design is a sort of shadow-boxing, but it is not. Half of what you see in the garden—or in my design in general—would not exist, without a content-driven design. When I write it up I focus on the content, and leave the formal analysis implicit for others to discover.

How does your garden art relate to the speed of the evolution of scientific knowledge? **Life is short; even contrary to Hippocrates, art is also short; science is long. Science is the longest unbroken meditation on the universe. Scientific theories, that have been around for two thousand years still work—better or worse—but they work: Newtonian gravity still works for 99 percent of space exploration. Of course, there is also progress and change in science. When I showed my** Universe Cascade **to Roger Penrose, he said: 'What happens when your concrete version of superstrings is shown to be mistaken?' I answered that the mistakes will date the building exactly to the time when we got it wrong.**

Your garden seems not only to be a representation of scientific knowledge, but also—sometimes—a criticism of scientific knowledge. **Definitely. Often the metaphors of contemporary science are like George W. Bush on a bad day. We have to stand up against such phrases of contem-porary metaphysics as the 'selfish genes' of Richard Dawkins. We use figures of speech and then they use us. The standard model of Dawkins & Co. is** that we are robot vehicles for our 'selfish genes.' If you think that you are a robot vehicle and I am a Warholian machine, what kind of relationship will we have? That of bumper cars? Two robot vehicles driven blindly by our selfishness to compete until we have a pile-up? Obviously we are going to have a nasty relationship. First, it is not a good metaphor for living entities, and second as wrong scientifically as saying we are driven by altruistic genes. It is a similar Bushian metaphor to the 'Big Bang.' That one was inadvertently invented by Fred Hoyle as derision, as a critique. But the problem here was that scientists and clerics took over Hoyle's derisive metaphor. 'Yes,' Gamow and other cosmologists answered, 'that is what it was, a Big Bang.' The Pentagon likes this image and explanation, and the Vatican also, because it gives God the big button. Ninety-nine percent of scientists still say, unselfcon-sciously, that the universe started in a big bang as if your mother were a firecracker. Yet the origin was not big and not a bang—no one heard it. It was the size of a quark and, according to inflation theory, this runaway event expanded faster than the speed of light, resolving the balance between all the forces. This was quite a miracle that ought to be celebrated, allowing us to be here talking about it. Instead of capturing our birth with adolescent terms we might grow up. 'Hot stretch' is one metaphor I have used, but there are probably better ones waiting to be designed. Thus double-design. You have to critique the Pentagon metaphors, stand up to the scientific culture and then get on with the invention of new tropes and visual metaphors. Figures of speech really do matter, they speak us, you speak through them—they are all we can say as we explain to each other how things are.

Could one say that your garden represents a universe beyond the 'Universal Darwinism' of Dawkins? **Yes, definitely, it is an attack on Darwinian funda-mentalism; not the universal aspect of Darwin, but reductive science. Natural selection and genes are part of evolution, which is why I have designed many**

DNA models in various gardens (and several for James Watson); but these aspects have to be put in much larger contexts, of ecology and the workings of the cell, respectively. They are hardly determinative of life or evolution, as many believe. A friend of mine, Ian Hamilton Finlay, had a garden about thirty miles from here which I used to visit. He said: 'A garden is not only a retreat, it is an attack.' That is true as he showed a garden can be an attack on the reductive views of nature and culture that dominate us.

In your book **The Garden of Cosmic Speculation** you mention that serious garden art is not only about beauty, but also about terror. What is the terror element in your garden that makes it a serious garden art?
That is for you to discover. But there are many catastrophes, planned and accidental, and a Garden of Death. Things that destroy what I am doing are part of the plot, the way nature beats me and kills me, a little terror.

It seems to me that your garden is a representation of a very big scale and a very small scale. But what about the middle range between the biggest and smallest phenomena, e.g. societies, populations, etc.?
I take your point, but this middle range is in development. In other work, for instance Italy and Germany, there are parts which have to do with identity. Near

Altdöberner Lake—Niederlausitz, Germany—all the destroyed villages become part of the plot. In the end, it does matter how an artist or an architect cuts the cake, and it is one of our freedoms.

What do you think is missing in your garden? What needs still to be done?
A lot of the middle level and a lot of planting: I am somewhat happy with the plan, the bones of the garden, its overall structure. Now you can begin to understand how the garden fits together on a basic narrative and visual route. Then it is a question of filling it out, and knowing when to stop—but that is up to subsequent generations.

The conversation took place at Charles Jencks' **Garden of Cosmic Speculation** in Portrack, Scotland on February 22, 2009.

Michael Holquist (Ed.): The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin, Austin 1981.

Charles Jencks, Nathan Silver: Adhocism, New York 1972.

Charles Jencks: The Architecture of the Jumping Universe, London and New York 1995.

Stephen Jay Gould (Ed.): The Book of Life, London and New York 1993.

Hilary Rose, Steven P. R. Rose (Eds.): Alas, Poor Darwin: Arguments Against Evolutionary Psychology, London 2000.

Allen Weiss: Unnatural Horizons: Paradox and Contradiction in Landscape Architecture, New York 1998.
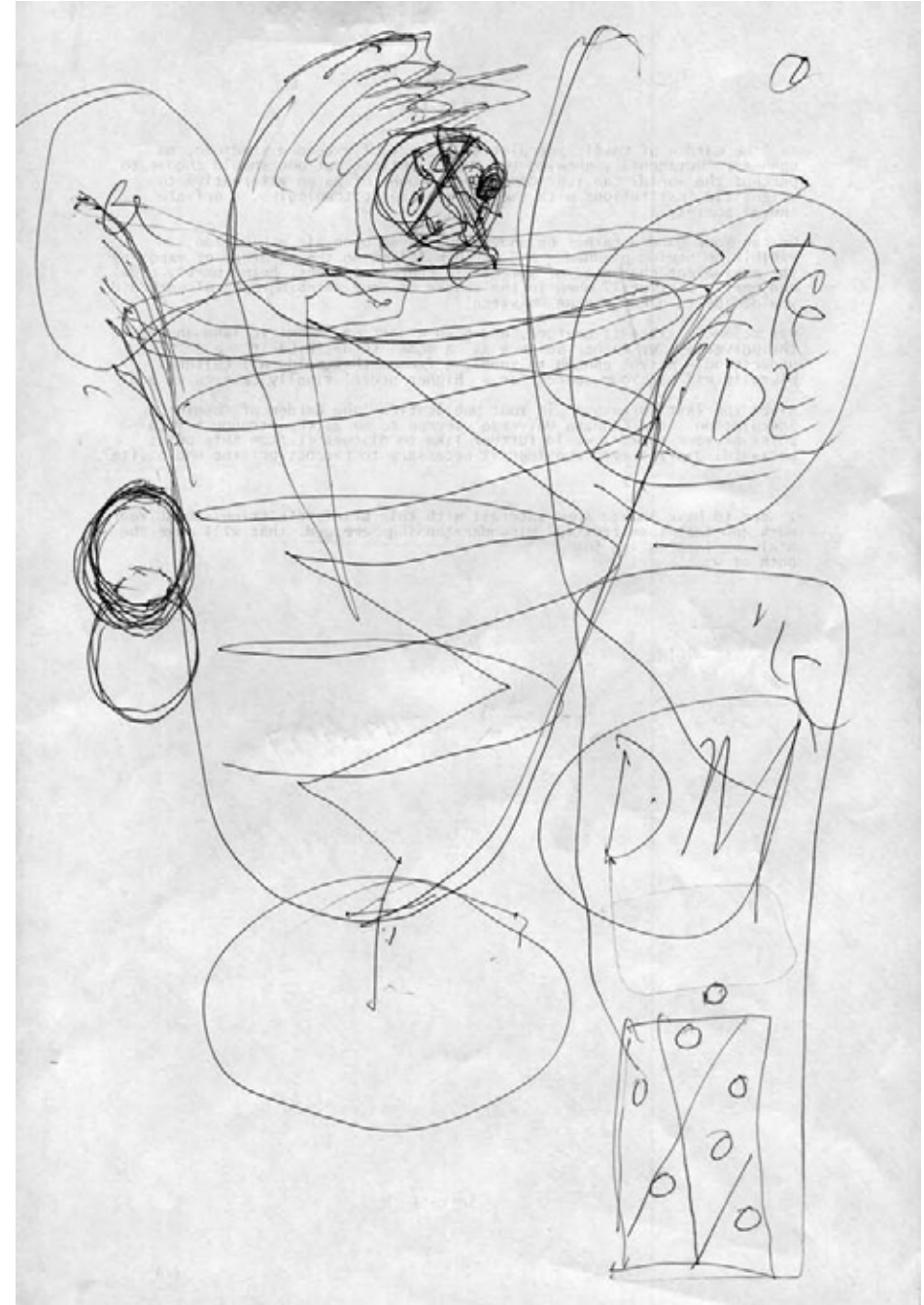
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01 Charles Jencks, Untitled. Guiding tunnel - part of the later-laid main path through The Garden of Cosmic Speculation, Portrack, Scotland, 2009.

02 Charles Jencks, The Unconscious. One exhibit in the yet-unfinished first part of a later main path through The Garden of Cosmic Speculation, Portrack, Scotland, 2009.

03 Charles Jencks remembering Paul Davies' drawing of the universe 20 years ago (vase-form). The name of the piece is Model for Memories of the Future, planned for Altdoebern + Greifenhainersee (hand-form). The drawing is sketched in Portrack, Scotland, in March 2009.

Re-Reading Space

Dancers performing Plaza Minuet in the post-modern lobby of the American headquarters of Deutsche Bank in New York in 2007. They are instructed by the artist Pablo Bronstein and the choreographer Hilary Nanney, forming a conscious contrast to the everyday pedestrians, who move freely in this semi-public space.

Katrin Mayer, passer qc en revue, Bibliothekswohnung, Berlin 2008, detail.

For many artists the exhibition space has become a source for producing works that 're-read' or introduce additional layers into the site of the work. In Katrin Mayer's and in Pablo Bronstein's practices, this notion of re-reading is prevalent. Based on thorough research into the particular historical and contextual conditions of a site, they produce new works specifically for each show. Mayer selects specific image and text material accumulated during her research and combines it in wall displays in the exhibition site. Deploying the grid structure, the ambiguity of words and various ways of constructing meaning through reading across the surface are suggested. This writing with pictures simultaneously marks the space and inserts differences, in close connection to the artist's engagement with theories of gender and identity. In Pablo Bronstein's work, architecture appears as a backdrop to the performance of citizenship and gender, particularly as it has been represented through certain behavioral codes in the 18th century and in post-modernism. Thus the moment of queer comportment refers back to the culture of 'sprezzatura,' which means acting in a light-mannered way without betraying any effort and is simultaneously related to conscious role-playing games in today's society. Architecture is proposed as a display of culture and existing relations of power and is the overarching element in his cross-media work. In view of the different spatial characters of the two artists' work, it becomes relevant to ask what significance notions of space, objecthood and the viewer have. How do the artists make use of performative strategies to enhance their ideas on staging and re-reading?

Pablo Bronstein

Pablo, part of your last show at Franco Noero in Turin in 2008, **Palaces of Turin**, were your drawings of important buildings in the city of Turin. How did this project start?

PABLO BRONSTEIN One of the starting points was the Palazzo Madama and its most famous element—the façade as a flat image and one that is replicated through the city in various architectural variations. This palace and the gallery building I was working in share one architectural idea: the grandness of the principal façade versus the extreme thinness of the interior. The exhibition was structured so that there was a different work on each floor. And each work is dealing with a different palace or building or site in Turin. As the exhibition progressed, the choice of building and my treatment of it indicated certain moves through architectural history. The works also created differing relationships to spectatorship and being in the space somehow.

The buildings that I am interested in make a clear display of their relationship to power and to ornament. Also, the buildings I work with, or have worked with so far, display the ideology and at the same time its failings rather obviously.

Central points of the exhibition were public and private buildings of Turin and the progress from private to public, or feudal to a state of civicness.

Yes, and it also dealt with the fact that the gallery had moved into this very famous private building, Casa Scaccabarozzi, and thus the building had become semi-public. The house is seven stories tall and two stories below ground floor. It is a very thin building, only 70 cm on one end. It was built by Antonelli, who is this fantastic and strange academic architect of the 19th century. He really spans the entire 19th century, from revolutionary classicism to a kind of horror eclecticism. That is why another point of departure was whiteness. The point at which this contemporary art gallery comes into contact with a historic building and how it deals with that situation.

The frames that you use for your drawings introduce another dimension to your works. Appearing quite historical, they stand in stark contrast to the drawings and seem to be more suitable for heavy oil paintings. How do the frames correspond with your drawings?

The frames are very often the starting points for the drawings. Some of them are real and expensive and some of them are totally fake. One of the things I felt I had to do in Turin with my drawings and paintings was to frame them in such a way that they performed off the wall. If they were framed within the conventions of whiteness, they would somehow not be taken seriously as contemporary art, as a critique. They would just become objects in a contemporary art gallery, which is something else. Paradoxically I needed the whiteness of the gallery interior in order to offset it, to reveal it as a convention.

Would you say that these decisions on particular frames and above all the process of re-drawing the buildings is a performative act?

Yes. Actually, the materials that I use to draw usually correspond with the subject matter of the drawings. That means if I draw a work about the 18th century, I draw more or less with 18th century drawing equipment of sorts, never that excessive, but certainly I'd use a pen and traditional inks, shellac and handmade papers and so on. The role-play element becomes about technical, architectural drawing styles. So far I haven't really copied buildings, I design buildings and I design scenographies and exhibitions and so on, on paper. So the design is kind of a performance, an act of designing. It is ultimately as much about performing a design as really designing, because unlike conventional design practice, I am not following a brief. I imitate design styles, and increasingly adopt my own synthesis. Someone exists in relation to this—a historical figure of an architect.

Another performative element has been introduced to your work with dance performances since your participation in the Tate Triennial in 2006 with **Plaza Minuet**. How did this come about?

Tate had asked architect Celine Condorelli and I to design the lobby for the Triennial 2006 and wanted something about post-modernity, which I was very interested in at that time. During the working process it transpired that they also wanted to have a coffee bar, a library and screens for orientation and so on. I had had this really romantic idea of what Institutional Critique was like, but it is very different in real life. So the only point at which I could still occupy this fantasy of rebellion was to create a grid on the floor which is the emblem of the void in architecture, demarcated by a green line, and to say that this is a public piazza and there will be no orientation and shopping in this space.

Four dancers then paraded to the sound of the metronome up and down the grid activating the installation in a sense. There was a baroque dancer, who did an archeologically reconstructed dance with all these expressive mannerisms. The dancer behind her reinterpreted the baroque dance along modernistic lines and then the other two dancers did further variations of that. The idea was also that they would create an ornamented emblem of people in a piazza. So from then on I started to work with dance and it became more that the people created the architecture themselves rather than being performers within an existing space.

You concentrate exclusively on the 18th century and post-modernism. What makes you focus so much on these two periods?

I think the link is about civicness, the notion of the public. With late 18th century classicism you have the birth of the bourgeois citizen represented and codified within spaces, like parliaments, courts or ministries. Within post-modernity very often the language of 18th century classicism is used in order to promote a commercial agenda that moves from public ownership into private hands. The architectural language of 'publicness' as developed through the late enlightenment is then used to encroach on real public space. It is this shift I'm interested in: being a citizen is to perform in front of an architectural backdrop, and this perfomativity is what constitutes the post-modern. The architecture, activated by us, mimics civicness but represents something totally different and engenders different activities as well as responses to that of the enlightenment idea of the citizen.

Kenneth Anger: Eaux d'artifice, film, 13 min, U.S.A. 1953.

Pablo Bronstein: Description of Casa Saccabarozzi, Turin 2008.

William Makepeace Thackeray: Vanity Fair, first published in UK 1847/48.

Katrin Mayer

DISPLAYER Katrin, the research you undertake is already part of the artistic work you exhibit. It directly translates into and composes your wall displays. How does this working process start?

KATRIN MAYER Sometimes there are terms, from which I get ideas, for example the term 'pattern.' It has several meanings in German. You can say 'Muster,' 'Schablone,' 'Dekor,' 'Ornament,' 'Struktur' and so on. For a recent show at Anna-Catharina Gebbers' Bilbliothekswohnung in Berlin, 2008, I started with the title passer qc en revue and across this term 'revue' many links connected: 'revue' in sense of a journal or newspaper and what I did for the show was to hang paper in the form of a discursive, site-specific wallpaper.
And my research went both in the direction of the immediate surroundings of the flat—for example, the vicinity of the Friedrichstadtpalast and its history as a venue for 'Revue' performances—but I also considered the architectural or formal components of the space itself: it is a 'Plattenbau' (prefabricated concrete slab typical of East German mass architecture) apartment used for exhibitions and has a semi-public character. Out of these elements I attempted to create a display that locates itself within the characteristics of the site.

How did you then put this display into the exhibition space?
I selected images and text-fragments out of the research process and put them together, thus forming a grid of A3 xerox copies on shiny and structured white paper, like a wallpaper, in two areas of the flat. For me this also carried the connotations of décor or interior design. At the same time the copies were not just hanging plain on the wall, but the corners and edges were loose, bending slightly into the room, so it seemed like

they were changeable and temporary. Here, the term 'newspaper' was invoked again on a different level. Then, I also hung three curtains consisting of a white satin fabric at three different places in the flat in front of the walls.

In a sense you also interfere with the space on the actual physical or architectural level, here for example through veiling certain elements.
Yes, but veiling in a sense of occupying, not hiding something. One is still aware of the given structure of the space. One example: I initiated a small show at the Golden Pudel Club in Hamburg during my scholarship in Worpswede in April 2008 with the other artists in residence. We found the walls of the space completely covered with graffiti by the visitors, which is a common practice there as it is a club during the week and only on Mondays there are art events. Instead of painting it white again, I preferred to simply paste white paper on them, which let the graffiti shine through and remain visible as a reference layer. And for example the idea with the curtain at Bibliothekswohnung was to create a diversification or proliferation of the wall surface, of the white space. I used it as much as I used the grid of the copies to become a display literally of/off the wall. Behind the curtains there are just walls, no mystery and everyone can see that. It is more about marking spaces.
On a more general level one could say that I cover selected surfaces and make these walls and spaces both visible but different and contextual by means of the displays. This again alludes to the term 'revue' in the title of the show at Bibliothekswohnung which can also be understood as re-vue: to view again but differently. The visuals take account of their various connotations and I draw connections in between their own, varying grammars. Like a visual translation of linguistic terms but in a pictorial logic.

Do you understand these interferences as constructions within a space?

I understand this notion of displaying in a sense to be like weaving—I put surfaces onto already existing surfaces. I weave them into each other. Here I am also alluding to the understanding of building and architecture as being associated with a male-dominated history. I consider my work to be located in a history of practices that have been ascribed to the female and were later appropriated and theorized by feminists, like constructing through weaving. For the show at Bibliothekswohnung I invited Hanne Loreck to do a lecture about the frieze of the Haus des Lehrers in Berlin, referring to theories by Gottfried Semper, who

compared walls with woven or clothing structures, which she juxtaposes with Adolf Loos' rigid theories against ornament.

Ralph Caplan, John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart: Connections: The Work of Charles and Ray Eames, Los Angeles 1976.

T.J. Demos: The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp, Cambridge MA 2007

Hanne Loreck: 'vorWand, Ein kunstkritisches Plädoyer für das Dekorative'. In: Bettina Allamoda (Ed.): Model Map, Zur Kartographie einer Architektur am Beispiel des Haus des Lehrers Berlin, Frankfurt am Main 2003. Published online: http://ask23.hfbk-hamburg.de/draft/archiv/hs_publikationen/vorwand.html

Michael Schweiger (Ed.): Bertolt Brecht und Erwin Piscator. Experimentelles Theater im Berlin der Zwanzigerjahre, Wien 2004.

Frances Stark: The Architect & The Housewife, Book Works, London 1999

Pablo Bronstein, Katrin Mayer

Research, Object, Image

DISPLAYER Both of your work sets out from the premise of research but the results are very different: only in Katrin's work is the research material actually still part of the visible result as a non-object, as the exhibition space. When do you stop the research and go into the exhibition space?

PABLO BRONSTEIN Very early on. In a sense research for me is only about stuff. I am a maker of objects, principally, so I always negotiate the research in order to make what I want to make. And so, very often my work is a kind of parody of an art object.

KATRIN MAYER For me research is always about the accumulation of material through excursions into the past, theory or the internet. These eternal lines lead me to some aspects of an existing logic of the space that I want to re-read and display.

PB And in its aesthetics your work is conceptual, because it is about the unit rather than the object.

As we have seen, your work, Katrin, relies very much on the interweaving of images, whereas Pablo's work links back to the idea of an object. What part does the singular image have in your grids?

KM My work is never about the singular image nor about a linear reading. I'm always working with the whole surface area in mind, attempting to arrange connections between the researched material that circles around the site and around what kind of combinations I actually arrange. A suitable term for this might be 'Bildschreibweis-en,' which could be translated as 'writing with pictures.' To take them as a language. As much as you have several ways of reading, you can have several ways of writing. I find it very important that viewers themselves can create connections between the fragments. Even though there are

kinds of pre-structured connections like in a choreography which I can offer, what the viewers in the end read is up to them.

In this context I also very much like how Charles and Ray Eames have expressed the interaction of singular elements: 'The details are not details, they make the product—the connections, the connections, the connections.' For them it was important to create a kind of frame or grid, in which information can be arranged. A form of architecture with images.

A similar attempt to construct with pictures were the stage experiments by Erwin Piscator in the Twenties in Berlin, which I came across during my research. He tried to change the ways of reception in a theater completely; one means of doing that was a stage setting that consisted of projections.

Viewer and Space

How would you describe the connection between the viewer and the space in your work?

KM To me the work is not at the center, like an object, but one could say the space and the viewer is at the center, since she or he is the one finding a way through the space and the material by connecting the fragments and perceiving the space through it. One can move around and be aware of one's movement, and one's own process of thinking about possible connections. So I give the viewers a kind of responsibility to explore the space on their own.

PB Then that is a very different idea of what happens inside the individual in our works. Because I don't think I register interiority that much. For example in the Turin show the idea was to hold the viewer in a particular relationship to historic objects, both as art objects, and as emblems of the city in which we were in.

You both consider the notion of site-specificity important for your work, whether represented through codes of style or historical architectural features or, in Katrin's case, also industrially coded 'off-spaces.'

KM For me it is not a question of style where I exhibit, but generally I find it more interesting to be invited into a space where there is some history or project spaces with special characteristics that do not pretend to be neutral. For example I did a show in a former stocking factory, in Sonthofen (2004) and it was very interesting to deal with this history. I worked with several layers on the floor, especially lines of numbers that were running through the space. As Mini-Performances I first cleaned these lines and took off the dust that had accumulated since the factory is out of service. Then I wrote other numbers in between and thereby kind of re-wrote the assumed code of the building in order to point to the change from factory to service center. A further layer were pasted posters with a re-enacting of a found newspaper image from the 1930s where a woman paints her legs, which I connected also to myths of creating/self-creating.

PB I get asked to work in those coded spaces—more than the other way around—as I am interested in working in those spaces in a site-specific way. I resist the white cube because I don't really know how to deal with white spaces. But whenever I am presenting in a white space, I end up carving it out or parodying it in some way.

So when you go into a white cube, Pablo, does that change your work? How do you react?

PB In the case of an upcoming show at the Metro-politan Museum in New York in Autumn 2009, for example, I think I will have to look at the museum as a whole within that space. It is a very boring square room, totally straightforward white walls, no windows, low ceiling, very straightforward gallery illumination. So what I will do is to treat that room as a kind of mirror of the museum. I will exhibit drawings about the way the museum is, to try to record it as an image. As if the white cube removes itself from the historical art museum, and so allows for the possibility of commenting on it. I will use this supposed blankness as a point of abstention within

the turning world of the museum and have in the center a large orientation, like a floor plan.

Does that also constitute institutional critique for you?

PB It is a point that the works expand the frame to some extent and critical in the sense that they expand it towards the institution because it will be a very obvious representation of it. I would never think of showing old work there, disconnected from the museum as a subject, because then it would be entirely subsumed within the larger structure, unable to maintain a critical distance.

Marking

So you are using the drawing to perform the museum within the exhibition space. That seems similar to your work, Katrin, where you often pushed the attention of the visitor to the space and to the institution by marking an architectural part of the room like we saw at Bibliothekswohnung, but it became even more important at your recent show at Produzentengalerie in Hamburg which was called **TEMPORARY SCENARIOS – recollected afterglows [white].**

KM Regarding institutional critique I would say that it really went to a point with artists like Andrea Fraser, where everything was said; 'said' maybe also in a very linguistic way. I guess Pablo's and my practice aim more towards another language system, one that argues spatially and in a visual grammar. I would describe my process as putting layers into the space, which mark the space—the term of marking and identifying surfaces I under-stand in a way that is still connected to the surface itself.

How did you interfere with the architecture of the exhibition site in this show?

KM I created two wallpapers consisting of posters pasted on the walls—images I took during a travel grant in NY and Mexico. To interfere with the architecture of the space I took semi-transparent foil and wrapped it around three columns that were in the middle of the space, creating a triangle. The

relation of the columns was thus made visible in a way that had not been there before. So you entered the room and were directly confronted with this new architecture. But it was just foil, it was not fixed. It was a very temporary thing.

Another architectural element I was working with were the ceiling joists. I prolonged them with stripes of glitter pasted on the wall, running down to the floor. Depending on the light situation and where the viewer was standing the glitter changed color and was more or less shiny. The materials I used for this show were very purely embedded into the space. And of course these elements also connect back to the words of the title. But I would not go so far to call this exhibition critical. This exhibition rather tried a shift of perception or to activate the space as a whole and not to concentrate on exhibited objects.

Spatialized Flatness
It is striking that in your work, Katrin, there is a very strong spatial experience of a flat reality, of flat images. It is not about spaces, it is information that is flat but spatialized through the display. And on the other hand Pablo's work relates to architecture but actually it is absolutely not spatial. In the case of Franco's Gallery the whole building seems to be a surface. It does not seem to be a space.

PB Yes it is really flat and it presents a façade of wealth and exuberance that is unmatched by an interior with very cramped and difficult conditions.

The fascinating thing is actually, that it is a totally dishonest building. It shows a very powerful façade, but it is totally deflated behind.

PB That is the antagonistic relationship between the façade and the need to create the façade and that is where I perceive a comparison to be constructed between sexuality and sexual identity. I understand this as an analogy. There are buildings that exist entirely within the paradigm of power and structure, and are perceived as truthful, honest, or better still, are not perceived at all. They are so within the

convention that they are comparable to learnt codes of behavior that are perceived as natural—'normal' gender-specific behavior or mannerisms. There are also buildings that are unable or unwilling to effectively exist within the convention. Buildings such as the gallery space, or Palazzo Madama, are queer, in that they reveal construction and architectural style, as well as the power relationships they engender, as a series of codes, as language rather than truth. This is similar to queer politics in its bid to reveal gender as performance.

Also the inside-outside relations of these two gallery settings in Turin and Berlin are very different. Although it is so small the gallery building in Turin has a very weird way of taking over. In that sense it serves as a stage for the visitor who is then moving in front of your drawings which re-present your reading of the Turin buildings. But also, if you are on the stage you are not the person looking, but the one who is watched.

PB Yes, and one approach I had on some level was to make the show about façades so in a sense there would be a series of façades stacked on top of each other.

You look from the outside although you are inside. But at the same time it is one installation, it is not really a singular work with a view but the view of a whole, the city of Turin. That seems to be a different situation to this apartment in Berlin where the outside is very present, for example through this incredible view of this courtyard of the prefab building. And the curtain makes you want to look outside even more because it conceals in order to open and to make conscious. Also in front of Katrin's pictures one really gets the idea of an opening. And the windows are very important in that they create even more pictures.

KM This for me again connects back to the double meaning of the title passer qc en revue. It means to scroll across something, to look through or verify something. So like 'passer q.c.' you can stroll through this apartment and it is an open structure, it begins with the curtain at the entrance and then

it goes on like a structuring element which could go on also in the next-door apartments.

At Bibliothekswohnung it was important that the apartment itself was made visible or staged. You could walk through and recognize the rooms, its characteristics and especially the gaze out of the windows was activated as an important part of the work: through one window you can see a typical Plattenbau backyard, the other one opens the view to Friedrichstadtpalast, with citations of art déco elements and Friedrichstrasse with its long past in entertainment and theater history, especially regarding the Roaring Twenties. But at this point/ on a different level I would be very interested to know how the dance style in your performances, Pablo, is related to the architecture?

Movement in Space
PB The type of movement the dancers work with comes from something called sprezzatura ['the art of embodying difficult actions in a light-mannered and elegant way without betraying the effort that goes into this masquerade'] which is the art of embodying aristrocratic values within one's physical comportment. It stems from court etiquette and became more marginalized towards the late 18th century. To some extent it survives in queer culture. I would not say that sprezattura was directly related to the architecture. But in a sense I am using another behavioral language that is not the conventional one through which the 'normal' is made manifest. The idea of representing pedestrian behavior was something that was around heavily in the 1960s and 70s and really persists with us today in dance conventions, and so the idea of using another entirely different behavior code I guess was a reaction to that. Also I wanted to talk about how within postmodern architecture we are expected to embody different social and physical values to those engendered by previous architectural models.

So for example the performance piece Passeggiatta that was part of Palaces of Turin is about strolling

through a baroque town, how we are living within a theater of other peoples' gazes, how our bodies become ornaments to these buildings, how we are coerced into becoming ornaments and how this in turn is sexualised and subverted. Here the dancers walked methodically up and down a white line in this kind of reference to pedestrian performances, but with movements which reflect an elegant sprezzatura, or lack of work aesthetic, as well as an understanding that the poses are queer. Someone walking, but saying 'I want to be seen walking.'

So by using the notion of sprezzatura as a kind of codifying and structuring ceremony the dancers role-play in front of the painting and at the same time move in front of a façade. Architecturally and choreographically the bodies are forming an ornament. How does ornament play a role in your work, Katrin?

KM One might have had the impression that I was interested in the decorative and ornamental in my show at Bibliothekswohnung using many images from revue choreographies, where dancers were situated in ornamental orders, but that was more part of the specific content for this space. In former works I dealt with stripes or squares as patterns, that were used both as content and formal elements. Formally, I view ornament to only be relevant in connection with the repetition of elements of décor, creating a structure and a grid for elements. And ornament stands discursively close to practices like weaving and decoration as being a female handicraft in contrast to modernistic functionalisms associated with masculinity. I guess both of us are trying to put something against that functionalism from our gendered views and show its powerful reductiveness.

PB I'd like to add something. I find sprezzatura interesting similarly to the way I find hyper-gendered behavior interesting. I love romantic novels in which the woman faints all the time and the man rescues her. As much as I like earlier notions of kind of poly-sexualized/androgynous type of

physical comportment and so on. Non-gender-specific comportment I find very interesting. And the same, I think, goes for buildings. I both like buildings that represent a sense of vulnerability in projecting power, and buildings which exist within the conventions of power completely. This need to create a royal façade and plaster it in all its magnificence onto a disintegrating medieval hovel, which is what Palazzo Madama is, as well as the Franco's Gallery building, is really about a sort of display, and the weakness revealed simultaneously—the weakness or underside being an easily seen attempt to capture and convince us of its magnificence. I have to say that I also find it exciting when I feel the full force of a state behind a piece of architecture—when it is unquestionable, a little bit like a kind of archetypal masculine or feminine behavior. I find that really great. In order for gender-specific behavior to be exposed as

performance you need people to behave in the conventional way.

KM In the first moment I think buildings are usually not vulnerable. If I think of this building in Turin it doesn't give away this kind of power relation it has. Important is your way of re-reading it.

PB Yes, I think all buildings are as powerful and vulnerable as we make them out to be. There is nothing that is intrinsically destructive in the architecture. I think how we relate to architecture is absolutely what the work is about. That is why the drawings are all role-plays. They are all about the active making; or what happened before the building existed; or how you can read design; or how you can move around something.

The texts are based on a dialogic talk in public, November 25, and on a seminar workshop, November 26, 2008 at Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe.

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01 Large Building with Courtyard Incorporating Facade of Palazzo Carignano (2008), ink and wash on paper in artist's frame, 200 x 120 cm.

02 Katrin Mayer, passer qc en revue, Bibliothekswohnung, Berlin, 2008, installation shot.
03 View from a window into the backyard of Bibliothekswohnung.

Strategies of Repetition

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1886–1969 German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona, Spain, view of the interior, 1928–1929. Gelatin silver print, 15.9 x 22.9 cm
Mies van der Rohe Archive, gift of the architect © 2009 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

The rebuilding of Berlin's Stadtschloss has revived the reconstruction debate which has been underway since the early 20th century. Opponents argue that reconstructions are forgeries, deceit or fakes. Reconstructions contradict the virtues of architecture internalized as basic rules since the Bauhaus era. You cannot expect utility, honesty and transparency from them. Reconstruction is an illusion like the facades fronting Frankfurt's Römer or on Hildesheim's market square. In most cases it only provides an image, aimed at bringing the lost past closer and anchoring the feeling of home more deeply. In contrast to architecture, since post-modernism at the latest, the fake in art is an important and much-used strategy that refers to the incorporation of new levels of meaning into one's own work. It was this very approach that gave birth to Appropriation Art; appropriation was practiced in the United States and Europe from the 1960s by artists such as Elaine Sturtevant, Marcel Broodthaers and others. Over a decade ago, artist and art historian Stefan Römer examined the fake in art and compared it with the cult surrounding the original. In doing so he defined the meanings of forgery, fake and citation and distinguished them from one another. Adopting the fake as a strategy gave art a new, fruitful direction. The question is: can you apply the strategy of the fake as employed by art to architecture? What options and forms of expression exist for the fake in architecture?

Stefan Römer

Fake in the art context

DISPLAYER In your dissertation you explore the term 'fake' in the art context and make a distinction between 'fake,' 'forgery' and 'quote.' Where do you draw the lines between these terms?

STEFAN RÖMER The two terms 'forgery' and 'quote' emerge during the same period. It was the time when people began to mull over the fact that there is such a thing as an 'original expression.' This was discussed by Kant and others under the term 'original genius.' In quoting, an effort is made to preserve the authenticity of the cited author by indicating which words are from the author and which are not but are rather an interpretation. Quoting is above all to be found in literature. Later on, it is also applied in art, but controversially. With forgery exactly the opposite happens: forgery in art specifically seeks to deny authorship. Forms and creations by an artist are adopted but are published either under your own or another name. The difference is that the quote clearly refers to the source, the author of what is cited, while in the forgery something is covered up by the false signature.

'Fake' refers to something else again; when you consider the history of the fake you must begin by looking at the English expression, the origin of this term. First of all, a fake is a proclamation which points to the fact that this would seem to be a case of faking or deception. The German word 'Fälschung' translates as 'forgery.' A 'fake' is a special strategy of forgery. It can also refer to the forgery of banknotes. I have conceived the term 'fake' to mean a deliberate mimetic forgery that is published. The person that produces a fake simultaneously employs small details to refer to the original author and thus designs a strategy of reception. In principle she or he is working with the material of another artist but there is always a

clue or indication somewhere of that fact. It may be that the painting or picture is so well-known that it is immediately apparent to everyone that it is a fake, or it may be that she or he provides some pointer or other. For example, the photographs by Sherrie Levine, which she signs Sherrie Levine After Walker Evans. You can argue that the wording 'After Walker Evans' is in itself redundant as the images are very well-known and can immediately be recognized as photographs by Walker Evans. Yet, adding to that by using the expression 'after Walker Evans' she is relying in principle on the strategic guise of referential art. In painting you say you are inspired by Manet or that you are painting 'after' a certain canvas—and the title would get the epithet 'after Manet' indicating who was the source of inspiration.

As you see it, is this manner of referencing a vital component in the development of art?

If you were to ascribe to modernism the forgery, the citation and, it then follows, the original, then you would ascribe 'appropriation art' and, consequently, the fake, as well as its consequences, to post-modernism. The emergence of the fake as I have analyzed it means that the concept of the original harbored by the institution also underwent a fundamental change. Specifically it has changed in such a way that it becomes an artistic strategy which refers to or presents an almost identical image of a work by another artist. Without a doubt, this was completely out of the question in the 19th century. There were the copyists, but they were not necessarily considered to be artists. Copies were made in order to make certain works accessible to the less wealthy sections of society. Then there was the copying required of art students; they copied the Old Masters both in sculpture and in painting in the process of finding their own, original signature. This is the difference from 'fake' art or 'appropriation art.' This art discloses its references and it also brings with it an intellectual gain for the public. The simplest examples I can give are the works by Sherrie Levine I mentioned earlier. When she says

'these are my works after Walker Evans,' this means in principle if I, Sherrie Levine, appropriate these images and put my name below them this is a differentiated shift of this artwork, which consequently gains an expanded frame of reference. And, conversely, this applies to the most interesting fakes, which produce their own references.

Can you give other examples that demonstrate this strategy using other methods?

Various methods have existed since the 1960s. You have to mention Elaine Sturtevant, who made screen prints of Andy Warhol in the presence of Andy Warhol in the Factory, and signed them with her own name. Then you get people like Marcel Broodthaers, who with his Musée d'Art Moderne basically also forges a museum—but does so tongue-in-cheek. He explores and satirizes how a museum functions. There are also artists of course like Sigmar Polke, who with his exhibition Original + Fälschung/Original + Forgery **(1974)** also appropriated paintings and photography by other artists and processed them in his own works. Then there is a whole series of artists in connection with 'appropriation art' in the early 1980s such as Richard Prince, or Cindy Sherman, or Peter Weibel. It must be said that these methods and the way references are made in them frequently vary greatly; alongside a certain faking, deception or falseness there is a call for intellectual work in the art's reception.

The fake in architecture

The 'original'-discourse has existed in art since its beginning. In architecture it is a very difficult topic. Since modernism, the terms 'honesty' or 'veracity' were primarily shaped by the Bauhaus. Although prior to this, it was never made an issue since architecture has always relied on appropriations and transfers. After modernism the expectations of architects have altered. One element of this is that the topic of reconstruction has become highly contentious. Is it possible to talk about 'fake' or 'forgery' in architecture?

In this context I would like to touch upon post-modern architecture given that—according to the theorists—it is primarily an architecture of citation. Reputedly, there was an element of capriciousness in this citing—if you wanted an Italian influence you cited Palladio somewhat, if you wanted something older you cited Greek antiquity. This produced architecture montages some of which can be described as 'post-modern-decorative.'

I would like to differentiate this emphatically from the artistic fake, because I believe that much more is at stake in art than simply citing a form. I believe that in architecture in citing form—if you disregard the function of representation—it need not necessarily be the case that the function is influenced. But that is very much so in art. When something is cited in art, references are produced and the functions are also altered. If one places something in front of a façade this might contradict the true nature of the architecture inasmuch as one conceals what is behind it and only makes a reference or installs a decoration from the representational level, from the outside. In this I differentiate—unlike Frederic Jameson—between the post-modern quotation in architecture and the post-modern quotation in art.

In 1997 Aldo Rossi built an ensemble in Schützenstrasse, Berlin by placing modern façades and a copy of the façade of the Palazzo Farnese next to one another. In doing so, he examined Berlin's buildings from the early period of Germany's reconstruction, which often cite the architecture of the palazzo and commented on it with his quarter in the Schützenstrasse. This façade that was made of specially imported Italian building material fits into the modern ensemble but is simultaneously a reference to a 16th century Roman palazzo. It is not just a matter of decoration. That would be an intended form of citation that also involves a deliberate referencing. That is on the first perceptual level an immediate, intuitive form of what I would consider as post-modern decoration. On the second level it does not seem to be the case, for Rossi fundamentally explored the conditions and

knew very well why it should be built like that and not differently. This sets it apart from post-modern decoration as it emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as simulation, typified by the blind wall, for example on the Frankfurter Römer.

So is it possible to talk about the fake as strategy or method in architecture?

I am skeptical there because there is a fundamental difference in the way architecture and art are received. What constitutes this difference is the fact that artworks, in the sense of Kant, should be free of any purpose, and architecture should primarily fulfill a practical purpose. Today, works of art also have an intention or purpose that goes beyond beauty, but their reception varies. Even if some architecture theorists, architects and politicians would prefer to have architecture seen as aesthetic objects, they must tolerate the following objection, namely, that buildings must primarily serve a function, and after that fulfill specific representational tasks. Of course, one can make alterations to his or her home and insist it is art—I am free to do that—but nonetheless the spatial and site-specific nature of a building is quite different as a public structure from a work of art. Then there are fundamental distinctions in the ontological and institutional determinations. I would prefer to talk about those mechanics which, however, cannot be separated from aesthetics.

I cannot apply the concept of fake as I have defined it, i.e., not in the sense of the degradation of the ideology of the original, but rather as deconstruction of a theoretical-phenomenological concept, to architecture. Except perhaps in the traditional disparaging manner by saying: 'This architecture is a fake!' But this would not correspond with my use of the term. Yet, it is possible to speak of various simulations in architecture.

Reconstruction as fake

Just now the concept of fake is primarily used in the architecture discussion in connection with reconstructions. An interesting example of reconstruction is the Barcelona Pavilion by Mies van der Rohe. Retrospectively, the Barcelona Pavilion was imbued with a strong aura thanks to the photos that exist of it. This contradicted Benjamin's concept of the loss of aura owing to technical reproduction, but this was the case for this building that only existed for a short period of time. The photographs had such a strong impact that the reconstruction was demanded by people only familiar with the pavilion from these expressive photographs. People wanted to recreate the aura of this building and reconstructed it; as a consequence, the existing building vies with these photographs and, according to the experts, loses out. It only received its justification from the location but has forfeited its aura.

The aura refers to the pavilion but the photographs of the original building are also upgraded as original documents through that. In other words, the reconstruction of the building results from the visual, but in this case the underlying idea is so pure and clear—even though it was a purely functional building—that the entire building was reconstructed. Later the depiction of the idea in architecture gains a dynamic of its own by making a fetish of the visual. As far as the opinions on the reconstruction are concerned with regard to the original they are justified. But in this particular instance, in addition, the artist Jeff Wall stage-managed this entire story of the pavilion. In his work Morning Cleaning he depicts what would seem to be a daily cleaning ritual of the reconstructed pavilion, which plays with this aura. He manipulates the story and then adds something to it.

On the other hand we have the Berlin Stadtschloss, which similarly people are only familiar with through images, and the green light has been given for its reconstruction. Perhaps it would be interesting to juxtapose the two reconstructions as they evoke such different opinions, most of all in architecture circles. A majority spoke out in favor of the pavilion, but, by contrast, since the debate began on the reconstruction of the castle there have been emphatic battles over it. Is it possible to place these things in a category at all—is what is being built a fake or a forgery?

In the case of the Berlin Schloss you can put forward a series of arguments. Firstly, this project cannot be a forgery because there was no original that can be reproduced. After all, as far as I know, the Stadtschloss never was an original in the sense that specific plans or a specific architect existed, nor was there a specific idea or design. In the state that it was last known, the Stadtschloss was a compilation of buildings and ensembles that were added and extended one after the other. Also, as far as I have been able to find out, no plan, containing a layout, the schema of individual floors or the annexes of the building, exists. There is only a plan of the main façade, and as such no original exists at all. Secondly, you can of course argue that the building embodies a representational ideal, a specific form and function of architecture. These two elements can be examined. Thirdly, it will not be possible to reconstruct this building as regards its function, nor would it make sense as the various sections were built as needed, and it is hardly likely the main rooms would be built the same way today because they would be ascribed different purposes. Fourthly, it would not make sense to replicate the design because it neither reflects the contemporary feeling of the Berlin Republic nor does it follow the ideas of democracy, integration and so on but only embodies a past, a monarchist ideal. This cannot succeed as no planned palace complex exists which could fulfill a contemporary representational purpose.

To return to your question about fake and forgery: first of all, you have to make a clear distinction between reconstructions such as that of the Mies pavilion or the Schinkel buildings and the Berlin Schloss. In the case of Schinkel what you have are buildings that fit as a module into a larger urban setting, but that is not the case with the Berlin castle. If on this representational level the castle is be given a function then you should pose the question to all the citizens involved of what is to be represented with this Schloss der Hohenzollern, if in the year 2009 or later on its completion takes place in a democratic republic. As far as I know the decision against the reconstruction of the castle was made again and again. What, then, is this building to signify? It is located in the center of a city which has fortunately been reunited and it clearly refers to the period prior to Germany's foundation and a period prior to democracy. If you consider how a forgery functions then juridically speaking the guilt lies with those that bring a forgery into circulation, in other words publish it and offer it for sale. You can conclude from this that everyone who is involved in realizing the castle project is operating as a forger and in addition, incurs a responsibility in future by being involved in a building which historically represents a denial of democratic progress in Germany. As such, I would neither speak of a forgery nor a fake nor a quote in this case but rather of utter nonsense.

If you are to use any of these terms for this building then the one that fits best is 'simulation.' This is what is happening there, and only through its naming and through certain ornamental elements does it reference the complexity of the bricolage-type structures that previously stood there. Neither in the function nor in aesthetics will it have anything in common with the original. In the context of Berlin, it is just one more act of architectural cowardice to formulate not a programmatic position but to refer to the Old. The castle is a simulation, a 'third-order simulacrum' (Jean Baudrillard) in which certain institutional-representational functions are inscribed.

In other words it is an attempt to simulate history, while that is not the case with the other projects?

If a historical reference is to be made at this place then it will probably be done using information panels. I could imagine that in an international competition you could select an idea for a pioneering building with relevant historical references. If it is historical reference which is at issue, there is

absolutely no reason why you could not both show sections of the castle and the Palace of the Republic. Because I can guarantee that the discussion will come up why it is not possible to find a reference at this place to the Palace of the Republic. Every citizen in a democratic country must feel much more comfortable with the idea of a 'Palace of the Republic' than an arbitrary historical reference to a monarchical architectural complex. That is, unless you see downtown Berlin as a theme park.

If we are talking about a building by Schinkel such as the Bauakademie, many architects really welcome reconstruction since they believe that in Schinkel you see the beginnings of industrialization. Is this justification enough to reconstruct the building? **Ideally the justification to reconstruct a building comes about through a democratic process. After all, reconstructing a building by Schinkel implies an understandable historical intention. It takes up a specific symbolism, which in many buildings pursued certain functional and representational objectives via a planning arrangement. From the present perspective there is nothing reprehensible about these objectives, indeed, they can be considered as fundamental to modern developments. As such, from a democratic point of view Schinkel's programme for Berlin is most certainly a programme you can refer to with a clear conscience.**

These are all aspects that do not apply to the Stadtschloss, there's no argument there. But there is another strong lobby, which is tantamount to a description of the political process per se: the public discussion was very clearly against the Stadtschloss. But the stubborn lobbyists finally got their way, against all reason. This process clearly indicates that the civic public as assumed by Habermas has long since been replaced by its corporate counterpart. I think it would be amusing and droll to reconstruct the Stadtschloss as it was and put it in some noble park. You would have to collect everything that still remains about it—all the drawings and pictures—so as to compile a plan in order to build the Schloss exactly as it once was. That would be a fine forgery.

The interview is based on a talk in Munich and a telephone conversation, January 2009.

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Orson Welles: F for Fake, film, 85 min, France, Iran, West Germany 1975.
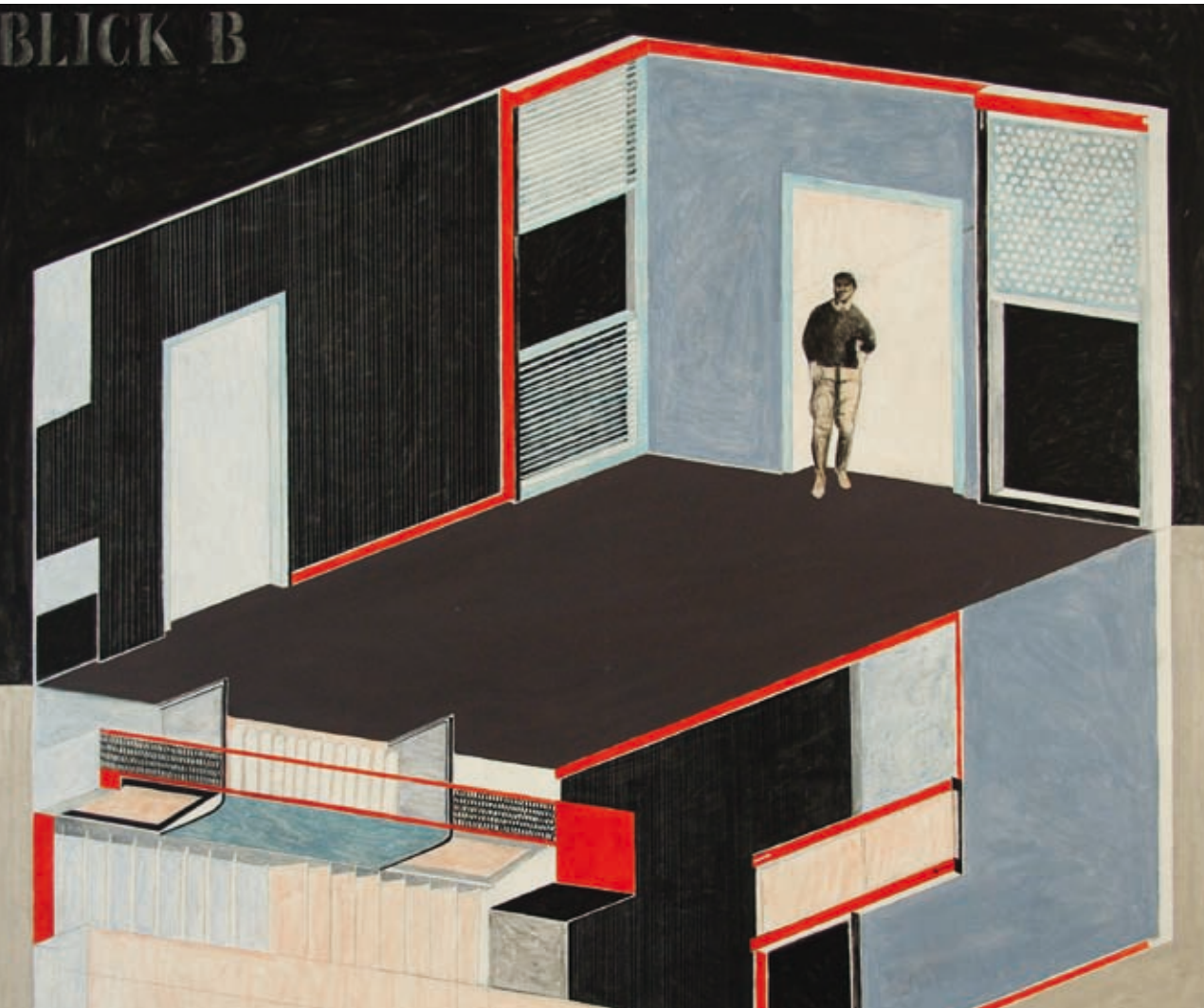
01 Jeff Wall, Morning Cleaning, Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona, 1999, transparency in lightbox, 187 x 351 cm.
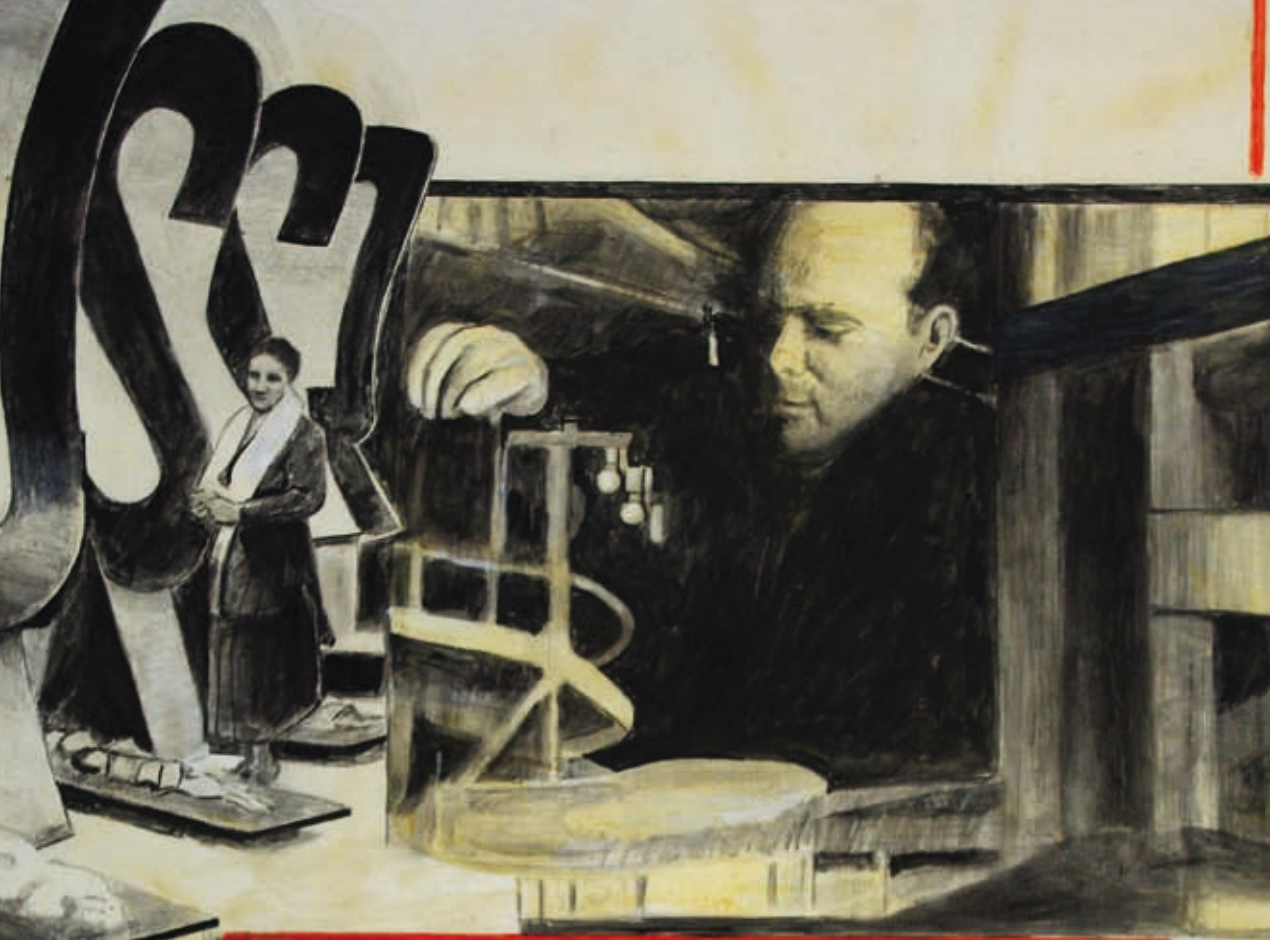
el lissitzky and alexander dorner

kabinett der abstrakten original and facsimile

museum of american art berlin

ARTIST

Once upon a time, in a faraway Empire in the East, there lived a young and inventive artist. He full-heartedly joined the Revolution that swept the nation after a long and terrible war that destroyed the Empire for good. Soon after, he began traveling through the world, taking part in many exhibitions and spreading the magnificent achievements of the new Revolutionary Art. One day he was invited by the Director of the museum of the land in the West to make a room specially designed to show abstract art. He made the room with unusual walls that had moving parts and changing colors. It was filled with abstract paintings and had a special mirror behind a single statue. The walls looked different as the visitor walked around. Named the Abstract Cabinet, it became the best-known room of the museum. Unfortunately, after not too long, the circumstances began to change for the worse, and abstract art was not appreciated any more. It was now considered decadent and degenerate and, accordingly, the once-famous Cabinet was dismantled and completely forgotten. Meanwhile the Artist returned to his native land forever. Soon after, another terrible war among the nations of the Old World destroyed everything, including the traces of the memory of abstract art and the Cabinet as well.

Luckily, the memory of abstract art and the Cabinet was not forgotten everywhere. It was being kept alive in the museum that opened in the New World. That museum became known as the Modern. And that is how we know about all this today.

From the Tales of the Artisans

Alexander Dorner: *Artist*, 2028, acrylic on canvas, 80x60cm

DIRECTOR

A long time ago there lived a young and ambitious man who loved history and museums. It so happened that one day, after the Great War that ruined his land, he became the Director of the most important museum in a certain province. In this museum, like in all other museums, various epochs from the past were displayed in the same monotonous way. The young Director made it his business to change the museum completely. He decided that each epoch would be confined within its own, specially arranged room. While connecting the rooms he abandoned the Law of Symmetry, and adopted the Law of Chronology. Also, all the museum's windows had to be covered in order to separate the Past from the Present. The last room was devoted to the most advanced style of the time, known as Abstract Art. It was designed by the Artist who came from the vast and far away land in the East that had just been born in the Red Revolution. The Abstract Room the Artist had made was unique and attracted a lot of attention. Soon after the Museum became recognized as the most advanced museum in the entire world and the Director was widely praised and respected by his colleagues. After some time, cold winds of hatred and intolerance swept the land, and the Director had to flee across the ocean to the New World, bringing with him novel ideas about the Museum and History. He there became the Director of yet another museum, and changed it according to his principles as well. His ideas became widely accepted, and after not too long, other museums followed the Director's ideas. But it seems nobody understood that by changing the Museum, they were changing History as well.

From the Tales of the Artisans

Alexander Dorner: *Director*, 2028, acrylic on canvas, 80x60cm

Anonymous: *Provinzial-Museum*, 1902, acrylic on canvas, 70x100cm

by other criteria like symmetry, the paintings' size, subject matter or the collection from whence they came rather than by chronology and evolution. The design of the museum displays was uniform regardless of the period, epoch or style, and that would give an impression of the timelessness of the Museum itself. When we go to the Museum we see the past, arranged as History, which is fixed and unchangeable. Of course, this was just a 'temporary timelessness,' since the technology, design, and aesthetic of museum displays were changing all the time. And thus the picture of the past kept changing as well.

The *Provinzial-Museum* in Hanover (later *Landesmuseum*) was one such place at the time young Alexander Dorner became its director. Soon after, realizing the necessity of a radical change of the museum's display, he came up with the idea to show the development of art as a chain of specially designed 'Atmosphere Rooms.' He adopted not only chronology, but also the evolutionary principle, as the foundation for the museum's display narrative. Each epoch, period or style would be confined in its own specially colored and designed rooms, exhibiting not only the artifacts, but immersing the visitor in a complete visual experience. Walking from one room to another, following the progressive timeline, a visitor would be able to see and experience the entire history of art as a progression of styles from the beginning of civilization to the present

Alexander Dorner: *Kabinett der Abstrakten*, 2028, acrylic on canvas, 150x200cm

Provinzial-Museum

Since their beginnings, museums have been places where one could see exhibitions of selected fragments from the past. However, those early museums were closer to the idea of libraries, lacking an over-arching narrative that would connect various exhibits and artifacts into a coherent story. Since the early 1800s, thanks to Vivant Denon, the first Director of the Musée Napoleon (*Louvre Museum*), those exhibits gradually became structured chronologically and by National Schools, in what became known as Art History. The display narrative of the museum and the story of art merged, and the Museum became the materialization of Art History—a special place where we would go to see the past remembered through this particular linear story, populated by unique characters (individuals, places, objects, etc.) The story begins in the distant past (as of last century it is Prehistory, before that it was Egypt and before that, Ancient Greece), and, flows chronologically through various civilizations, epochs, lands and places up to the present, opening indefinitely towards the future. The uniqueness of the characters and the chronology became the main aspects of this story, coinciding with the idea of evolution and progress. Although the connection between the Museum and Art History was well established, throughout the 19th and early 20th century the display narrative of the museums was governed

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Alexander Dorner: *Kabinett der Abstrakten*, 2028, acrylic on canvas, 150x200cm

exhibited as 'degenerate art,' and some simply destroyed. Finally, in the capital of modern art, Paris, most of the European avant-garde, including Malevich, Mondrian, Schwitters, and Duchamp, could not be seen in the museums, since no museum had collected their work by then. However, across the ocean, then and for many years to come, the most important 20th century art movements were exhibited in the *Museum of Modern Art* in New York. Not only were the important works of modern art preserved and on public display, but the entire modern narrative was reinvented there. Instead of the 19th century concept of National Schools, the *MoMA* display narrative was based on the notion of International Movements, according to the evolutionary chart printed on the cover of the catalog *Cubism and Abstract Art*. After the war, this narrative was gradually introduced and adopted in Europe and became universally accepted up to the present day.

Clearly, there are some obvious parallels between Dorner's concept of history as a linear evolution of styles, and Barr's concept of history based on international movements. But it seems Dorner thought that there should be only one kind of museum that would show art from all times, including the present, and was not happy with the idea of the modern museum as a separate institution. As we can see today, with the mushrooming of modern and con-
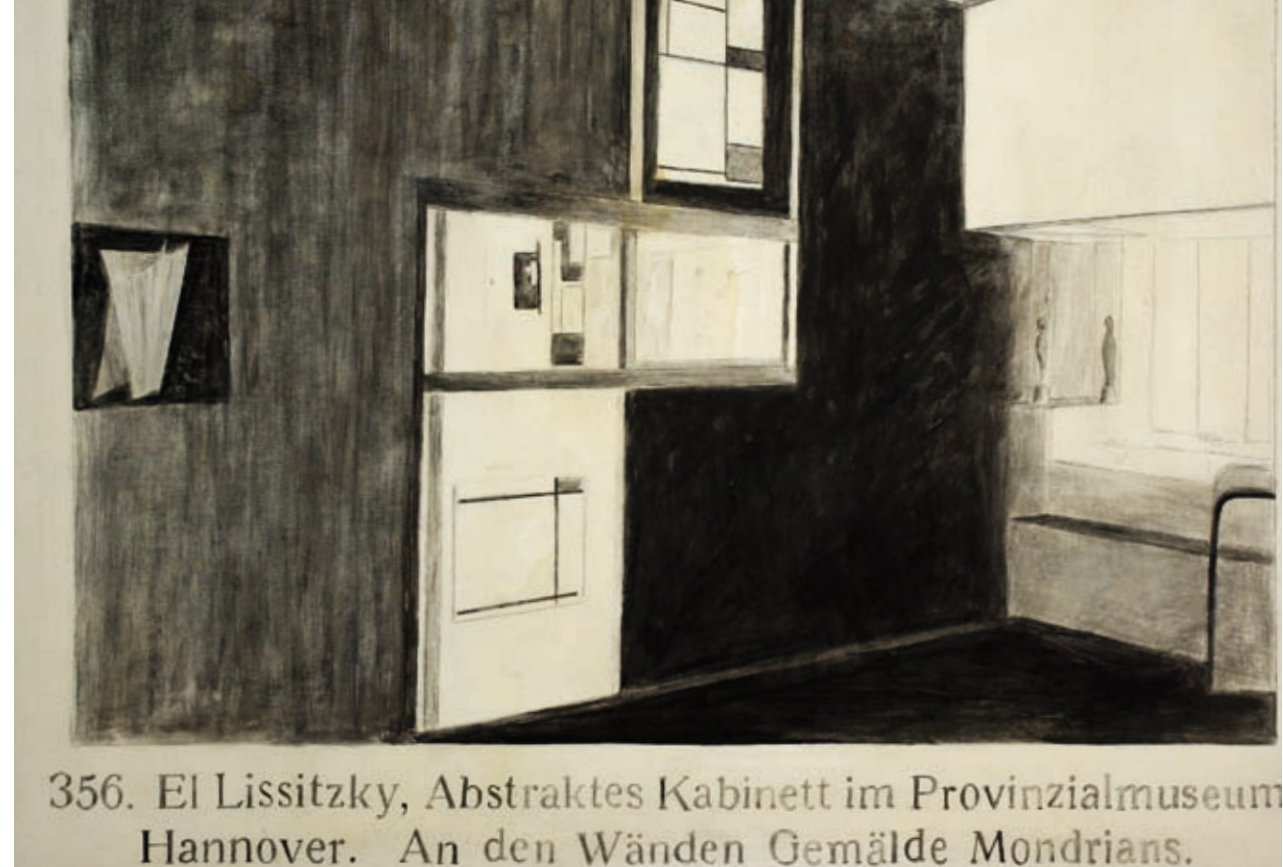
day. The most famous room became the one devoted to abstract art designed by Constructivist artist and designer El Lissitzky. Since Lissitzky had designed a special room for abstract art at the 1926 *Internationale Kunstausstellung*, Dorner thought to ask him to do something similar now as a permanent installation at the Hanover museum. The result of this idea was the *Kabinett der Abstrakten (Abstract Cabinet)*, opened in 1928. Among the various photos of the *Kabinett* we can recognize works of Picasso, Leger, Moholy-Nagy, Mondrian, Archipenko, Schlemmer, Baumeister, Van Doesburg, Marcoussis and El Lissitzky. There are indications that some of the works from Malevich's 1927 Berlin exhibition were exhibited as well. Those might be the works that Alfred Barr got from Dorner, later in 1935, for the exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art*, which remains on permanent display at the *MoMA* until today.

It is worth noting that at this time, no Malevich painting could be seen in any European museum. By the early 1930s his works had been removed, first from the Soviet museums, once the authorities had dismissed abstract art as bourgeois and formalistic. They were removed from museums in Germany a couple of years later, just after their mocking display at the 1937 exhibition, *Entartete Kunst,* under the auspices of the extreme conservative and nationalistic ideology of the National-Socialist party. This was also the reason why the *Kabinett der Abstrakten* had been dismantled by the time of this exhibition, and all abstract works removed from the *Landesmuseum*. Some of them had been

Alexander Dorner:
Kabinett der Abstrakten, 2028
acrylic on canvas, 140x100cm

Anonymous:
Hans Hildebrandt, 1931
acrylic on canvas, 110x80cm

Anonymous: *Hans Hildebrandt-Kabinett*, 1931, acrylic on canvas, 100x80cm

temporary art museums throughout the world, Dorner's idea didn't gain much support. But if we expand it and, instead of one museum with many 'atmosphere rooms,' have a series of linearly connected museums, each devoted to a particular epoch or style then the *Museum of Modern Art* could be just one in a line of 'atmosphere museums,' providing, of course, that it closes its timeline on both ends. However, unlike the early museums, both Dorner's and Barr's museums not only historicize the past, but the present as well, and, furthermore, they are ever expanding by being open toward the future. The first obvious question regarding this concept is its practical sustainability, considering how much space we'll need at 'the end' for such museums, assuming their continual growth, and how much time we'll need to walk through them to see the exhibits. The growth of *MoMA* in the last 70 years is a good illustration of this (its first building opened in 1939). If it continues to expand at its current pace in the next couple of centuries, it will most likely have to occupy the entire block between 53rd and 54th Street. In addition to the physical limitations of space and time, there is a conceptual problem with the institution that is attempting to historicize the present and keep an open end toward the future. Can it be 'museum and modern' at the same time, as Gertrude Stein once asked Barr just before the opening of *MoMA*? Simply put, the things that *MoMA* is collecting today might turn out to be totally irrelevant for the dominant narrative

tomorrow. Where are all those great Geromes, Bourgeraus, Cabanels ... today? One can understand a museum's desire to attract more visitors by being actively involved in the present, but the underlying reason for the museum's interest in historicizing the present is a question of power exercised 'here and now' by 'immortalizing' certain phenomena of the present and, by doing that, increasing their market value and social importance in the immediate future.

The Museum is not an old invention. We can trace its origins to the early 16th century. The first public collection of Antiquities (Antiquario dell' Statue) was exhibited in the Cortile dell' Belvedere in the Vatican. This event represents the invention of both Antiquity and Modernity, and at the same time, the start of a departure from the millennium-old canon based on the Christian narrative. For the next three hundred years numerous public or semi-public collections of various kinds of objects and artifacts (antiquities, painting galleries, Wunderkammer, etc.) appeared throughout the Western world. These were collections of antiquities and other objects which were occasionally open to the public and could be considered the first museums. Those were the places that contained artifacts from the distant past, arranged by some 'aesthetic' display narrative, like a repository or 'visual library.' Although there were names and anecdotes attached to each particular object, in places like these one could just get

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an overall sense of a distant past called Antiquity. It was Winckelmann who introduced the notions of chronology and development of styles to the collection of antiquities in the Vatican museums, and then the Musée Napoléon brought together under one roof Antiquario dell' Statue, picture galleries and contemporary sculpture. Finally, it was Vivant Denon who arranged all this according to chronology and national schools. That represented the birth of the modern Museum—the moment when Art History and the display narrative of the museum were brought together. Gradually, Art History became the story of how we remember the past, and the Museum became the place where this story was materialized. Following the original idea that a Museum should be concerned only with the past, curators were careful not to include artifacts originating too close to the present. Throughout the 19th century the museums that were established all over the Western world followed this rule, including the *Provinzial-Museum* in Hanover. The display narrative, display technology and display aesthetic looked the same everywhere and all the museums were telling the same story. That story became our common and unified narrative, both as a story and as a display. The past looked the same everywhere.

Anonymous: *Entartete Kunst*, 1937, acrylic on canvas, 115x80cm

Anonymous: *Der Neue Weg*, 1936
acrylic on canvas, 115x80cm

Anonymous:
Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung, 1937
acrylic on canvas, 115x100cm

Anonymous: *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 1936, acrylic on canvas, 110x80cm

It is Dorner's introduction of the 'atmosphere rooms' that suggested displays which did not look homogeneous regardless of the epoch or style, instead offering a different visual and aesthetic experience, according to his vision. And this vision became a new picture of the past. It maintained the concept of chronology, but now enhanced with the notions of evolution and progress. In other words, the 'new past,' the past remembered through the new museum display, looked different from the past commemorated in the old museum.

This was in fact a different past. But this was a different past only for those visitors who had a chance to walk through both the old and the new type of museum. For the visitors who came to know only Dorner's museum, that was the only version of the past they knew. The museum is conceived to be the place where we can see and learn our collective past, the way it changes and evolves along the linear timeline called chronology. However, the museum itself is perceived as some kind of timeless place that does not change, since we assume there is only one (official) past, there is only one story we call History. But this is obviously not true. The museums are changing all the time and in many ways. Dorner's museum is just one such example, but an important one. If the museums are changing all the time, then the past is changing all the time as well.

177 (302A) Lissitzky: Gallery for abstract painting. Art Museum, Hanover, c. 1925. Works by Picasso, Mondrian, Moholy-Nagy, Lissitzky (?) , Leger

Anonymous: *Cubism and Abstract Art—Cabinet,* 1936, acrylic on canvas, 110x80cm

Alexander Dorner: *Die Zwanziger Jahre in Hannover*, 2062, acrylic on canvas, 150x200cm

We could now ask ourselves, what might be the place where we would preserve memories of all the different ways that the past has been remembered since the emergence of the first museums? A Meta-Museum? And, what would be the narrative that will connect all the exhibits in the Meta-Museum? Meta-History?

Walter Benjamin
New York, October 2008

Pablo Picasso: *The Spaniard*, 2008
charcoal on paper, 63x47cm

Letter

Thirty years ago the Gallery of Abstract Art in Hannover was probably the most famous single room of twentieth-century art in the world. It was achieved by the ingenious treatment of the walls. As one moved along, the walls appeared to change. Sliding panels made it possible to use the full height of the walls, and in front of the windows were two four-faced rotating cases. Canvases by Léger, Picasso, Mondrian (the first of his abstract paintings in any museum!), Kandinsky, Moholy, Lissitzky, Baumeister, Gabo, hung high and low. An Archipenko sculpture was placed in front of a mirror that reflected both the sculpture's back and the wall opposite. The designer of this handsome and ingenious installation was the Russian constructivist El

Lissitzky. The director of the Hannover Museum, whose imagination and courage made the gallery possible, was Alexander Dorner. The Nazi revolution was cultural as well as political. Like the rulers of the U.S.S.R., the Nazis felt that modern art, created in freedom, was subversive. They persecuted the modern artists, threw their work out of German museums, and attacked the museum directors who had shown or collected 'art bolshevism.' Some of the museum directors were discharged; some resigned; some stayed on to fight a rear-guard action. Among the last was Dr Dorner.

I last visited the Hannover Museum in 1935, two years after the Nazis seized power. The first thing I asked to see after being welcomed by Dr Dorner was the gallery of abstract art. Elsewhere in Germany modern painting had disappeared from museum walls, so I half-expected to find the famous room dismantled. Yet it was still there and accessible to the public, though to visit it may have been risky for a German, since there were spies even in the museums. Dr Dorner showed me the abstract gallery proudly. But it was the last redoubt. Within a year or so it was closed, its works of art dispersed, destroyed, or sold abroad, its director a voluntary 'cultural' refugee in the United States. Germany's loss was our gain.

Alfred H. Barr, Jr.
Museum of Modern Art, New York

Fernand Léger: *Étude en Bleu*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 65x50cm

El Lissitzky: *Proun GK*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 65x50cm

Alexander Archipenko:
Flat Torso, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 100x50cm

El Lissitzky: *Neuer*, 2008, acrylic on paper, 51x43cm

A Box in the Basement.
On the works of Kasimir Malevich loaned to the Provincial Museum of Hannover

Kasimir Malevich only traveled outside of Russia once in his lifetime. In the spring of 1927 more than 70 of his paintings, gouaches, information boards, and architectural models were shown on the occasion of the Great Berlin Art Exhibition. Having traveled to Berlin for the exhibition, he was, however, disappointed by its results. Malevich was only able to sell a single work. Something else thwarted any further plans: After only two months he departed once again for Leningrad for unknown reasons. He subsequently landed a jail sentence, which marked the beginning of a defamation campaign that ultimately erased the name of the founder of Suprematism from the annals of artistic life in the Soviet Union. In addition, he soon fell ill with cancer. At the time of Malevich's death as a result of the disease in 1935 a representative selection of his work was in storage in the West—in a large crate, which had apparently been de-

signed by the artist himself. To be precise, this crate was sitting in Hannover's largest museum at the time, the former Provincial Museum, which had been renamed the State Museum in July of 1933.

Why in Hannover? Up until now nothing has suggested that Kasimir Malevich had ever been in this city. Nevertheless, the artist and the director of the Hannover Museum certainly knew about each other's work, even if only through the mediation of El Lissitzky, who had lived in Hannover from 1922 to 1927, where he had been working on a book about his artist colleague. Through El Lissitzky, Malevich was also in contact with the Kestner Society, which planned to present an exhibition of his works in 1924, although this never came to fruition. One year later the Provincial Museum showed interest in purchasing one work by the Leningrad artist.

The mid-1920s was a favorable period: Alexander Dorner, who had been appointed to a position at Hannover's oldest museum in 1919, had recently become both a member of the board of the Kestner Society and also the Director of Art at the Provincial Museum. Through his competence and willingness to take risks he had worked himself into a position of respect. Based on his beliefs about the historical evolution of tendencies and movements in art, Dorner had redesigned his section of the museum through the use of color and new hangings into so-called atmosphere rooms that were intended to emanate the mood of a specific period. His work benefited both from the general desire for change that permeated the early Weimar Republic and, in Hannover, the acute need for action to be taken in terms of what was up to that point an outdated and crowded gallery. The reorganization concluded with the so-

El Lissitzky: *Zankstifter*, 2008
acrylic on paper, 51x43cm

El Lissitzky, *Proun 1C*, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 100x67cm

called Abstract Cabinet, which was completed in 1927 and which Dorner had commissioned El Lissitzky to design as the highlight of his new art gallery. In this dynamic, constantly changing space he subsequently presented the most contemporary art of the 1920s. In quick succession he purchased works from artists who today are among the most important representatives of the classic modernist period: works by Heckel, Kirchner and Nolde were entered into the inventory lists as well as those by Schlemmer, Kandinsky, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy and Baumeister. The planned acquisition of a work by Kasimir Malevich did not take place, however. Nevertheless, from May 1930 to approximately the fall of 1936 the museum did house the box of Malevich's works.

This is how it came about: In the fall of 1929 Alexander Dorner asked the architect Hugo Häring, a German friend of the artist, to send him a selection of works for review, since he was considering a purchase. It is still uncertain today whether Häring had the right to sell works to Dorner. There is, however, clear evidence that a crate of paintings was sent to the Provincial Museum of Hannover at the order of Häring in May 1930. When asked a year and a half later whether he had come to a decision about a purchase, Dorner replied that he currently saw few chances for an acquisition but that the works could gladly remain at the museum. Häring agreed, since he did not have comparable storage facilities: Dorner should freely take his time with any decision. According to Häring, it had been agreed with Malevich that the proceeds from any sales should for the moment remain in the West, until the artist would have time to return. As previously mentioned, it never came to that, and so the

box remained in the Hannover Provincial Museum, where Dorner occasionally exhibited the work. According to a letter from Dorner to Sigfried Giedion, dating from October 1934, the Cabinet was still intact and exhibiting pictures by, among others, Malevich.

One of the idiosyncrasies in the history of the arts in Hannover in the 1930s is that artworks that had long since been declared 'degenerate' elsewhere continued to be exhibited in the art gallery of the State Museum. This occurred with the assent of Dorner's superiors, and it can be explained both by his exhibition policies and his ability to combine lip service to party politics and a belief in the evolutionary trajectory of art in such a way that, for example, abstract art—including also the works of Kasimir Malevich—was viewed as the representative art of the new German state, thus continued to be shown.

Up through the end of his life Dorner considered himself a defender of modernism, who assumed the risk of keeping the Malevich loans in his museum. Why else, he asked his friend Walter Gropius in retrospect in 1942, would he have 'assumed the personal risk' of smuggling the works of Malevich 'secretly from the museum and out of the country, partly under my name,' if not 'to fight the Nazis with their own weapons?' Everyone else lacked the courage. Playing on Gropius' stance in the 1930s he asked, 'Walter, didn't you ... also at first try to save and preserve what you could before you gave up?' But in the face of increasing pressure, Dorner too found himself forced to give up. In

El Lissitzky: *R.V.N.2*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 100x100cm
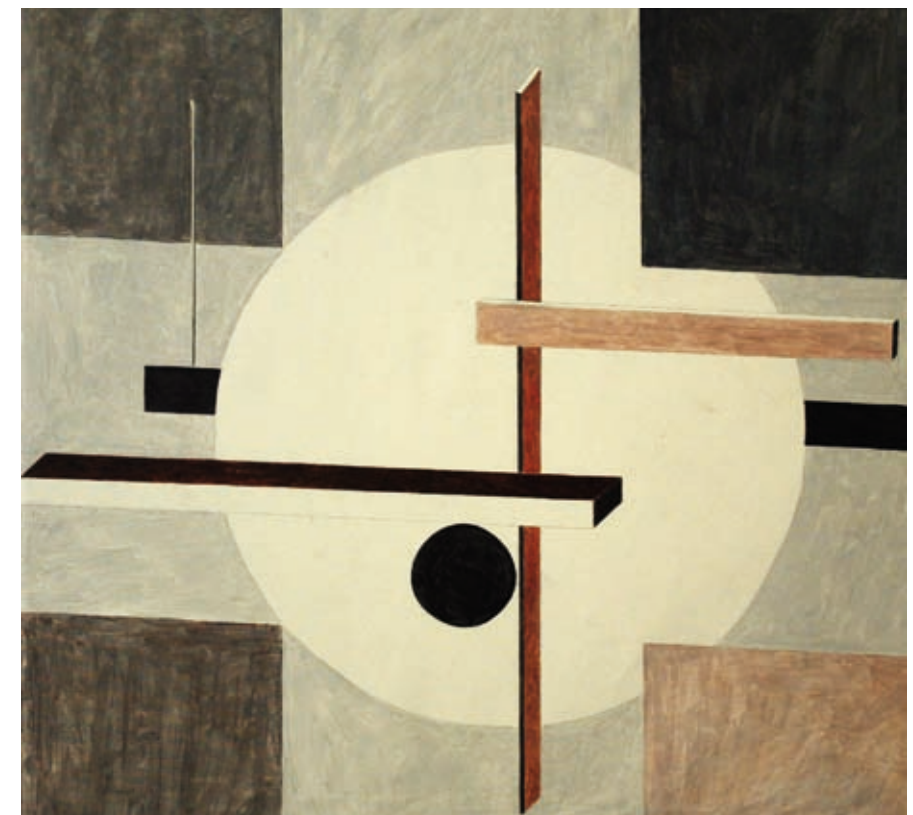
the beginning of February 1937 he submitted his resignation to the State Museum.

When Dorner and his wife arrived in New York five months later in order to start a new life in the USA, two works loaned by Kasimir Malevich were in his luggage. Permission had not been granted that he take these works. It can be proved, however, that Dorner did not intend to use the works to improve his lot in the USA. Namely, he ordered that 'as soon as the political-cultural situation has changed to the extent that the Malevitch heirs [sic!] are in a position to take the painting and the drawing back to Russia,' their property should be returned. And also: 'This drawing should go to a public Institute—in case I die before I have taken care of this trust.' The Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard University, to which Dorner's widow gave the drawing, has honored this request of holding the drawing for the legal heirs of the loan for over six decades.

Other museums that had similarly come in contact with works from the Malevich box were less transparent about the origin of the pieces. One of these was the New York Museum of Modern Art. Its founding director, Alfred H. Barr, had been hosted at the Hannover State Museum with his wife in 1935, where Dorner had shown him the Malevich box. Four works were handed to the enthusiastic director of the MoMA on the spot for $160 (a value corresponding to 600 Reichsmark). Dorner sent an additional 17 works to New York in Sep-
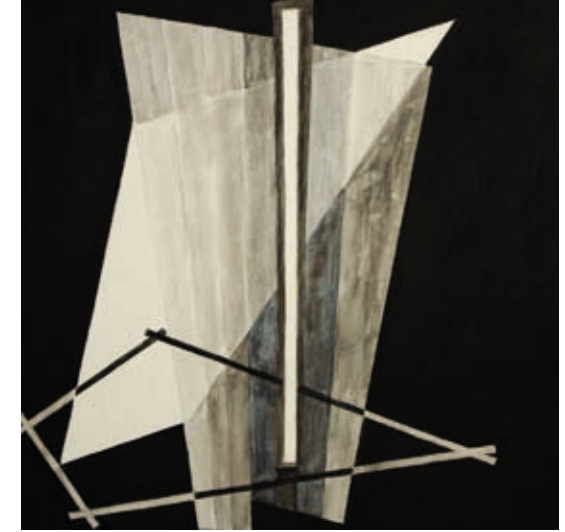

László Moholy-Nagy:
Konstruktives Bild, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 50x52cm

tember 1935. The correspondence provides proof that at the time it was not intended to leave the works there. Instead, Barr was supposed to send them back to Hannover after the conclusion of the exhibition Cubism and Abstract Art. However, it became increasingly dangerous for Dorner to continue his work. Ultimately the works remained in New York. Over the course of Alfred Barr's long directorship they were labeled as anonymous loans and exhibited. After the Barr era the museum silently incorporated the works into museum property. Only with the shift in the political system in the 1990s did this practice come to an end. When sued by the heirs for the return of the loans, MoMA approved the payment of a one-time sum of a suspected 5 million dollars and the return of one work, which the heirs could use at their discretion. From this point on, the remaining works have been in the possession of the MoMA.

Eight years later the book finally closed on the last chapter in the story of the loans from the Malevich crate: In April 2008 after many years of legal battles the Malevich heirs came to an agreement with the city of Amsterdam about the return of 5 of a total of 14 works from the collection of the Stedelijk Museum. How did these works reach the Netherlands? At the end of the 1950s—when almost everyone who had known about the Malevich crate had died—the Stedelijk purchased 84 works from the crate. Two decades before, in the fall of 1936, Dorner had sent the remaining works in the crate back to Hugo Häring, who initially continued to hold the works in trust. Then, a heightened interest in the works of Kasimir Malevich developed in the years after the war. In addition, Häring's health rapidly declined; he needed money. In May 1956 he drew up an affidavit, which stated that he himself had been named the sole custodian of the loans by the artist in 1927, and in accordance with valid law he was now their owner. Although there were doubts from the very start about the legality of this act, the Stedelijk increased the pressure on Häring to sell the works at a price way below their value—with success. This step was taken in the fall of 1958 and—not surprisingly—well out of sight of the public eye.
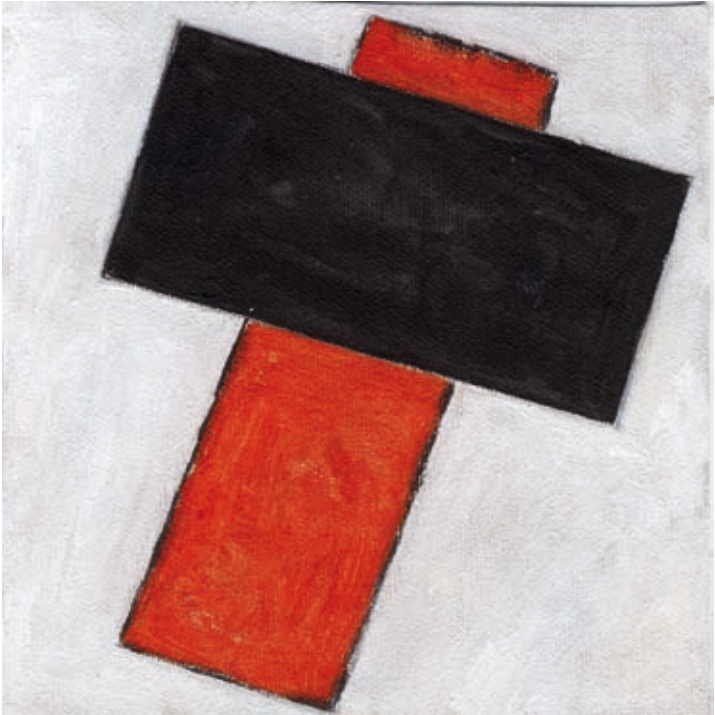
Ines Katenhusen
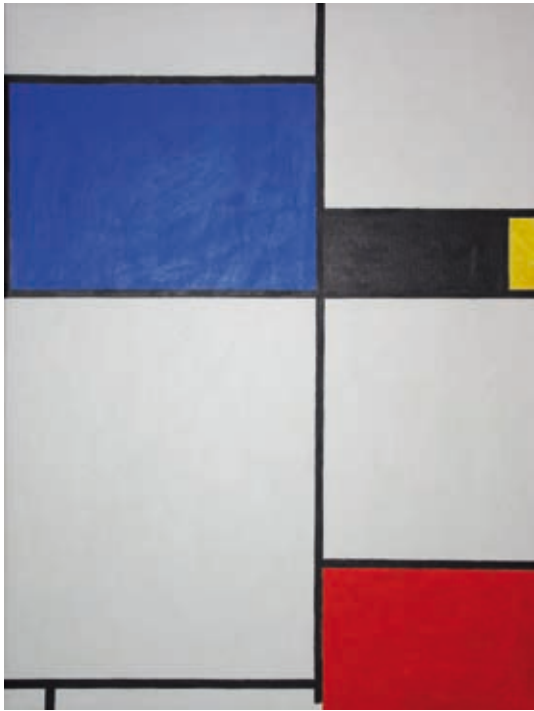
Oskar Schlemmer: *Figur,* 2008
acrylic on paper, 56x41cm

Piet Mondrian: *Composition*, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 80x60cm

Kazimir Malevich:
White on White, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 15x15cm

Piet Mondrian: *Composition*, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 42x49cm

Kazimir Malevich:
Suprematism, 2008
acrylic on canvas, 15x15cm

Kabinett der Abstrakten, Halle fuer Kunst, Lueneburg, 2009, this and following pages.

To create a complex space of memory, the exhibition worked with various kinds of reference material and display techniques including paintings, books, catalogs, film footage, and sound. 'The artifacts at this exhibition are not works of art. These are rather souvenirs, selected specimens of our collective memory.' (Walter Benjamin)

The Museum of American Art is an educational institution dedicated to assembling, preserving and exhibiting memories primarily of modern American art shown in Europe during the Cold War. The major focus is set especially on those exhibitions which contributed to establishing a common cultural post-war identity in Europe based on individualism, internationalism and modernism.

The Abstract Cabinet is a recent acquisition of the Museum of American Art, which extends its early modern collection with one of the most important achievements of modern art.
www.museum-of-american-art.org

The Museum of American Art is a member of AMI.

Politics of Memory

'Every community is an imaginary one, but only imaginary communities are real.' (Etienne Balibar) Fragment of an image taken at the shooting range of the 'Policemen' sports club, showing a part of the adjacent wooded area purported to be a crime scene.

In 2001 in Northern Afghanistan, US-backed Northern Alliance soldiers shot and killed Taliban fighters who were locked inside a freight container. Milica Tomić developed her work **Container** as a performative object based on this war crime. The object is created anew for every exhibition. In reconstructing the hole-riddled container, production conditions specific to each location are inscribed in the work. Thus far the work has been realized multiple times: in Belgrade in 2004, for the Sydney Biennial 2006, and for the 6th Gyumri International Biennial in Armenia in 2008. In 2002 Milica Tomić co-founded the Grupa Spomenik (The Monument Group) which consists of theoreticians and artists. It was formed in response to the call by the city of Belgrade to design a memorial. Serbian artists were supposed to conceive a monument that was to be dedicated to the wars that took place on former Yugoslavian soil during the 1990s. Grupa Spomenik wants to develop a memorial that follows neither the politics of monument construction nor the model of reconciliation. Grupa Spomenik declares its activities as the monument. The monument that they create consists of the collective process in which political positions are defined. This way of re-conceiving the monument, or the object of art, generates several questions. How does the mediality of form shape specific articulations? How does a public existence determine the mode of that speech? How does the locality and temporality of an exhibition— be it a group show with **Container** or a public conversational event by Grupa Spomenik—displace the limits of a work of art?

Milica Tomić

DISPLAYER Let's begin with the following thought: exhibiting can be viewed as a cultural praxis, since it operates in a relational field in which various interests converge. What is at stake in the exhibition is a specific selection, a factor which crucially heightens the cultural responsibility of those participating in the exhibition process. Do you think exhibition can be a cultural and an artistic praxis at the same time?

MILICA TOMIĆ I clearly distinguish between art and culture. Art breaks through barriers, and the role of culture has always been to smooth over these breaches. For me, culturalization is a process, an attempt to normalize art. How to process art and how to consume art. I understand exhibiting to be a cultural praxis along those lines. Concerning the exhibition design, I think it has to become a constitutive part of the work. The exhibition site and design should 'vanish' in the work.

Does that mean that when art is exhibited, it becomes part of culture? And mends the breach at the same time? In other words: art that produces, if not to say provokes, a disruption; does the disruption last only up to the time it enters an exhibition space?

Not always, because there is art that is brought to realization only by being exhibited. But in many cases, strategies and policies of exhibiting are responsible for a process whereby art is culturalized, normalized.

Take **Container**; the on-site production is an integral component of the artistic work, even if the process of producing involves the cultural field to the greatest possible extent. But is exhibiting identical with production in this case, or is the exhibition of the container, for instance, at the Sydney Biennale, something that occurs only after the completion of the artistic work? Putting it another way: Does producing the work under local conditions with the involvement of local actors amount to a form of exhibiting?

Yes, that puts the case well. In the 1970s, the conceptual artists brought the institutional exhibition space into art by using the space as a medium. In the 1990s, the place of production has become a place of exhibition. After the production process, every act of exhibition is one of culturalization. In the case of Container**, I don't think the exhibiting can be part of the production process at all. As a final object, the container is only a result of the process of reconstruction. But why should a container be exhibited as a final product of the reconstruction process when the essential factor—namely, the reconstruction process—has been completed and it is an essential part of the project? The requirement to exhibit the final product is something we can view in the framework of the capitalist system, along the lines that an employer who has made an investment now needs to see a result. These relationships are reproduced in the collaboration among artists, curators, and directors who have invested in a work in an institutional framework. The exhibiting institution, being the last link in the chain of this market transaction, needs a visible, tangible result: a product.**

The result is the container as an object in the garden of the museum, a presentable product. But your work is different?

Container **starts as a reconstruction of a crime perpetrated in Afghanistan in 2001. Thousands of Taliban militants who had surrendered to the Northern Alliance were loaded by the hundreds into sealed truck containers. They were deprived of food, water, and air for the duration of the several-day drive through the desert to Sheberghan prison. When they started begging for air, the Northern Alliance troops, controlled by the US Army, opened fired on the containers 'in order to make holes for the air to get in.' (as quoted in Jamie Duran's documentary film** Afghan Massacre: Convoy of Death**) Those who survived were subsequently shot** and buried in mass graves. In order to reconstruct this event, we have to find a container, to find a place where it can be riddled with bullet-holes, to find an appropriate machine gun, and so on. In order to do this anywhere in the world, this object-container has to go through the process of local political, military, and economic relations, the relations of production of the act of shooting (reconstruction), which in retrospect makes visible the relations and interconnections of the local political, economic, and military structures. The relation between the modern state which possesses a sovereign right to use force, and the way this LEGITIMACY is distributed, becomes very palpable. The army always has the right to use the machine gun, and in this regard the application of force by the state becomes very concrete. During the reconstruction, each state determines the conditions for the realization of this piece of art. When the work was realized in Belgrade, Serbia, the right to use the machine gun was confined to a policemen's sporting club whose members are both police and army officers. In my case, they were exercising this right for private ends. In Guymri/Armenia, there was an absolute ban on weapons. In Sydney/Australia, only kangaroo hunters were allowed to riddle the container with bullets, and shots could only be fired on the private ground of a film scenographer, using the same ammunition as the Australian army was employing in Afghanistan. In Britain, the only possibility was inside the BBC production studios.**

But exhibiting is then not only the exhibition of the container as a product, but part of the artistic work itself, part of the producing and part of the institution that co-determines the way the work is realized on-site. **In the case of** Container**, the exhibiting institution always mirrors the power relations of the apparatus of state. You're right when you say that the exhibiting can be part of the production process. But I still can't see the right method for making that visible in exhibitions.**

Your documentation includes a great deal of information about the evolution of the work—information that remains concealed to the uninvolved viewer with no knowledge of the local conditions. I'm thinking, for instance, of the reaction of that former policeman you asked to specify the type and quantity of ammunition. He then began to associate the whole thing with a different war crime, perpetrated in a container on Yugoslav territory. He was unfriendly, and visibly nervous in front of the running camera. That made the container's production process a visibly performative act, even if it was not taking place as a performance in front of an audience in an art institution. This episode becomes very important in the framework of your documentation, but is neither directly nor indirectly legible in the container as an object. On film or in a photograph, the valence of the act of shooting is entirely different. But when the object is put on display, the depiction of the act of production doesn't occupy the foreground. Instead, the viewers are allowed to think about the container and their own picture of past events. The production period is skipped in its entirety, and the viewer has no access to the documentation. That's why I'm interested to know why you choose not to show this material.

For me, the object—the container—is strongly performative: the entire process of reconstruction is inscribed in the container itself, and this process has created a space in which the politics of war become subjectivized and the ways in which these politics are implemented can unfold. In my view, the process is much more important than showing the documentation or the container as an object, if the necessity exists to put something on display. But the question arises: What are we able to see, and what are we not able to see? That leads us to the French philosopher Alain Badiou, who wrote about war images in his Diary on the Iraq War**, and asked 'What can we see, or what is to be seen of war at all? Are we able to see anything of the war?' A paraphrased version of his answer might read: 'We have to bravely accept the idea that we are not able to see anything of the war**

or about a war. Accordingly, the existence of the war as well as our attitude to its existence are dependent on abstract decisions and political axioms. If we do not see anything, we have to think without seeing, and this will give us a chance to realize something about it, in an unexpected way or by accident.'
I'm interested to know how people might handle this absence: Is the documentation the only way of making visible this network that is the core of the piece? I'm in the middle of an investigation conducted through a reconstruction of the crime. I build a network of information in which the local situation becomes clear together with the strong links between the local politics of war and the global politics of violence. The moment the container goes on display and invites visitors to approach it, then the viewer is placed in the middle of these circumstances through the object-container. Of course, the visitor knows nothing about the process, but it has a strong performative character: the process of reconstruction was inscribed onto the object-container, and this inscription constructed a container where the politics of war are subjectivized and realized. It functions as the object of the process through which it has passed, which this container-body has experienced, and thus it becomes a performative object.

That's exactly the point: it becomes performative the moment people arrive, view, and imagine the things which might have happened inside the container, due to the violence of the bullet-holes, because it is a strong picture, a strong object, a strong place. Or, alternatively, one attempts to display the developmental process of the container. For me, in fact, these are two entirely different works. Is it about the process in society? What brought me to the container, what brought me to the bullet-holes? Or is it about the factual situation that originally occurred in Afghanistan? **I would never claim that the work describes the occurrences in Afghanistan at the time. It's primarily a matter of the local conditions, but also of the fact that the local networks, which shape this process,**

are part of the global politics of war. But I always have problems, such as for instance during the Sydney Biennial. There was a sign in front of my work reading 'Milica Tomić, Serbia.' At first glance, the viewer has to assume it's about the wars conducted by Serbia. Even after obtaining more information about the work, one connects it with the wars in ex-Yugoslavia and in Afghanistan. But it extends far beyond these conflicts. It stretches to Sydney and Australia. Container **presents itself merely as a reproduction of various conflict situations … That's how the container appears when exhibited merely as an object. A representation of war.** Container **is traveling the world, riddled with bullets wherever it goes. War is everywhere. Yes, war is everywhere, Serbia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, etc. The container is all these different situations of war. War is everywhere but not as a depiction/description of different situations of war, rather, this work embodies the ways in which the local network participates in a global politics of war. This work is able to capture, reveal and construct through the process of reconstruction a real and concrete network of violence at those places where the reconstruction and exhibition take place (Sydney, Belgrade, Guymri).**
This work is capable of constructing something new, of making visible a real, tangible network of violence in the specific location. Formally, this was a reconstruction of a crime, however, through this reconstruction what was established, constructed and made visible were unexpected new/old relations. What do these new/old relations mean? How did this happen? At one end, we have a modern state which has the sovereign rights to use force and at the other, the ways in which this right gets distributed.
Re-enactment of this reconstruction, that is, the conditions of shooting into the container, produced different scenarios in different countries and states. During the reconstruction of this crime it is the state which defines under which conditions it is possible to perforate the container and this is

the moment where this artwork takes place. At the same time, it shows the link between the local network of violence and the global politics of war, precisely highlighting the mode and point of linkage. But the reason people often understand this work only to be a depiction of war is a consequence of the exhibition policy we can then view as part of the process of culturalization.

What makes **Container** so difficult to exhibit is the direct, but differing, relations to the public with regard to the original event, to the reconstruction process, and to exhibiting itself. In Afghanistan, something took place outside the public eye. Something happened that was explicitly not addressed to the public. It was clandestine, and obviously became public only by chance. When it comes to exhibiting, however, the activation and production of public spheres is a constitutive component. The procedures of laying out and exposing are inherent to exhibiting. **Container** is about the opposite, about the other side of exhibiting, namely keeping in. What did not enter the public domain? I'm alluding to the relationship between the explicit addressing of the public of an exhibition and the attempt to politically 'make invisible' this event in the container. That makes it difficult to find an appropriate form of exhibiting the work. Beyond the exhibition, what formats of public presentation exist that are able to build up the relationship of the container to the public and simultaneously thematize the problematic nature of this relationship?
Container is a kind of prototype that develops different forms or a programme of rules that enables a container to be produced in a specific location. This location possesses a series of specific attributes. A network of conditions stipulates the form ultimately assumed by the container and especially the way this form comes into being. The reconstruction does not refer to a single occurrence somewhere in Afghanistan, but is specific for the exhibition location. You say that the container in its specific manifestation is possible only within this situation, since the process gives rise to the object. But what the process inscribes cannot be

conveyed by the object alone. For that reason, I wonder whether the process and the conditions of the network in each place could not be emphasized by the title. 'Reconstructing a Crime' refers to a temporal process, while the subtitle of the work **(Re)Construction of a Crime** designates a product resulting from a completed process. Moreover, **(Re)Construction of a Crime** in Sydney is something wholly different from 'reconstruction of a crime' in Belgrade. Does the title not give rise to misunderstandings, as well? **I have to say, this work is neither a re-enactment nor a reconstruction. Initially, though, I thought of the work as a reconstruction of the crime because I wanted to ask who is entitled to narrate a particular crime. The answer is always the state or international courts of justice. As an artist, I assumed the right to narrate the crime and try to connect up the material in a different way. For that reason, I'd hesitate to deny the aspect of reconstruction, which is really important for the beginning of the work. But at a certain point it flips over into something that has nothing more to do with reconstruction but instead creates wholly new circumstances that might be termed CONSTRUCTION.**

I believe it's important to realize that the reconstruction does not stretch investigatively back into the past but always takes place at the moment of presentation and in a specific location.
The reconstruction is then constitutive for the public in this moment, at the site of reconstruction. You show the Sydney newspaper with a photo report about hunters shooting at the container on the private site. The report is likewise part of the reconstruction, and a space is created by the type of publication. Is that not already part of the exhibition? In this case, the container poses very precise questions and shows reconstruction as the possible actualization of an event.
For me, that is the exhibition. It's hard to establish the moment when it starts. Does the exhibition begin on Day Zero, when the research begins? Does it end the instant you begin exhibiting? Or is the exhibition rather

the situation and the constellation in which the container-object finds itself? Actually, the container is scarcely acceptable as an object anymore: due to the process of inscription you describe above, but also due to what a specific context evokes, the container could also be viewed as a subject, a performative subject. I believe that the exhibition arises here in the confrontation between the concealed, the political, and the public. That is also the moment in which you, Milica, stand in the garden of the ranch in Sydney where the bullets are flying and people come into the situation from outside. But when a report on your work appears in the paper, it's equally a moment of exhibiting. These circumstances in which the public is created allow the exhibition to happen. It can be a matter neither of a period from A to Z nor of a material object, it has to be about a flashing-up within this process, that is to say, about a coming-together of that which is made visible and whoever happens to be looking at it in that moment.

Here's the quote from Walter Benjamin's **On the Concept of History**, in which he talks about the 'flashing up.' It brings home Benjamin's method of actualization: 'To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.'

That is also what the Grupa Spomenik (Monument Group) is about. The main topic of the Monument Group's work is the politics of memory, and our main working axiom is very simple—there is no memory without politics, which means that there is no memory without a political subject. If there is no political subject in our actuality who can remember a certain emancipatory politics in the past, the only memory we can have is just a private, or a historical, memory.

You mentioned the 'political subject' several times in yesterday's lecture. What exactly do you mean by the term?

When I say 'political subject' I mean an emancipatory subject, which I see as an intervention in a certain situation, in the existing situation that is apparently 'normal' and accepted as such. It is about breaking a consensus, imposing risk and (non-globalistic) universalism—politics for ALL. It brings us back to Grupa Spomenik. In 2002, the Belgrade municipal authorities issued a call to artists to conceive and design a memorial to the 'Fallen Combatants and Victims of the 1990-1999 Wars in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia (including those killed in the NATO bombings).' There followed a series of unsuccessful competitions with changing titles. Each competition generated new discussions among the group of artists and theorists gathered to discuss key issues connected to the impossibility of naming and building such a monument. Additionally, the discussions generated conflicts among us, the participants, resulting in splits and ultimately the disintegration of the discussion group. So we can say that the group called Grupa Spomenik was formed as the result of these splits and diverging opinions and the failure to create or name a monument dedicated to the wars of the 1990s. We decided to initiate a project to create a public monument in the medium of discourse. Our idea was to generate a political space in which it is possible to discuss the wars in the 1990s and to discuss the (post)-war collectivities in the former Yugoslavia, but instead of referring to models of reconciliation between subjects, each entity can define his or her political position. We are trying very carefully to produce circumstances which can initiate a discussion with different political positions and groups.

I'd like to know what you mean when you talk about the public. What do you produce to address a public, and which public do you attract?

There are different strategies. We use the art system. Our 'Politics of Memory' series publishes the transcripts of discussions. The entire production of these books is part of artistic display production. Thousands of copies of the books are placed in the exhibition space—as distributive objects, participatory monuments. In this way, the publication which is a transcript of the (im)possibility of building a monument becomes a public discussion, stays in the hands of the viewer, and the exhibited installation in the form of the monument disappears as an aesthetic object. Last September, Bojana Pejic invited us to the 49th October Art Salon, to the international exhibition titled Artist/Citizen: Contextual Artistic Practices**. Grupa Spomenik established the editorial board for a newspaper called 'Mathemes of Re-association.' We opened up a discussion within Serbia's public and intellectual space about genocide in Srebrenica, a subject about which Serbia is in total denial. The idea was to dislocate to Serbia two 'scenes' (speaking with Freud) from Bosnia and Herzegovina. One involved the youngest generation of theorists of the politics and culture of memory, criticizing the actual policies of reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The other scene was about contemporary criminological-forensic science and theory, represented by the scientists working in the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP), a Sarajevo-based global institution that invented the re-association and identification process for the mortal remains of people killed in the Srebrenica genocide, whose bodies were found in mass graves. There was a series of lectures and discussions, or open workshops, with forensic investigators (archaeologists, anthropologists, DNA analysts, and the like) presenting the chain of the identity re-association process. Each of the separate mortal remains has to go through this process of identification, which is followed by the reconstruction of a certain identity. The genocide in Srebrenica and the mass graves are unique in European history because never before was it the case that the location of mass graves was moved almost three times with the result that one body might be distributed over various locations in the landscape. In order to reconstruct a body, you have to go around the whole of Bosnia to piece back together one identity. Each set of mortal remains is assigned an identity/case number code, including the information that one right hand was found in a certain mass grave, and that the left hand was previously buried in a different location. When the identification process is completed and all the remains are collected, the identity number code enables you to reconstruct the way the people were killed and how the mass graves were shifted. It makes visible the entire politics and ideology, and all the activities behind the annihilation of these human beings. Under the title** Mathemes of Re-association**, we displayed the identity/case number codes in the exhibition space. The politics of reconciliation, also through the efforts of the ICMP, is erasing the political positions of both victim and perpetrator by naming the person killed by genocide as just a 'missing person.' Now I can say more about the 'mathemes.' The politics of reconciliation are reflected in a scientification—the scientific method of going through the process of re-association and identification, producing the case code numbers. At the end of the identification process, there is the identity, the name, of the killed person. But then, the same thing always happens: after regaining his/her name, the identified body has to go through the process of Islamic religious ritual in order to be buried! Even people who were never religious, secular citizens. The victims (the dead, and the community and families of the dead) who were killed and punished—regardless of their religious affiliation—for being Moslems in the perpetrators' viewpoint are now being identified with the view of the perpetrator who saw them just as 'ethnic beings,' as Moslems. The** Mathemes of Re-association **announced, or declared, this case code as a 'matheme.' We view this as a political act which ruptures the mandatory chain of equivalence: 'killed in genocide = missing person = case code number = Moslem.' But a large number of bones are unidentifiable. They represent a disturbing surplus. This surplus of bones resists being recounted, identified, and Islamized. As we see it, this quantity of bones harbors a capacity for political subjectivization that can never be produced by forensic investigation,**

by the politics of reconciliation, or by community-imposed Islamization. These bones remain an unidentifiable pile in the Center of Re-association. For us, that unidentifiable quantity is a fantastic potential, uncanny and troublesome for everyone in equal measure.

Does 'Re-association' mean re-assignment in the sense that the mathemes are there in order to make the identifiable body parts Islamic? The numbers are re-assigned to a political subject?
The personal identity, specifically the name of the killed person, is the end result of the processes of re-association conducted by the ICMP. Once the body remains, the bones, have been re-associated, they have to be thematically unified, and that's why they go through the religious process of Islamization, which in this case has the function of restoring the human quality. If we call the case code numbers 'mathemes,' the case codes become pure mathematics that calls for new axioms, and has some possibility of turning into 'ANYTHING.' That means that he or she does not have to end up merely as a religious or ethnic identity.

Starting with this status quo, how does one arrive at a work that deals with these conditions? Is the newspaper a form of artistic work?
The method of this artistic work is dislocation. The work appears in two mediums: the newspaper editorial board, and finally the newspaper.

You produce visibility. Although the genocide is not addressed as such, your project has provided a tool that allows people to talk about it. Like an archaeologist who reports, spreads out a procedure, proceeds descriptively.
Serbia does not acknowledge the genocide. When you talk about the genocide in Serbia, everybody behaves as if you were organizing the genocide yourself. What we have here, however, is not the reconstruction of the genocide, but the re-association.

But that is indeed an act of reconstruction.
What happened due to the war and the genocide? The consequence was the rupture of all connections! Genocide is at the center of our communications. And not just between Bosnia and Serbia. Slovenia, too, is a part of the whole story. It's also a matter of re-associating our connections! Society's connections! Dislocation is a method that restores these connections.

If one takes it that far, then it's not a question of re-association anymore, but one of reconstruction (of an occurrence)! Taking an archaeological approach, I 'play the film backward,' so to speak—with the help of a specific dead body. And there's an element of reconstruction precisely in that action. Due to the fact that it takes place not in Bosnia but in an exhibition in Belgrade, the reconstruction element gains a public. And this occurs in contradiction to a political framework that decrees, 'There is no genocide!' But only on the basis of a reconstruction process are we able to speak about genocide at all—only through that do the found objects take on this special significance.
Yes, through the circumstances being acknowledged and brought back into connection with each other.

Container tries to restore to consciousness something that has been covered up. The name of the Monument Group refers to a monument that was planned as nothing other than a symbol supposed to represent all victims. Such a monument in public space would have sunk into oblivion in the short or long term. Similarly, when identity is reconstructed over the bones the individual is submerged—as a victim. In my view, your artistic work consists in creating a monument by continuously thematizing these things and always discussing them in full view of the public.
To that extent, we have adopted Jochen Gerz's idea that discussion can be a monument. But in contrast to Gerz we say: Monument is a relation between the place of enunciation and the content of the statement about the wars of the 1990s. Every member of

the Monument Group and every discussant testifies to certain politics.

Can there be a point at which this Monument Group will disband?
We are permanently on the point of disbanding but then, miraculously, things keep going.

How does the Monument Group, as a subject, relate to the subject Milica Tomić in the exhibition? Your role in the Monument Group might be more aptly described as that of co-author. To what extent is artistic praxis part of that function?
The Monument Group is a group dedicated to producing theory and art—and I am an artist who belongs to the group. I wouldn't strictly differentiate between the art and the theory produced by the

group. In my opinion, the manner in which theory participates in the production of art makes it part of the artistic praxis. For me, the work within the group is very emancipatory. I see the Monument Group as wholly open and unresolved—a permanent questioning of the possibilities of art.

Alain Badiou: Circonstances, 2, Irak, foulard, Allemagne/France, Paris 2004.

Alain Badiou: Circonstances, 3, Portées du mot juif, Paris 2005.

Siliva Eiblmayr/Galerie im Taxispalais (Ed.): Milica Tomić, Innsbruck 2000.

Jean-Claude Milner: Les penchants criminels de l'Europe démocratique, Paris 2004.

Jacques Rancière: La Mésentente: Politique et philosophie, Paris 1995.

Grupa Spomenik (Ed.): Politics of Memory, Volume 1, Prague and Prishtina (English/Czech/Albanian) 2007.

Grupa Spomenik (Ed.): Politics of Memory, Volume 2, Nis (Serbia) 2007.

Branimir Stojanvoic (Ed.), Milica Tomić, National Pavilion, Belgrade and Venice 2003.

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01– 02 Shooters at the sports club 'Policemen' firing with automatic weapons at a container, Belgrade 2004.

03 Kangaroo hunters Stuart Taylor and Tony Mifsud on a private shooting range, Mount Victoria, NSW Blue Mountains, Australia 2006.
04 Kangaroo hunter Stuart Taylor shooting with a hunting rifle, Mount Victoria, NSW Blue Mountains, Australia 2006.

Back to the Present

Photo taken by an extra during production of the Steven Spielberg film Schindler's List, 1993.

Film is the medium of storytelling par excellence. Like its historical precursor photography, its referential character is tricky: As a technique of recording it has the quality of documentary. At the same time it's the appropriate medium for fiction. The Israeli artist Omer Fast challenges this double nature of the filmic medium by provoking short-circuits between reality and fiction. In some of his most significant works this play with ambivalences unfolds within an oral narration. Fast utilizes the documentary format of the interview and underscores the authenticity of the personal accounts while undermining it at the same time by re-editing the text of the script. With a sophisticated technique of montage, fictional and real stories (such as historical events and their popular re-enactments) are conflated in a new narration. Not surprisingly, even the following interview with Omer Fast has run through a similar editing process by the hand of the artist who refers to editing as 'a matter of an obsessive compulsion.' Fast recently advances his equivocal strategy using wholly fictional narratives. He plays the narrative space off against the production space behind the camera in which that narrative is performed and recorded. However, in cinema this educational 'Brechtian' gesture of questioning the conditions of storytelling gains a new circularity due to the transformative effect of the camera. Which spatial questions arise in the area of conflict between reality and fiction—between 'site' and 'set?' How fictional is the encounter with the real?

Omer Fast

DISPLAYER 'Örtlichkeit' (locality)—a German word you mentioned once in a talk—seems to refer not to a concrete place but rather to an ambiguous spatial texture. In **The Casting**, for example, the setting of the film-casting studio intertwines with the place of the date between the soldier and the young women. In your new work, **Looking Pretty for God**, too, there is a constant oscillation between the sites of the photo shoot and the funeral parlor. In both works, it is the oral narrative that connects these heterogeneous sites in an associative way. What do you take 'Örtlichkeit' to mean?

OMER FAST Let's start with the site: I understand a site to be the place where a particular event or activity takes place, like a building site or the scene of a crime. This implies both spatial and temporal aspects. The way a site is differentiated from just any old place is often achieved through signage and demarcation, for example a fence enclosing a building site or police tape sealing off the scene of a crime. These markers temporarily detach the site from its surroundings, restricting access to specialists who then come in and perform certain prescribed tasks for a given time. When the specialists are done, the site is usually reintegrated with its surroundings; the signage is removed and the space can resume its everyday functions. These characteristics of the site—its appropriation and demarcation, the specialization of the actors who enter it and the rehearsed, interim nature of the actions they carry out—are shared by another type of space, which is associated with ritual, storytelling and performance. We can call this other space a 'set' (like a movie set, of course, but also a theatrical stage, a musical venue, an amusement park, a circus, etc.) In contrast to the site, whose connection to the real is immanent and consequential, a set typically involves an imitation of the real, which functions

extraneously to it, if not transcendentally. (My understanding of public space and performance is indebted to Erving Goffman, particularly his notion of front and back regions.) Furthermore, no matter how authentic an imitation on a set might feel to an observer or a participant, much of the pleasure (or horror) it arouses has to do with knowing that it isn't real. Being on set requires suspending this knowledge or suppressing it. Anyway, a lot of what modern art's been about—particularly performance, happenings, situationism—is deliberately mistaking the site for the set, creating a new experience of space by confusing the two or conjoining them. I've been interested in looking at such hybrid spaces through the camera and in talking to the people who perform in them. For Spielberg's List, I visited an abandoned film set of a concentration camp outside Krakow, which was left behind after the production of Schindler's List. The deteriorating state of the set and its proximity to the site of the actual camp perfectly illustrate what I'm trying to talk about here. Together they form a kind of super-space—which one could describe in German with 'Örtlichkeit'—that conflates historical events with their later representations, relics and souvenirs with props and monuments. Although Spielberg did not intend this, what he left behind in Krakow is literally a site-specific piece of land art with a strong post-historical resonance! (I was told the company responsible for demolishing the set simply pocketed the money and ran.) For Godville, I visited the living-history museum of Colonial Williamsburg in the US state of Virginia. Essentially, the museum is a huge open-air theater created by appropriating and renovating the historical center of a colonial town. During museum hours, turnpikes seal the town center off from its surroundings. Colonial characters in period costumes inhabit the houses, working in the streets and fields, while hordes of tourists mill about, taking pictures and interacting with them. The few leftover town-center residents who have not sold their homes to the museum (the actual authentic actors

on set!) have little signs on their lawns that say: 'Not Open To The Public,' 'Not A Museum,' and my favorite 'This house is not a reenactment.' In both Spielberg's List and Godville, I tried to exploit my subjects' ability to effortlessly dip in and out of character and historical time. Furthermore, these subjects' comments about their experience on set are edited in such a way that their temporal context is often blurred or suppressed, again deliberately mixing site with set and foregrounding the unequivocal, first-hand nature of the accounts, their affective authenticity. In later work, like The Casting or Take A Deep Breath, I was less concerned with finding the site/set as a social readymade as much as with creating it inside a narrative. But that's a whole other can of worms.

Your characterization of a particular site is essential: signage and demarcation. In fact, these are also two very strong means to exhibit something. It seems, in **Looking Pretty for God** for example, the photo-camera, the headlamps and the artificial snow itself become a temporary signage of the appropriated site which also demarcates the situation, in fact articulates 'the set.' How would you describe the constantly blurring line of demarcation within the 'hybrid space?' What is the connection between the 'front' region and the 'back' region? It feels more that a different, a third space, evolves which somehow has nothing to do anymore with neither the site nor the set. Is that the 'whole other can of worms?'

It's a can of worms, a Pandora's box, a Noah's ark and a Plato's cave. The anxiety or suspicion that I feel towards the camera is very often projected onto the subjects of my work (unfortunately it can sometimes overwhelm as well!) This anxiety finds some historical foothold in the notion of the body as a trap, the prison house of the senses, from which it follows that the camera is merely an extension of the body, a prosthetic eye, and the images it produces are prosthetic images and memories. Sure a camera is also an enabling prosthesis when used as a memory aid or as a kind of crude

machine for time travel. But the camera ultimately disappoints where all technology does, namely in failing to free the soul from its prison and delivering the transcendence (immortality?) it so desperately longs for. Anyway, back on earth, what I try to offer in my work is certainly not a solution to this ontological mess but an articulation of its effects, the ways consciousness is impacted at a time when screens and cameras are very much part of our sensory/memory apparatus. This often leads to work that equivocates or blurs between the narrative space (what the camera sees) and the production space in which that narrative is performed and recorded (what or who is behind the camera.) Again, this goes back to the site/set subject. There is a nice circularity to doing this on film because once you turn the camera around to reveal the production space it immediately turns into the narrative space and vice versa. It's not a particularly novel idea but it's one I've been attracted to since I started using a camera.

Another way of pitting the front and back regions against one another is through editing. I briefly mentioned the fractured temporality that characterizes the taking and viewing of photographs. When dealing with film or video (as opposed to still photography) editing impacts the picture with yet another temporality, one that can be at odds with what the picture depicts or what the subjects within it describe. For me, editing is also a matter of an obsessive compulsion, a writing process that often produces narratives which were not a part of the script or what was said in the original footage. For example, for CNN Concatenated (2002) I recorded hundreds of hours of television footage in which news presenters speak to the camera and then cut the footage up into single words. These words (10,000 of them) were then edited together into a speech that is part poem, part confession and part harangue. The piecemeal editing not only runs against the temporality of the original footage (the news of the day delivered in linear fashion) but it establishes a competing temporality

in which speech is synthesized and an alternative consciousness or speaking entity is channeled. I've continuously returned to this technique in later works that involved interviews. The subjects are typically allowed to talk uninterruptedly for a while and then I take over and use their words and image to channel my own thoughts and issues. Although the results still contain the documentary evidence of the encounter with the real (the same way a photograph does) through montage the concatenated footage can not only swerve into the unreal, into the past or an imagined future, but more importantly back to the present.

Your thoughts are very interesting in terms of performance or land art—but you choose the camera for your work! And your work often incorporates a subtle reflection about the medium of film. To what extent does the camera itself have a transformative effect on the oscillation between site and set? Doesn't everything it 'touches' seem to become 'automatically' a staged performance?
Of course a camera transforms the space it is in as well as the persons around it who are aware of its presence. This effect is not only confined to the persons in front of the camera, who mutate into performers and actors while being photographed. Photographers and filmmakers are also transformed in relation to their surroundings in that they're distanced from them, as if being behind a lens signifies that what transpires in front of it is already part of a future photograph. (A transformation that might adversely affect the photographer in dangerous environments by increasing her courage to get close to the subject. Thus the mystique that surrounds being a photographer á la Robert Capa.) Interestingly though, with the popularization of cameras this distancing effect has become so commonplace that it can even occur in the absence of a camera. For example, eyewitnesses to disasters often relate their experience to a movie when making sense of what happened, as if their mind requires a phantom camera to comprehend

the event while simultaneously distancing them from it. In fact, when disaster actually strikes, persons in its periphery are very likely to reach out for their cameras in a gesture that arguably aims to insulate them from what's happening. In this sense, the camera not only furnishes the photographic evidence for having 'been there' but, somewhat contradictorily, it also dissociates the photographer from the 'there,' the site and the moment. And so, I would argue that the manner in which a camera transforms people has more to do with this forward projection in time (and thus space) than with a sudden perception of reality as necessarily staged or phony. (I prefer this explanation because of its association with visualization/ projection as a psychological defense mechanism.) This kind of distortion in temporal perception also occurs when looking at photographs, not just when making them. With its rectangular framing, the photographic document reminds us that it is not part of our space and, more problematically, that's it's not quite of the present. In** Regarding the Pain of Others, **Susan Sontag revises her previous claim that we become desensitized to shocking images when we're continuously exposed to them. Her conjecture (no experimental data is offered) is that being unable to change the circumstances of suffering that are depicted in a photograph is what actually triggers the feelings of helplessness and paralysis in the person regarding it. It is as if the very pastness and distance of what the photograph shows compete with the photograph's material realness as a document. This paradox underscores the historical fascination with the photographic image and the many contradictory sensations it provokes, like nostalgia vs. uncanniness. It's a subject that's obviously been widely written about by Sontag, Barthes and others. But I think your use of the word oscillation vis-à-vis the photographic effect captures something that I've been trying very hard to articulate in my work, where the ambiguities of photographic documentation are actually symptomatic of a much more endemic condition**

which is also characterized by anxiety, volubility, frayed narratives and subjects that are in continuous (temporal) motion.

Let's call it the 'Midas Touch of the Camera:' within the film there is no outside of the narrative space. In a way your media critical strategy—your suspicion towards the medium—reminds me of the 'epic theater' by Bertold Brecht: Brecht invented the 'alienation effect' to pull the theater viewer out of his uncritical, affirmative reception mode. The actors interrupted the play by addressing the viewers directly. But it seems to me that this self-reflexive strategy doesn't work out for the filmic medium. Because even if you show the production studio within the film, the reference to reality won't be intact—since it is impossible to show the 'production space' without making it immediately flip into 'narrative space.' Have you turned to physical manipulations of the filmic material to evoke such a Brechtian 'awareness of the medium' in another way? Through editing processes which leave the traces and cuts of your montages visible?
Although Brechtian effects have been long ago absorbed by mainstream entertainment (and in a particularly ironic twist they're a standard mode of address for the advertising industry) it still is possible to use them to at least allude to the production space in which a work is created and consumed, if not to challenge viewers' ground assumptions vis-à-vis what they are seeing and hearing. Having said that, it might be overreaching a bit to historicize the editing processes that I often apply to my documentary subjects by referring to Brecht's Epic Theater. Cutting interview segments into bits and pieces and then assembling them into new thoughts and sentences does allow me to switch between modes of address, between different temporalities, between voices and narratives. But this is actually inherent to editing. If anything it's yet another variation on Eisenstein's notion of 'dialectical montage,' which opened up productive alternatives to classical continuity editing. What's been relevant for me, especially in more documen-

tary works like Spielberg's List **and** Godville, **was finding subjects that come ready-made with a built-in alienation effect, if you will, subjects whose personal stories float between historical events and their popular reenactments. And so, the Polish extras in** Schindler's List **are caught somewhere between the repetition of a trauma and the trauma of repetition. So are the museum guides of Colonial Williamsburg, particularly the black ones, who take part in the enactment of slavery. The manner these works are edited in often quickly cuts between their subjects' multiple personas, suppressing or blurring the markers that usually indicate whether the person speaking is in or out of character. Occasionally, the editing becomes so manic and fractured as to give the subjects a third voice, what Tom Holert likened to digital Frankenstein monsters. Indeed, in these moments, the interviewees often turn on their interviewer in a diatribe full of accusations and the entire project becomes very self-conscious and mannered.**

In your very recent work **Take a Deep Breath**, you did not generate the script through cutting interviews into single segments that create a new story but you wrote rather your own a screen-play. Why? How does the oscillation between different temporalities, between voices and narratives take place here?
The short answer is I needed a break. Right after making The Casting, **I wrote a completely fictional script for** De Grote Boodschap. **The script was conceived as a loop with no beginning or end, which is of practical help when showing in art venues that are open continuously and do not have screening times like a cinema does. More interestingly, the loop structure also allows one to employ a circular temporality that goes against the linear time of most mainstream movies—and to some extent of mainstream life. The central character of** De Grote Boodschap **is an old woman who recalls a childhood memory of her father swallowing diamonds for safekeeping during the Second World War. The old woman is obsessed by the story and will repeat**

it to anyone who will (or not) listen. One expects a trauma perhaps, but the story finds a happy end, or at least a proctological one, when the woman blissfully recalls her parents' groaning and moaning behind closed doors, in raptures at the re-emergence of the diamonds in the family toilet. Life goes on in the work but like the re-emerging diamonds (they are forever, after all) the woman and her story will return precisely at the moment in the plot when she is supposed to have died. The notion of circular time this suggests—of a past that is continuously recalled and consumed, perpetually haunting the present, indeed a past that eventually becomes the present when the loop repeats without a seam and the present restarts—is very much shared by previous non-looping works. It's a notion of time that is both dysfunctional and liberating. It's both symptomatic of the post-modern and arguably a relic of the pre-modern, a time of ritual and eternal repetition. It's also very nostalgic. To quote Svetlana Boym: 'Nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition.'

Your artistic strategy seems to be marked by balancing acts: balancing between 'subjective' appropriation and 'objective' documentation—or on the border between the inside and the outside of the film. An unsettling play with ambivalences?

I don't necessarily see it as unsettling, or as only unsettling. I derive lots of pleasure from playing with ambivalences. However, any strategy can get old and balancing acts can certainly get tiring, especially if they rely on playing off pairs and opposites. Ever since the recent birth of our first child, I've been waiting for new subjects and structures to evolve, which aren't dialectical or Manichean. After all, threesomes are more exciting than doubles. They require more nuance and diplomacy. They're also more messy and complicated. Unfortunately, although my daughter is growing up, I'm still waiting for my work to evolve. If I've learned anything, it's that life moves a lot faster than art does.

The interview is based on several email-conversations between November 2008 and February 2009.

Svetlana Boym: The Future of Nostalgia, New York 2001.

Aleksander Hemon: The Lazarus Project, New York 2008.

Elias Khoury: Bab El Shams (Gate of the Sun), Beirut 1998 and Brooklyn 2006.

George Lucas: THX-1138, film, 83 min, USA 1971.

Sven Lütticken/Witte de With: Life, Once More: Forms Of Reenactment In Contemporary Art, Rotterdam 2005.

Matthias Michalka/Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (Ed.): The Casting, Omer Fast, Wien 2007.
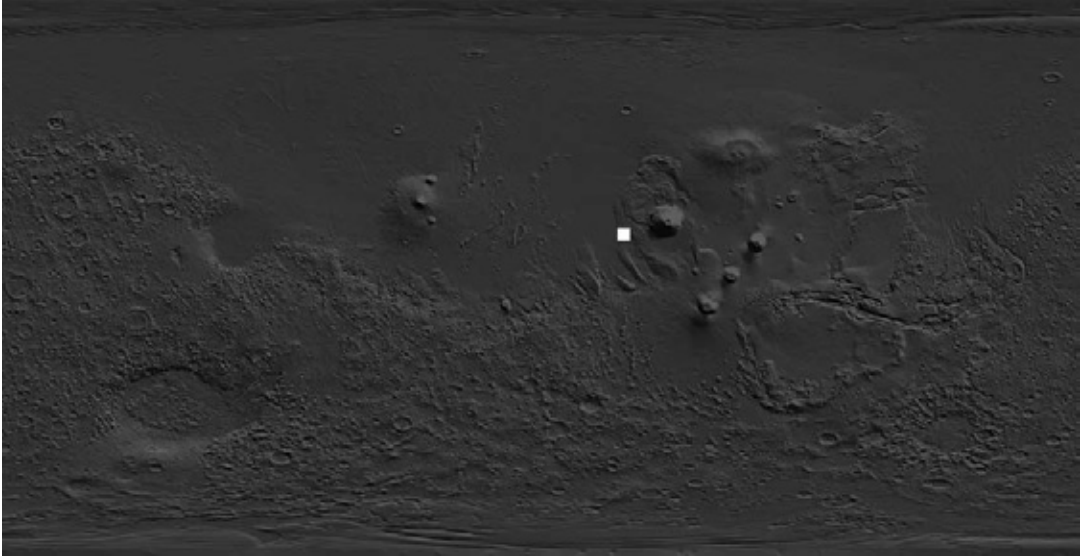
Georges Perec: W or Memory of Childhood, London 1988.

Ridley Scott: Blade Runner, film, 112 min, USA 1982.

Susan Sontag: Regarding the Pain of Others, New York 2003.

Omer Fast: Take A Deep Breath, two channel video, 2008 (stills by Yon Thomas).

Cabinetlandia

Maps of Mars with precise location of Cabinet's 3.125 selims of land on the Red Planet.

Cabinet—a New York-based quarterly—deals in a wide range of topics, including art, culture and the modes of display of a magazine itself. Since **Cabinet** was founded in 2000, the magazine has constituted a platform for multi-disciplinary research in the margins of culture as well as the cultural analysis of different forms of space. In the context of the release of **Cabinet's** issue on Property in Spring 2003, the publishers of **Cabinet**—amongst others the Editor-in-Chief and co-founder Sina Najafi—purchased different pieces of land. The first one—a half-acre parcel of desert scrubland in Luna County, New Mexico—launched **Cabinetlandia**, a project that amplifies **Cabinet** through an outsourced platform in the desert. About 14 unusable lots in the New York City borough of Queens, once acquired by the artist Gordon Matta-Clark for his work **Reality Properties: Fake Estates** (1973), were the base for a second project, a re-appropriation of inaccessible space. Later, with the purchase of 3,125 selims (2000 acres) of land in the Eastern Amazonis Planitia on the planet Mars, **Cabinet** extended this act of acquisition of space to a description of space, by envisioning an actual yet a fictive landscape. Regarded as an intersectional platform, **Cabinet** works as a joint between these several disparate pieces of land. Here, **Cabinet** resolves boundaries, and transfigures tangible sites into notional space that is displayed—both within the property projects, and in the magazine. How these different kinds of space merge into **Cabinet Magazine**, and how space itself can be transformed—and finally exhibited as a medium—is brought into focus in the following conversation with Sina Najafi.

Sina Najafi

Property Project

DISPLAYER Imagine **Cabinet** magazine as a private, enclosed room in the sense of a treasure chest, embellished with pictorial and textual artifacts (which convey knowledge), whereas **Cabinetlandia** is more an outdoor platform which displays space itself. Which mission did you follow, and how did the character of space change with the establishment of **Cabinetlandia**?

SINA NAJAFI Cabinetlandia **started with an issue we did on the theme of 'property,' for which we ended up doing three property-related projects. One of them was to buy a half-acre piece of desert land in New Mexico, which was bought on Ebay for about $300. We didn't know what we were buying because we'd never visited the land—we just bought it sight-unseen and only went there about a year later. Paul Ramirez Jonas, who is an artist who has worked with us on numerous projects, found a Mondrian painting that fit perfectly on the land (the ratio of the sides are the same as our land). Based on this painting, we parceled out the land—which we call** Cabinetlandia—**into several compartments, such as** Readerland, Funderlandia, Nepotismia, **etc.** Readerland **was itself subdivided into micro-parcels of land each the size of an issue of** Cabinet **(20 cm by 25 cm), and we offered these micro-parcels to our readers for one cent each. Many things have happened there on the land since we bought it in 2003; for instance, three of our readers built a library there, we put up a mailbox up, there is a labyrinth, and we have a guestbook on the land which is quite active ...**

The second project came out of our interest in tracking the fourteen strange pieces of land that Gordon Matta-Clark bought in 1973 at a New York City auction for his project later named Reality Properties: Fake Estates. **These parcels of land are all very unusual in that their dimensions make them**
useless for development; for example, one is about 40 centimeters wide and about 100 meters long. We found their locations in Queens and visited them to see what had happened to them. We could see many of them but some of them are inaccessible in that they are completely enclosed by other properties and buildings. It turned out that the city had repossessed all fourteen plots after Matta-Clark's death in 1978 because the property taxes were in arrears, and so we approached the city to see if we could buy the ten that were still in the city's possession (four of them had been snapped up by people who had adjoining homes). The city would not sell them to us but they did lease them to us, and we then commissioned three artists to imagine projects on these micro-parcels. This then led to a larger research project and exhibition called** Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's 'Fake Estates,' **at White Columns and at the Queens Museum of Art in New York in 2005/2006. In the context of this project, we found out that Matta-Clark's favorite bits of land were the ones you couldn't access at all, the ones that were even more useless within a group of useless parcels of land because you could only have a purely conceptual relationship with them. That was exactly the relationship that the city had asked us to have when they leased us the plots; our lease contained a phrase that stated that we could only have what the city called a 'conceptual paper relationship' to the land!**

The third project in the issue on property was to buy a rather large part of Mars from someone who claims on his website to have the authority to do this. This is the most inaccessible of our properties, obviously, and our relationship to it is one premised purely on fantasy. That's the basic setup!

Expansion and Failure

Creating an interconnection of space, power and property, **Cabinetlandia** marks space as a fictive architecture of desire. In Luna County, you re-defined desert land—a kind of 'terrain vague'—into a cultural space as well as a transitional zone between humans
and nature. What did you activate to transfer the display-qualities of a magazine to the blank space of the desert? Did you intend to operate with inaccessible space like Gordon Matta-Clark?

There is obviously a long history of how the desert is imagined in both utopian and dystopian thinking. For instance, look at the American utopian projects from the 60s and 70s; a lot of them took place in Arizona, in the California desert, etc. Part of the reason is that it is unviable land, no one is interested in it, and you're left alone in some sense; that was an aspect that we were interested in. Projects in the desert are less compromised by external human forces, such as commerce. Things fall apart in the desert too but they seem to do so more in accordance with their own internal logic. Cabinetlandia **has also unraveled—the library has been filled with mud, the postbox has fallen down—but most of the breakdown has made us feel the force of nature in a way where it is hard to mark the division between us making things in the desert and nature destroying them. At its best, all the ways in which the project is dismantled by nature also seem to be part of the project. This is not say that culture is absent: someone stole all the books and back issues we had in the library, and the extraordinary rain that came one day and washed mud down into the library was not exactly natural insofar as we've modified the environment completely. But on the whole, you feel that entropy is happening at a different scale and at a different rate that would be the case in a project in the middle of Manhattan. That 'longue durée' is very conducive to certain kind of thinking, where 'creation' and 'destruction' are part of one dialectic rather than opposed to each other.**

Being a marginal, abandoned space, the desert is also somewhat like peripheral magazines or cultural projects like ours, so we are in a sense staging our marginality in the desert. For a while, we had this idea that it would be wonderful to encourage other small magazines to buy some land next to ours and we would have this whole desert
of strange little libraries showcasing independent publications; and somebody in 100 or 1,000 years' time would come across these weird structures and wonder what happened at this place, with all these strange libraries all over this area of New Mexico ... but unfortunately all our neighboring land has been bought up.**

Did you intend to convert desert land into a cultural and re-defined space?

No, it was more the other way round, about how to rethink a cultural project under the sign of the desert, and about how to accentuate conditions under which the ultimate sense of failure around any project like Cabinet **can be staged fruitfully: I think it's useful to keep in mind a sense that all this work that we do is just paper, that it will rot one day. There is a kind of Beckettian drama around the whole thing—'I can't go on, I must go on'—all our work happens under the sign of decay, entropy, and perhaps even futility. I think that's part of what** Cabinetlandia **is about: it is not about bringing culture to the desert land, it is about bringing entropy into the heart of** Cabinet. **It's a little piece of the real that is now embedded in the magazine and is a counterweight to** Cabinet.

Legal/Fake Estate: Marks of Culture

With all these property projects **Cabinet** takes a wide view over time—present and historical—or assembles aspects of history and converts them—within the magazine but also within the spaces itself. In relation particularly to Matta-Clark's **Fake Estates**: did you purpose to revise space as a historical site, or to transfer historical space as a fiction?

The relationship of time and history is very different for the three kinds of land that we've acquired. Acquiring land on Mars is a fiction obviously, but on the other hand it allows us to think of a very long future insofar as that land changes at a geological rate. The Matta-Clark plots of land are right in the middle of Queens between peoples' gardens and houses, and so the relationship to time and change

is very different there. This was a distinctly historical project for us, because we were interested in why these bits of land were created to begin with (there are thousands of bits of lands like this all over the city). When we first asked officials at the city of New York about the genesis of these parcels of land, they said that they were the result of surveyors' errors and these were the remainders of those mis-measurements. This seemed plausible, but as we did our research, it turned out that these weird bits of land were all created either in the 1930s or in the 1960s, and they had nothing to do with survey- ors' errors. Queens is one of the last parts of New York City to get a geometric grid imposed on it, and when this Cartesian grid was placed on farmland, the edges were cut off to make some of these bits of land. And the second part of this history came later when Robert Moses reconfigured New York City's highways, tunnels, and other transportation infrastructure, and he ended up breaking up some of the gridded parts of Queens in ways that resulted in more of these strange parcels of land.

For us, revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's project was one of precise history. The temporal relationship is very different here than in the desert— where the landscape invites you to collapse past and future and to engage in a certain kind of fantasy, though that fantasy, which seems to nudge history aside, is itself historically determined, of course.

Acquisition and Ownership

Along with the ownership of disparate parcels in Luna County, **Cabinetlandia** was also launched as 'real estate,' but with fictional features. This piece of land that you purchased through an auction on Ebay is divided into several so-called 'ranchettes,' marked by a particular owner's name, like the allotment **Reader- landia**, which was available in **Cabinet** magazine-sized compartments for a low price. Would you regard such a 'marking of virgin soil' as a post-colonial gesture, an act of cultural imperialism? In which way is ownership important for you in the context of the desert land you acquired?

When we spoke to Jane Crawford, Gordon Matta- Clark's widow, she said that, despite all his inter- est in the radical an-architectural dimensions of buying useless bits of urban land, Matta-Clark still had an old-fashioned, bourgeois fantasy of being landed gentry; he still had the thrill of owning land. I think this fantasy of being landed gentry is also at play in our relationship to the lands that we own. But 'ownership' is too easy a word in regard to all this. It covers part of the relationship, but I think a better way to express it would be 'guest' and 'host.' In some sense, we are the hosts of this land—we can never be full owners of it—and we welcome guests who visit. But in another sense, we are only custodians or perhaps even guests on our 'own' land in the desert and the unusable land that we supposedly control on Mars and in Queens. Derrida speaks about how he's learned so much from his cat, because his cat is in his apartment, and as it comes and goes, the question of whose apartment this is, and who is guest and who is host is con- stantly being renegotiated. When I go to Cabinetlan- dia and I see a rattlesnake that has a nest there, the notion of 'ownership' is a pathetic one compared to the intensity of the relationship in that moment. All of these adjectives, verbs and adverbs that come with ownership are bracketed when you own land that is far far away, that is more or less unus- able, or has no marked borders.

Staging Space

By purchasing those parcels of land which Gordon Matta-Clark located and assembled for his artwork **Reality Properties: Fake Estates** in 1973, you appro- priated not only these lots in Queens County, but also the act Matta-Clark performed within this operation: the marking of space which is defined even more by non-existing architecture—which is finally exhibited. In this regard, would you agree that this desert space works like a kind of stage?

I think staging is a good way to think about it. When we watch a play at the theater, we know it's fiction but we take it to be both true and non-true. We

generally think owning property is not a fiction; the English term 'real estate' even points to this, and Matta-Clark was of course very interested in this question and punned on it in his title Reality Proper- ties: Fake Estates. **This is one way to 'stage' things, through making someone aware of how truth and fiction are interrelated. I think desert land though has a different way of staging the same relation- ships; any project in the desert that requires us to be there is backbreaking work which needs total commitment, but on the other hand, none of it feels real because it seems absurd and unnecessary. It's a huge effort but it's not clear any of it is justified. In that sense, it's less like theater, and more like a strange dream where you feel like you might wake up at any time. And owning land on Mars is more like a thought experiment. Having said that, fictions, dreams, and thought experiments are not to be cast off as useless or without effect. They are as real in their effects as anything else.**

In which way do these different kinds of spaces— unsettled urban, suburban as well as extraterrestrial spaces—refer to and influence the content of **Cabinet** magazine?

It affects the magazine in surprising ways. Having land in the desert, for example, embodies a kind of failure; everything we do there will eventually fall into oblivion. And it underlines a sense of Sysip- hean futility that is also part of how we go about running the magazine. But we don't mind these things; in fact, we get nourishment from this. I

think of Beckett again: his universe is a very funny one. People try and fail, but they keep going, and in some sense that's part of what goes on within the property projects that we did. When you have something rotting in the desert, you get a very dif- ferent sense of how to calibrate what you do, which is very different than getting feedback from read- ers, getting an award, and so on. Having staged decay in the desert, we can then carry on, albeit differently than before.

Which future projects are planned to cultivate, extend and make **Cabinetlandia** more substantial?
We're going back next year with some readers to build an underground bunker and conference room. I think this underground bunker also fits into the strange utopian/dystopian fantasy of underground survival, which runs deep in the Cold War American psyche. From my point of view, the desert is a kind of privileged site for exploring the strains of utopian and dystopian thought in America.

The interview took place in Brooklyn, New York at the Cabinet Office on January 25, 2009.

Reyner Banham: Scenes in America Deserta, Layton/Utah 1982.

Jorge Luis Borges: The Library of Babel, first published in English in U.S.A. 1962.

Cabinet Magazine: Issue 10, Property, New York Spring 2003.

Cabinet Magazine: Issue 18, Fictional States, New York Summer 2005.

Jeffrey Kastner, Sina Najafi, Frances Richard (Eds.): Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's Fake Estates, New York 2005/06.
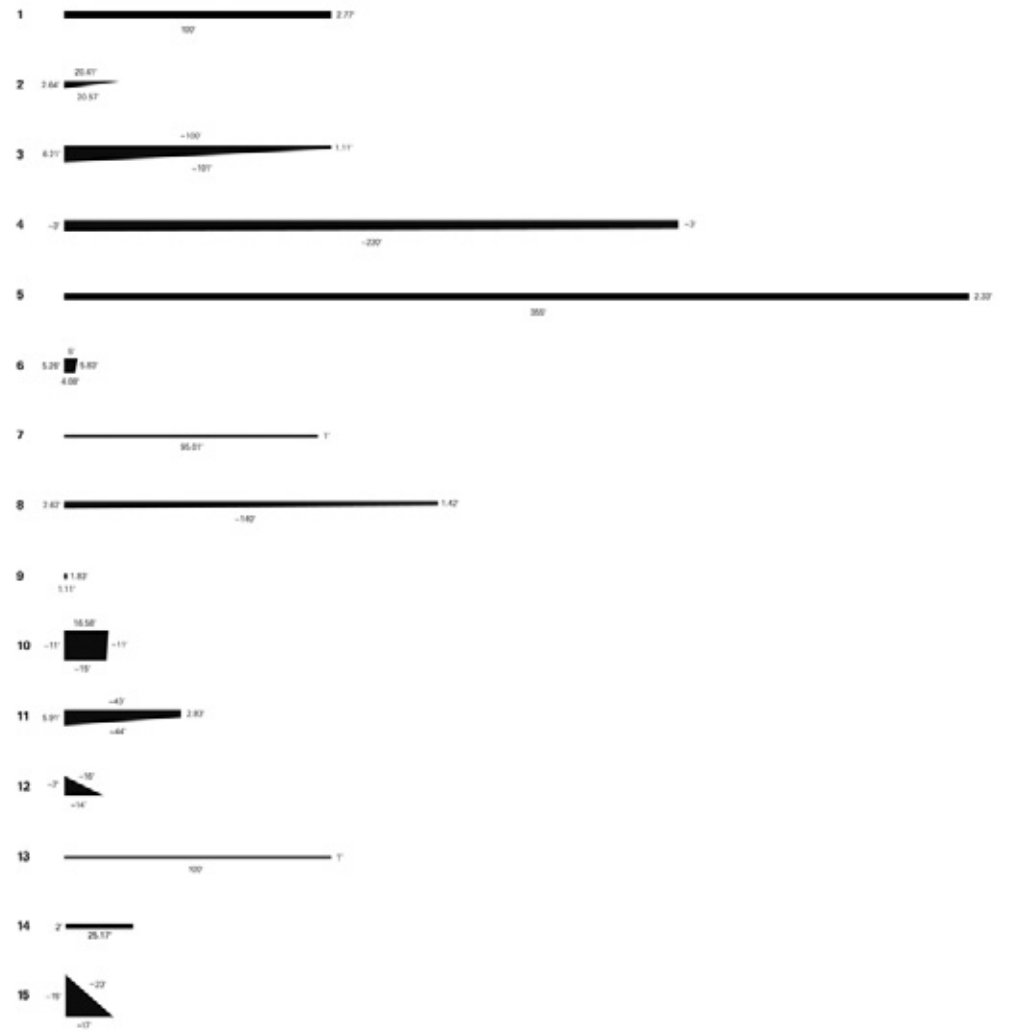
01

02

03

Schematic drawings of lots acquired by Matta-Clark at auctions in 1973.

04
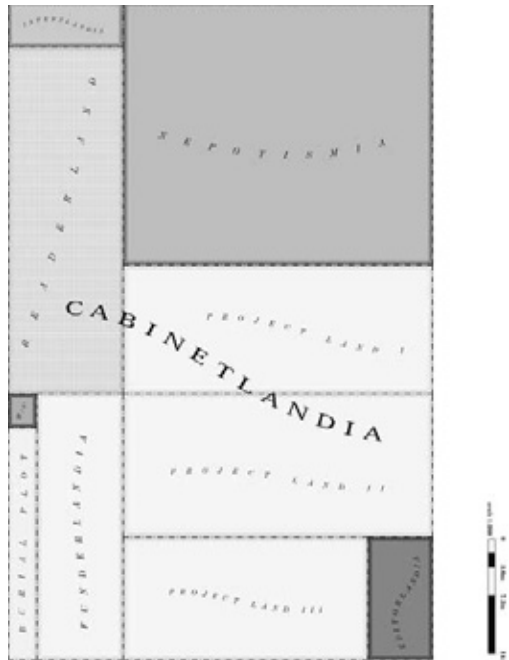
01 Map of Cabinetlandia, which is divided into a number of zones, including Nepotismia, Readerland, and Funderlandia. The map was produced by Paul Ramirez Jonas and Cabinet by placing a Mondrian painting on Cabinetlandia and following the painting's divisions to create the various zones.

02 Aerial image of desert outside Deming, New Mexico. Cabinetlandia, marked by a black rectangle, lies between the railway line to the north and the highway to the south.
03 Mailbox in front of the Cabinet National Library on Cabinetlandia.

04 Schematic drawings of lots acquired by Gordon Matta-Clark at auctions in 1973, adapted and expanded from an original design by Brian McMullen (for Cabinet No. 10).

Exhibition Extension

Visitors of the Triennale di Milano in 1968 wearing Österreichbrillen ('austria glasses') designed by Hans Hollein, which were were produced in the exhibition space and could be taken away.

'Everything is architecture.' In 1967, Hans Hollein used this script to question boundaries in a fundamental way. Working as an architect, curator and a visual artist, he does not distinguish between the categories of his practice. He would rather stress the fluid transitions between them. Two of his exhibitions are particularly significant in this respect. His contribution to the Triennale di Milano in 1968, which turned a product fair into a multi-sensory experience, placed him in the vanguard of exhibition design at the time. The opening exhibition **MAN transFORMS** in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in 1976—today the National Design Museum in New York—was an opportunity for Hollein to present objects of everyday life as a curator, but also to present his work as an artist, and to programmatically declare that 'everything is design.' Hollein establishes connections to art history and cultural history and transfers these into his multi-directional work. By working in a transdisciplinary way, he demonstrates in his exhibitions as well as in his buildings a particular grasp of space, its formation and use. In his architectural projects, he deals with the specificity of the given site, for example **Media Lines** for the Olympic Village in Munich 1972; or the Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, for which he was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1985. Structural and at the same time associatively guided thinking is present in his projects and writings but also concisely expressed in his free drawings and sketches. To what extent do the theoretical models that Hollein developed engage such categories? How do the exhibitions negotiate with everyday life?

Hans Hollein

DISPLAYER In the exhibition **MAN transFORMS**, you interpreted the concept of design so broadly that the transition between life and art became seamless. If one thinks, for example, of the loaves of bread on the table, it was an exhibition about the man-made, about the artificial and the natural in one. By so doing, you proclaimed a very broad idea of design.

HANS HOLLEIN I should say right away that for me there are no separations between architecture and design, for example. In the English-speaking world in particular, one speaks of 'urban design,' 'architectural design,' 'stage design,' and so on. Everything is called design. It's my opinion that while there are focuses, there are no clear boundaries between these areas.
MAN transFORMS was the inaugural exhibition of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York. The idea was to make an exhibition that would not simply show objects from the Cooper-Hewitt Museum 'but would be an inaugural exhibition that asked 'What is design?' There was a competition. Ray and Charles Eames, Richard Saul Wurman, George Nelson, and I were asked to present proposals, of a rather elaborate sort. The director of the museum, Lisa Taylor, approached me—primarily because of my exhibition for the Triennale di Milano.

Did you consider the overall look of the exhibition more important, because, after all, the entire exhibition supports the idea, or were you more interested in the individual exhibits?
I developed the concept and sought out the exhibits necessary to convey my ideas. It was not about an accumulation of exhibits but a relevant thematic—and spatial—environment. The goal was to develop a total concept within the ambiance of the Andrew Carnegie Mansion—a view of design.

What a curator does today.
Yes, a curator—the usual scenario was that an art historian wrote a letter, and then the architect or designer was supposed to design the space and the panels or display cabinets. I was never that kind of exhibition designer. I made display cabinets too but only if I could design the concept myself or at least play a large role in that. In the case of MAN trans-FORMS, **the point was primarily to present a fundamentally different concept of design.**

Can you outline your concept briefly?
It is a little difficult to do that in two or three words. To get back to the English-speaking world: I wrote many of my texts in English, and that was clearer, of course. Like I said before, 'urban design,' 'architectural design,' 'stage design,' and so on. My goal was not to limit the concept of design to product design and product development. There are fluid transitions, not clear separations. In MAN transFORMS, **I deliberately introduced architectural themes or Leonardo's** Last Supper**.**

Is the religious and also life-giving character of bread very important to you?
In MAN transFORMS, **that isn't true. My interest in** MAN transFORMS **was to show three phenomena. It started with the star. When a child, who is already a little predisposed to do it a certain way, is supposed to draw a star, he or she draws something like this:**

[Draws a schematic star.]
But everyone knows that a star really looks like this: [Draws a circle.]
I showed that there and also added stars as stars— that is, film stars. It was a total fantasy product. The second concern was that forms do not follow function. 'Form follows function' is a dogma of design and architecture I have always resisted. We brought together examples of everyday bread from all over the world and spread them out on a table. Bread as a product in very different forms, which is

made throughout the world by all cultures and in fact serves the same purpose everywhere. The table was the table from Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper**. At that time, in the Biennale in 1984 too, I reflected on the theme of the** Last Supper **a number of times. But the bread could just as well have been placed on any table or on a pedestal or nailed to the wall. The third point was exactly the reverse: the hammer is a tool that, in all its different forms, absolutely follows function. There is a special form for everything: a dinging hammer for an auto body shop and a carpenter's hammer for nails, and so on. These hammers, two hundred or so of which were spread out there, were all very specifically for a certain use. So 'form follows function.' There is, of course, a basic idea of a hammer. And then I introduced the hammer and sickle, because that too is a basic image.**

In the center of the room you displayed Paleolithic hammers—stones, really.
Yes, Paleolithic stones.

The first design?
The point was whether it was simply an objet trouvé or perhaps already a precisely chosen stone that could be used as a hammer. The Incas, for example, did not know the hammer before the conquest by the Spaniards.

Do everyday objects acquire the character of art for you as soon as you put them in an exhibition or is it simply a matter of exhibiting everyday design?
The objects do not acquire the character of art automatically. The object exhibited, the hammer, one of many hammers, does not directly become an art object; those are fluid transitions.
For example, the flag was another theme, or rather fabric in general. There was a marble flag and a real one; a fan made the real flag wave in one direction, while the marble flag came from the other direction. They had contradictory air currents, so to speak. That could certainly be seen as an art object.

For the Triennale di Milano in 1968, **il grande numero**, you produced a pair of glasses that did not fold, which visitors could take away with them. Because they could not be simply put away, visitors were forced to react to them somehow: put them on, throw them away, or do something else with them. Later, too, in **MAN transFORMS**, there was this kind of transfer between the exhibition area and everyday life.

Exactly, I wrote about that too. For reasons relating to the exhibition's funding, Austrian products had to be exhibited as well. I showed them in a small amphitheater. Then there were corridors with various things to experience. The other thing was that I explicitly wanted to create a contemporary product—namely, the Austrian red-white-red eyeglasses. You could look through the red part and then through the other part and then either look into the rose-colored future or into another one. But above all we wanted it to be something you put on, something you hold in your hand, that you throw away, but not something you can put into your pocket. That was the essential thing.

Why is the extension of the exhibition space into the everyday world so important to you?
Because I have always believed an exhibition has to have an extension. That can be, first, the catalog. But an exhibition should in some form go beyond the place and beyond its true core.
That was surely also the reason why some of my exhibitions were so successful, though that was sometimes unintentional. We exhibited the original document of the Peace of Westphalia in the exhibition Türken vor Wien **(Turkish siege of Vienna). The Peace of Westphalia had not been seen publicly in about fifty years, and buses of people arrived who had traveled especially to see the Peace of Westphalia. It was always my intention to have such highlights that would attract very specific levels of visitors. Ideally, of course, all levels of visitor would be attracted and come because there would be the original object to be seen, as in that case.**

Let's return to the Triennale. There was a general curator, Giancarlo De Carlo, who was responsible for the thematic exhibition. But you were in one of the country sections?
Yes, I was in one of the country sections, but I did something that Austria had never done before. The Triennale was, after all, in part a kind of trade fair, a product fair. I had a concept and presented a model, more or less as it would finally be produced. The concept was unusual, however. Next to it glasses, at that time from the Czechoslovak Soviet Socialist Republic, were displayed in the classic way, in vitrines.

Die Turnstunde (Gym class) of 1984, at the Städtisches Museum am Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, is another interesting situation: as an architect, you built the building and then performed in the spaces as an artist. Did the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk (total work of art) play a role for you in that case?
It was certainly conceived as a work of art, not part work of art and part architecture. Very often, I built a second inner shell into the rooms when it was useful for the exhibition. It didn't bother me to exhibit within my own architecture, and in a certain sense I also responded to the space. It is, after all, always a question of volume and light above all, whether natural or artificial light. But if I had exhibited something else by me, I would certainly have built another shell into this exhibition space.

In the Venice Achitecture Biennale in 2006, **Stadt = Form Raum Netz** (City = Shape Space Net), you exhibited an aircraft carrier, a concept from 1963. You were represented under the category Form. The press release said that the aircraft carrier represented for you the energy of the city. How did you come up with such a transfer, or rather why did you choose an aircraft carrier in particular to embody the city?
On the one hand, I use things to communicate something. On the other hand, I deliberately presented the aircraft carrier and that series of transformations in such a way that it could have multiple meanings,

perhaps sometimes more intellectually and sometimes more directly. For example, I could see the aircraft carrier as a city. That had been done before with the ocean liner by Le Corbusier. For me, however, the aircraft carrier was first and foremost a product of the possibilities and technologies of the twentieth century, and for me it is also a city with seven thousand residents in the middle of the water and has everything a city needs. It started with me taking the carrier out of the water and placing it in the middle of a landscape, dug in a little. I was interested in the asymmetry of the aircraft carrier. This tension: you have a basic form—we are back with Le Corbusier's ocean liner. And then with the aircraft carrier, by contrast, it begins with the fact that it sticks up a little on the side, that there is a runway on one side, asymmetrically. That is something I consider important for modern architecture in general: cantilevers. For me, modern architecture begins with the cornice by Cronaca on the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence. For me, that is the beginning of the modern era and in part precisely the fact that the cantilevers create an 'exterior space.'**
I once showed how architecture evolved. That was in 1958, before I went to America. First, there is a hill or a depression—that is, a hollow. Then it develops into something that perhaps looks more formalized—a cube—and then it grows up, like the Pharos in Alexandria, say, or the tower of Saint Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. And then the projection we just discussed begins. Then I said the next thing is building oblique. That, for example, is an oblique building.**
[Points to a poster on the wall depicting the Torre Interbank (Lima, Peru, completed 2001).]
That is where I wanted to go.

The theme of the subterranean is also found in your work.
Then comes the next development. One way is building upward, but I also go downward. In my opinion, the architect is challenged most when building downward. For if I produce a house that

isn't so great, but there's a flowering apple tree next to it and the sun is shining, then at least there are some things necessary for life. In subterranean architecture, however, the architect is completely responsible.**

So you could say that you are interested in spaces that are nothing but space, that do not have the excuse of still being an object but are merely spaces. Usually, many architects are not so interested in space but rather in the forming of objects. But you have always worked from space. Your material is really space, isn't it?
Yes, that it is. But there are also objects that create 'space.'

In 1987 you wrote the text **Imaginäres Museum** (Imaginary Museum), in which you discuss the ideal museum. What was, in your opinion, the museum building in which you best achieved that?
It was partly fulfilled in Mönchengladbach.

With the diagonal. And the interesting thing is that all four walls are retained, and the doors in the corner, where diagonal views are possible.
The diagonal views and the thing I wanted to avoid there: that you have to race through rooms 1 to 21 to get to 19. It would surely not be good if every museum today was circular, as described in the text. But it is certain that the idea and basic schema is better understood in a circular matrix than in a square.

If you think of the backbone of the museum, the path through it, as a concept or a basic structure, then what role does the idea of a spatial narration play for you? An exhibition always has a course or path through it, after all. Do you imagine it to be a film, a script, or scenes in a theater?
That depends. The first question is what kind of museum it is, whether it is an art museum or has other prerequisites. The volcano museum I built in the Auvergne in France is a museum where you can

learn something about volcanism. In that case, the building was deliberately built into a flow of lava. It refers to the place and takes up its materials. The wall by the entrance is made of 'prefabricated' stones (volcanic bombs). That is magma that is thrown out of the volcano, which is found as ovoid stones within lava flows. The wall was made of that.**

So the building is connected to the place.
Yes. If it hadn't been a volcano museum, I would not have built the wall there.

In the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2006, you were exhibited in the Austrian Pavilion along with Friedrich Kiesler and Gregor Eichinger. With his 'city in space' that was exhibited there, Kiesler was engaged in shaping the concept of space. What was your relationship to Kiesler?
He influenced me in several areas. I was preoccupied with similar themes. The first time I was confronted with an actual work by him was at Philip Johnson's place, outside his glass house, where he had a sculpture by Kiesler, made of wood, in which you could sit. That was interesting: a sculpture you could sit in. Not that you would sit on a sculpture that was intended for that. Finally, I visited Kiesler in New York, around 1960. All he showed me were sculptures. They were set up in a room, almost a little like an exhibition on which he was still working. The seating sculpture came close to that, in a way, but it was a little too utilitarian. It was a paradox. It was more architecture than sculpture, and his architecture was sometimes more sculpture than architecture.

In an increasingly specialized world, your concept of design runs counter to the trend. You seem to be saying that as an architect or designer one should be operating not with specialized knowledge and increasing technical precision but that one really needs a design of the world, of the human being.
That expresses it rather well. This strict separation in general—I still remember very well: for a long

time Friedrich Achleitner thought about whether he wanted to be a poet or an architect, and then he shaved his head, put on a straw hat, and said he was a poet. And he said he had to decide: architecture or literature. And then I said: You could also decide to do architecture and literature. And after several years that's what he decided to do.

The interview took place in the studio of Hans Hollein in Vienna on December 22, 2008.

Johannes Cladders, Hans Hollein: Die Turnstunde: eine Rauminstallation von Hans Hollein, exhibition catalog, Mönchengladbach 1984.

Wilfried Skreiner (Ed.): Hans Hollein, catalog of the Austrian exhibition on the 36th Biennale di Venezia, Vienna and Venice 1972.

Hermann Czech, Hochschule für angewandte Kunst (Eds.): Hans Hollein. Design. MAN transFORMS. Konzepte einer Ausstellung, Wien 1989.

Lisa Taylor (Ed.) MAN transFORMS, New York 1976.

Historisches Museum Wien (Ed.): Hans Hollein: eine Ausstellung, exhibition catalog, Wien 1995.

Stephan Trüby

'EVERYTHING IS ARCHITECTURE' VERSUS 'ABSOLUTE ARCHITECTURE'

Among the members of a Viennese architecture movement from the 1970s and 1980s which could retrospectively be called 'Miniaturism,' Hollein is considered the most complex. The most important architectural contributions to the Austrian capital from this period were all small-scale: boutiques, shops, exhibition design, etc. Studying the architecture of Hollein from this period, one has the impression that exhibition design is the perfect testbed for architecture. This hypothesis is readily confirmed by the three comparisons that follow, in which individual examples of Hollein's exhibition design individually correspond to the architecture of specific Hollein buildings.

The first 'Hollein pair' consists of the exhibition **MAN transFORMS** (which took place in 1976 in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York) and the Austrian Transport Department (1978–1979) on the Vienna Opernring; the second 'pair' is the exhibition **Death** (which took place in Mönchengladbach in 1970) and the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach (1972–1982); finally, the third 'pair' is Hollein's contribution to the Milan Triennale of 1968 and the **Media Lines** that Hollein constructed for Munich's Olympic Village in 1972.

But first a few methodological preliminaries: It is not easy to name another contemporary architect whose work can be so clearly understood within the categories of the horizontal and the vertical as Hollein's. One can possibly even differentiate between a 'vertical Hollein' and a 'horizontal Hollein.' The 'vertical Hollein' is the one who creates upright structures and hollowed-out forms. This is the Hollein, for example, who designed a superstructure for Salzburg in 1960, who suggested a monstrous superstructure for New York in 1963 and who is currently realizing a comparable structure with the Porr Tower in Vienna.

However, many rightly believe that Hollein's most important buildings and projects are not to be found above ground but below. The Viennese architect is the reputed 'Tannhäuser of architecture:' at home in Venus' cave and the Hörselberg. In this context one recalls his design for a Guggenheim Museum in Salzburg's Mönchsberg or his Museum of Vulcanology constructed inside an inactive volcano in Auvergne. Is Hollein the best **interior** architect among the architects of the 20th century?

What about the Hollein who does not dig down or build up but remains on a level surface? What about the 'horizontal Hollein?' This question leads us to Hollein's activities as an exhibition designer and theoretician (or, better said, manifesto author).

Hollein's writings demonstrate two different tendencies that are hard to bring into synthesis: the idea of 'absolute architecture' and the notion that 'everything is architecture.'

In 1963 Hollein writes about 'absolute architecture:' 'Architecture dominates space. It dominates by propelling its structures into the sky, by hollowing out the earth, by hovering over the land with far-reaching extensions, by sprawling in all directions … A building is useless … What we build will find its purpose … Today for the first time in the history of humanity, at a point in time when incredible scientific developments and perfected technology provides us with all possible means, we build what and how we please and create architecture that is not determined by technology but that utilizes technology, a pure, absolute architecture. Today mankind is the master of boundless space.' Architecture is thus for Hollein something decidedly visible, something surrounded by an aura; it is sculptural and transcends technology.

Five years later Hollein publishes a manifesto in the magazine **Bau** that sounds totally different: 'Everything is Architecture.' The statement of the first sentence alone could hardly be more programmatic: 'Limited

terminologies and traditional definitions of architecture and its remedies have today lost substantial validity. We should be concerned with the environment as a whole and all the media that constitute it.'

Other key sentences in 'Everything is Architecture' read: 'Man creates artificial conditions. This is architecture. Physically and psychically he replicates, transforms and expands his physical and psychic realm, determining his "environment" in the broadest sense.' He continues, 'Architecture is the conditioning of a psychological state.' Next, 'Architects have to stop thinking only in terms of buildings.' And finally, 'Everyone is an architect.' In this context Hollein specifically mentions trained architects such as Paco Rabanne, Simon Wiesenthal and Luis Trenker. A number of Hollein's projects are manifestations of the slogan 'everything is architecture,' for example the suggestion of expanding a university simply by adding a television connection, an architecture pill or a spray for a furniture manufacturer.

In 'Everything is Architecture' Hollein's primary interest lies not in the final contours of an object (as in 'Absolute Architecture') but in his environment. The role of technology is enhanced in the process: it no longer simply functions as background machinery but as the crucially decisive medium for achieving a controlled environment.

While the idea of 'absolute architecture' can be ascribed to a theory of archaism, 'everything is architecture' could be considered a tenet of Futurism. While 'absolute architecture' defines the discipline of architecture as the creation of tall and towering usable sculptures and deep-dug hollowed-out forms, the slogan 'everything is architecture' suggests diffusing architecture into a quite general competency of designing a technical environment.

In the following I intend to demonstrate that the theorist behind 'Absolute Architecture' largely corresponds to the 'vertical Hollein' and the proponent of 'Everything is Architecture' to the 'horizontal Hollein.' I also argue

that the 'horizontal' and futuristic Hollein has left behind few important buildings—with one exception. However, precisely this Hollein is the one who blazed trails in contemporary architectural research that still remain largely unexplored today.

First, let us look at **MAN transFORMS**: this was the opening exhibition of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum located in the former Carnegie Mansion on 5th Avenue in New York. The theme of the exhibition was design in the broadest sense of the word. It was not about the pinnacle of design but about creating a consciousness for anonymous, everyday design decisions. Through the exhibition architecture Hollein aimed to stimulate 'all the senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.'

Time was an important component: Hollein constructed a winding route through the exhibition that visitors had to follow, a fast-forward simulation of the 24-hour cycle of a typical office worker. Even the ordinary and all-too-ordinary was elevated to the status of exhibition objects in **MAN transFORMS**: Hammers hung in a 'hammer room' and bread in a 'bread room.' In a room with the photograph of an igloo were dozens of buckets of water containing the exact amount of water necessary for the construction of an igloo. There were also flags waving in a gust of air placed next to cement flags, collections of scarecrows, hats, dolls, a conservatory made into a palm-tree jungle and cloth: folded cloth, sewn cloth, painted cloth. Finally, the exhibition also formed a point of intersection for various city tours: there was a touch tour (featuring various doorknobs in the city) and a taste tour (through different hamburger joints).

The lessons learned from **MAN transFORMS** had perhaps the most impact on the Austrian Transport Department building located on the Viennese Opernring, which was designed at approximately the same time as the exhibition and built from 1976–78 (destroyed in 1987).

Among Hollein's architectural works, the Austrian Department of Transportation is likely the most sceno-

graphic or exhibition-like. A number of motifs that appeared in **MAN transFORMS** were reworked: draped cloth, palms, flags, a starry sky. Along with the travel author and tourism theorist Victor Segalen, one could describe the Department of Transportation building as permeated by an 'aesthetic of the diverse.'

Let us turn to the next Hollein 'pair,' the exhibition **Death** that Hollein produced in Mönchengladbach in 1970 and in the art museum on the city's Abteiberg (built from 1972–1982). **Death** was half environment, half happening. There were fictional archaeological sites along with a fake grave that contained burial gifts such as a hard hat and golf clubs. Visitors could start digging and uncover objects (or even money). A broken cola bottle that had been meticulously reassembled stood in a glass display case. In a corridor behind a folding screen was a deathbed. There was a room full of funeral bouquets that slowly began to rot over the course of the exhibition. As Wolfgang Pehnt once wrote of Hollein, 'With Adolf Loos' dictum—that only the grave and the monument can be considered architecture—ringing in the ears, a Viennese senses a closer connection between death and architecture than the average Central European.'

The exhibition **Death** led to Hollein's direct commission to build a new museum in Mönchengladbach. Two initial studies for the museum bear the titles **Aircraft Carrier** and **Rice Terraces**. Essentially this is what was built: serpentine forms cover and animate a surface, which holds a collection of more or less technical-looking objects recalling the structural parts of an aircraft carrier. At one point Hollein explained the rice terraces through a remarkable analogy—by comparing them to the folds of the burial cloth in Mantegna's **Dead Christ**.

There are only a few art museums where one enters at the highest point of elevation and proceeds slowly into the depths, as in Mönchengladbach. One of the most famous 'exceptions' is naturally Mies van der Rohe's Nationalgalerie in Berlin. Pehnt formulated the

difference between Mies and Hollein as follows: 'Mies certainly did his best to simply render the downward passage an internal process, in which one approaches from outside on level with the temple-like superstructure via a broad set of steps and a sequence of expansive podiums. In contrast, Hollein immediately sends visitors to his building into the depths and does not make their way down particularly easy.'

Now let us look at the third and last pair: the **Austriennale** installation at the 1968 Triennale and the **Media Lines** in the Munich Olympic Village.

The director of the 14th Milan Triennale, the architect Giancarlo de Carlo, dedicated the exhibition to the theme of the 'Great Number.' This was a reference to population explosion, mass culture, industrialization and prefabrication. Hollein was entrusted with the design of the Austrian section, which was located in the first floor of the Palazzo dell'Arte and bordered the international section. Hollein named the exhibition the **Austriennale**. The **Austriennale** project is considered the first architectural manifestation of the slogan 'everything is architecture.'

Hollein was interested in developing a concept that, as he himself wrote, 'utilizes the tools of display in and of themselves to communicate an immediate message that stimulates all the visitors' senses and confronts them with different facets and phenomena of the great number, both physically and psychically.' The first thing one saw upon entering was a long row of uniform aluminum doors, an allusion to the phenomenon of mass production. Through a row of passageways visitors could experience different adventures in the space.

The shortest corridors were simply passageways connected by viewing slits. There was an isolation corridor (in which one could experience solitude), a dead-end corridor (in which there was a staircase leading nowhere), a 'Corridor of Population Explosion' (in which the walls narrowed in accordance with a

prognosticated growth curve), a frustration corridor (that had a door with multiple doorknobs and no indication which one would actually work) and a corridor of coldness (in which one could experience a snow storm swirling around one's head). The longest and highest corridor was a passageway full of file folders. Order is everything, especially when everything is architecture. According to Hollein both a quick walk-through and a leisurely stroll through the installation were to have an intense 'architectural impact' on the visitor.

After the stress of the corridors, a relaxing experience awaited the visitor in a section dedicated to consumption. In the 'amphitheater' Austrian products were exhibited in a display of merchandise-artifacts. In addition, the **Austriennale** boasted an automatic two-color injection-molding machine that produced something special every 15 seconds: an Austrian pair of polystyrene glasses that visitors could take home with them. The glasses functioned as an extension of the exhibition. The 'non-collapsible construction of the frame,' as Hollein described it, made it difficult to put the glasses away: 'Both wearing and discarding the glasses are a way of extending the small Austrian section into other segments, in order to carry the message of the Austrian section out into other parts of the exhibition, the city of Milan and, yes, even the world.'

The **Austriennale** is considered a crucial project for Hollein's professional identity. Only beginning with this project is it possible to differentiate between design, exhibition design, art installation, architecture and theory with Hollein.

Finally, we come to the **Media Lines** that Hollein constructed for the Olympic Village in Munich in 1972. The architect built a system of pipes that passed through almost the entire Olympic Village. This piping system formed a kind of support structure for all kinds of installations: light, electricity, heat radiation, sound, orientation, projections, water curtains, screens, sunblinds, etc.

These **Media Lines** are Hollein's only architectural project that made good on his slogan of 'everything is architecture.' They are the sole futuristic architectural document in Hollein's work. They represent a form of architecture dedicated to the overall control of the environment, including an attempt to condition psychological states of mind.

The contribution is based on a lecture held on January 22, 2008 at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart.

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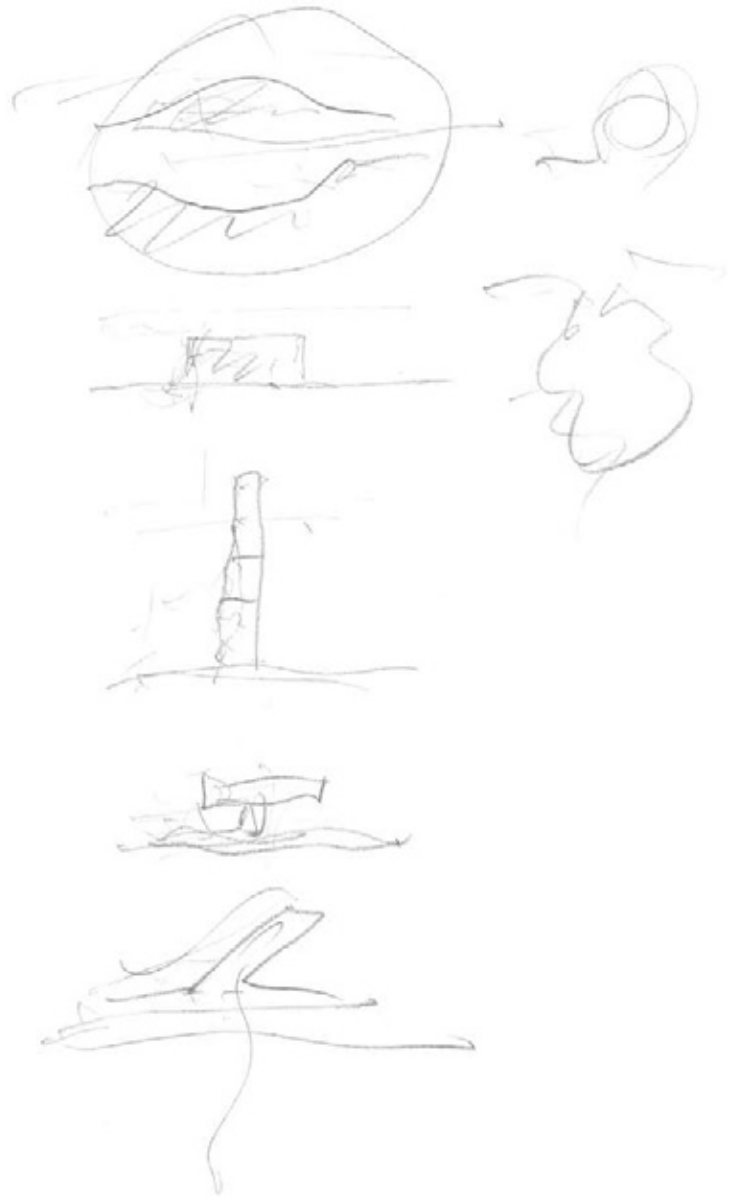
01 Hans Hollein, drawing of the development of architecture (1958), sketched during the interview on December 22, 2008, pencil on paper, 297 x 210 mm.

02 MANtransFORMS, Opening exhibition of Cooper-Hewitt-Museum, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design, New York, 1976.
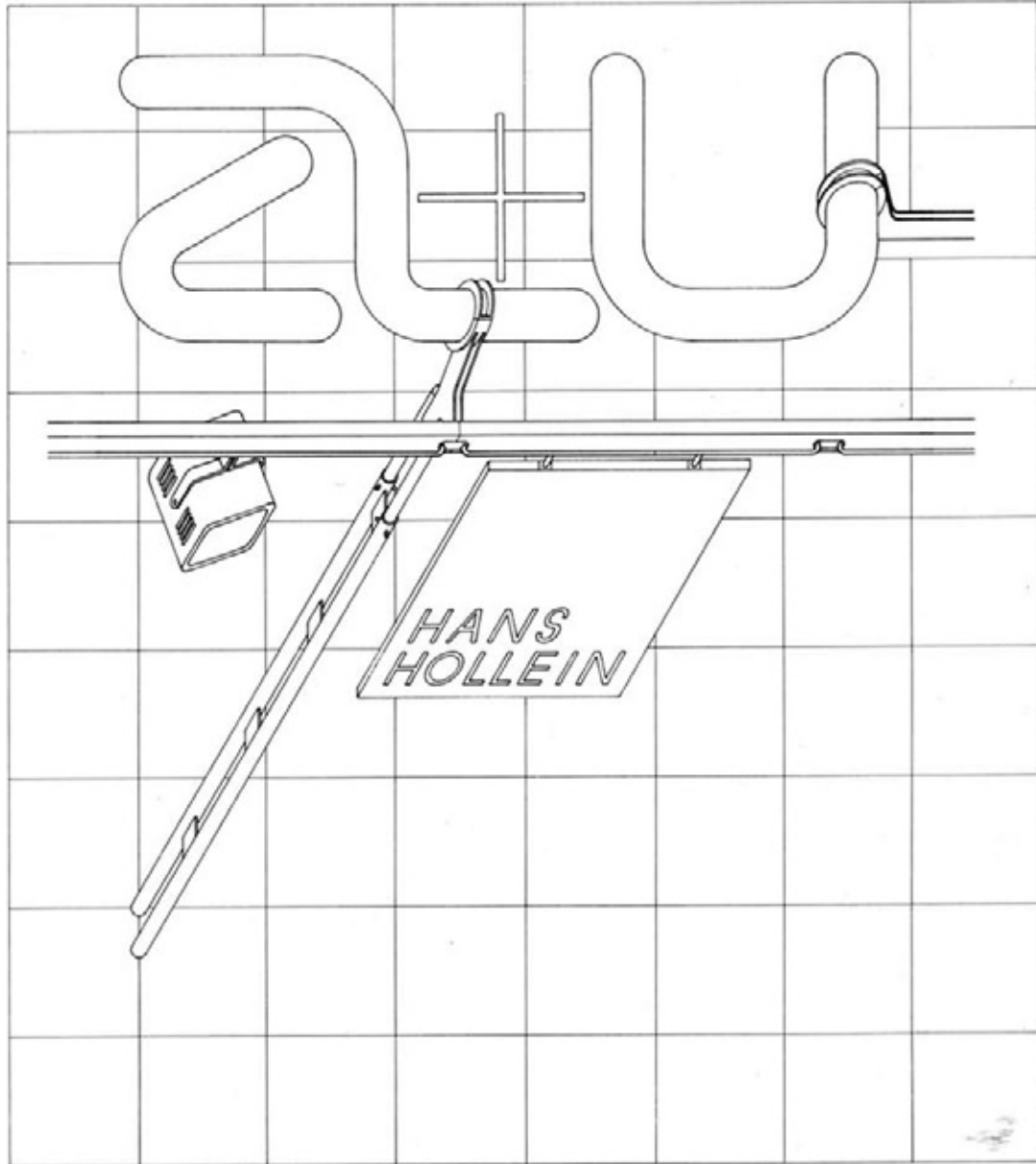
01 A+U logo stylized as a Media-Line segment and used as a half-title in the magazine's issue 'Hollein' (A+U E8502).
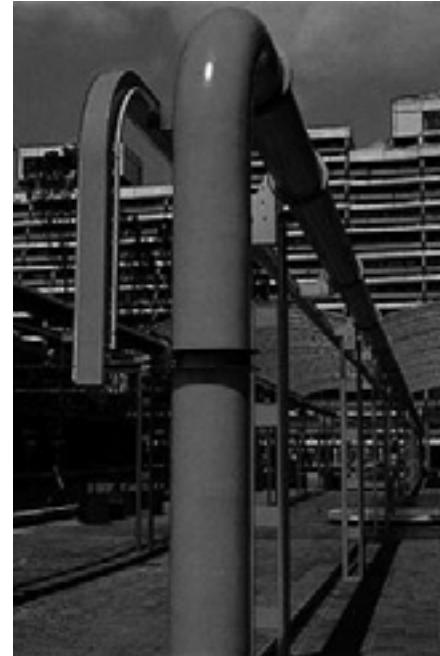
02–05 Details of Hans Hollein's Media Lines, Munich 1972.

Once is Nothing

Once Is Nothing, Brussels, 2008, installation shot; the catalogs were free to pick up.

Can exhibitions serve as mnemonic models? To what extent does the transfer of exhibition architecture to a new context change its reception, once it no longer has to serve as a display for something else? Josef Dabernig submitted his exhibition design for the exhibition **Individual Systems**, curated by Igor Zabel for the Venice Biennale in 2003, as an artistic contribution to the exhibition **Once is Nothing**, for Maria Hlavajova and Charles Esche's section of the first Brussels Biennale (October 19, 2008–January 4, 2009). In connection with questions of repetition and continuity, they presented **Once is Nothing** as an exhibition about an exhibition. In Brussels the show's exhibition architecture became a sculpturally installed system of reference. Another consideration behind the curatorial concept was the observation that, unlike the presentation formats of other kinds of art, the visual arts lack a system of notation that could make it possible to preserve and re-enact exhibitions. The curators invited Josef Dabernig to reinterpret his original design for Venice in the new context of the show in Brussels. Josef Dabernig's transfer of a system and its integration into the former mail-sorting system produces a structure that can function as a mnemonic model. It becomes a sculptural structure that emerges from a specific transformation that can be re-traced through the catalog as an essential part of the installation.

Josef Dabernig

Copying in Drawing and Writing

JOSEF DABERNIG When studying sculpture, I asked myself how subjective my life drawings were. And I made more than a little effort to avoid it. I measured the model like an engineer would, forcing him or her into x-y-z coordinates and trying to avoid any uncontrolled stroke of the pen. It was around this time that I copied F. X. Mayr's book Schönheit und Verdauung; oder, Die Verjüngung des Menschen nur durch sachgemäße Wartung des Darmes (Beauty and digestion; or, The rejuvenation of the human body simply through proper care of the bowels).[1] **I copied the entire book delicately and cleanly by hand, writing on both sides of the pages, and then asked myself, what was the substantial difference between assigning coordinates to nude models and writing out pages of text. At the time, I was interested in concentration—in the form of hours spent drawing from nature, weeks spent practicing copying books, and no less time-consuming conversion tables and columns of numbers. Sculpture became a pretext for an accounting trick, an attack on subjectivity and originality carried out with a contemplative disposition.**

DISPLAYER In 1982 you used motifs from Torvaianica in Lazio, Italy, as the basis for using drawing and cartography to translate a physically real situation into a system of signs and, ultimately, numbers. Using inherently rational systems like $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ to generate coordinates, you produced data that you then used to form a sculpture. Is there a program or script that determines the systematization of the processes and decisions for designing the form down to the individual working steps of abstraction and re-concretization?
No written summary of those steps was prepared. The Torvaianica project consisted of fifty-four drawings, tables of numbers, and a steel sculpture. The decision to use the Pythagorean theorem was

connected with the choice of a differentiation code that seemed to me would be difficult to decode through sensory reception. For the formula $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$—which in that sense was also chosen for purposes of concealing—I defined for a the factors 0.5 for the x value and 2 for the y value, for b the factors 0.75 for the x value and 1.75 for the y value. The curves of a and b intersect as x is increased while y is decreased, forming the basis of a mutation that is controlled but nonetheless of baffling complexity. The values for c derived from the formula are the logical consequence for a kind of third dimension. The conceptual decisions are no longer adjusted in the mechanical execution; the task tends toward an exercise in concentration.**

How would you define the artistic position in which the processes of deciding on forms are determined by systems of rules?
I would see them as conforming to reality in the sense of explanatory models that can be objectified. For me, aspects of rationalism and structuralism fulfilled an important function in overcoming traumas caused by certain values of a Catholic, petit bourgeois education.

In your cinematic oeuvre, systematization often seems to be part of the action presented. To what extent could elements which are perceived simultaneously, like action, selection of image, site, and music, be observed individually?
In my short films I try to create a symbiosis of elements from narrative cinema and the tradition of experimental film. Simple narrative threads are interwoven with strictly conceived spatial settings and elaborate dramaturgies of editing; moreover, the relationship of image and sound is generally conceptually loaded with anachronisms and clashes of genre. The constituent parts are linked in such a way that they can still be separated analytically but make no sense in isolation from one another. Putting them together is defined as film. Rosa coeli[2] —which may serve as an example to describe the

relationship of individual elements—consists of a cinematic narration about a mysterious encounter of three men in a hotel. On the visual level, there is the plot of a male world that is emphatically cold, squared off by rectangular reinforced concrete, plunged into an icy winter climate, and accompanied by sparse communication. The soundtrack that is interwoven with the images is quite different: birds are twittering and the word images of Bruno Pellandini speak of warmth, rural idyll, and the colorful history of a place, and they never, ever mirror the visual thread that runs in parallel with them. The level of images and the level of sound would otherwise run the risk, independently of each other, of ossifying in genre clichés. But the film derives its tension from the symbiosis and dialectic of elements that contradict one another.**

Choreography of Derivation

Scene change to the film Lancia Thema.[3] **The protagonist is driving through Italy in the car of the title, stopping frequently to get out and photographing his vehicle each time. While he is shooting, the film camera leaves the photographer and offers long panning shots of what evidently doesn't interest him: significant sites marked by a tension between the ancient and the modern. This dramaturgical scenario is repeated five times against different backgrounds and with changing music. If** Rosa coeli **is a film with a beginning and an end—and here that applies to the image and the text levels, seen both together and independently of each other— then** Lancia Thema **calls that form into question: the film camera and the still camera represent different gazes in** Lancia Thema. **The exercise with five repetitions was used to work that out: the film camera leaves the protagonist in order to become independent—as a model for the reception of the film.**
As a rule, the details are specified compositionally. For example, with few exceptions, the camera moves only horizontally. This lends something profane to the iconography and content. The camera

work and editing were intended to allow the viewers to find themselves in the fiction. That sometimes makes a conceptual reception more difficult, but it opens up the miniatures (short films) to the tradition of narrative cinema. In each of my films, there is an aspect of content that generally serves as the trigger or motivation for the film in question. The most obvious basis of material for me is my own traumas, since you don't have to invent anything. The second and at least equally important level is that of form. There I try to create continuities and at the same time violate them. Hence the individual films, but also all my films taken together, depict movements of figures that can be read as sculptural volumes.**

Under what conditions can repetitions produce errors and difference, so that differing forms can be generated from the systematic pattern?
A series can be articulated linearly or rhythmically. A rhythmical series is already a model of differentiation that differs from a linear one. As an artistic phenomenon, the series has the advantage of being easily readable; it is well suited to illustrating structural thinking but is at the same time the expression of a schematic view of the world. Errors or deviations in a series put this view into perspective and as a dramaturgical resource bring tension into monotony.

Whereas in **Lancia Thema** the camera leaves the scene of action and thus emphasizes the spatial context of the action over the plot, in the film **Wisla** [4] the fragmentary context replaces every narrative form of plot. Can the depiction of context replace a plot or be equated with it?
The framing of an existing but unseen plot is a crucial constituent in the farce of the plot. It becomes manifest through architectonic signifiers that document a place in transformation whose ambiguous content helps construct the voids of the pseudo-fiction. If an artistic statement tends to explain (or show) everything, then the viewer has no leeway. Such a statement runs the risk of being an authoritarian gesture. My conception of film

deliberately plays with established voids and sometimes also with traps for the viewers' autonomy.

The actors in Wisla represent the theme by means of stage directions and bearing; the camera collects via stage directions the images necessary to construct the content. These images are representatives of a narrative that takes place in one's head, is put on paper, and then realized. The void of the invisible center of the action is a conceptual and dramaturgical decision. It stands for the secret or for desire as well and represents the latitude for the viewers which I mentioned.

My task as an author is not to question the dramaturgical void once I have decided on it but rather to bring together all the dramaturgical details (including those that help to define the significance of the void) into a whole. That includes leaving things out and all the components of the framing that construct the empty center in this film. The latter is framed not only on the level of content, but the game simulated with the gestures of the trainers is also introduced and ended with a nearly identical pan. This structural framing establishes a narrative of signifiers through the landscape and buildings and at the same time is set up in such a way that its horizontal movement will not at first betray the real void but rather confirm it in the end. Consequently, the direction and editing make many decisions relating to form and content in the spirit of increasing precision and density, and the same is true of the sound direction and editing.

Analogies and Deviations

As part of Francesco Bonami's Venice Biennale in 2003, Igor Zabel brought together fifteen artistic positions for his exhibition Individual Systems.[5] Igor invited me to design this exhibition as a display with both open and closed areas. I approached my task by way of the immanent logic of the architecture of the Arsenale: the relevant exhibition space was a slightly distorted rectangle approximately

fifty meters long and twenty-one meters wide. Enormous columns seven meters apart articulate the three-aisle hall. The premise was to leave the central aisle free of built-ins, to make it possible to experience the depth of the space, and thus to help mediate the site. I decided to increase the dynamic of the linear rhythm established by the columns on both sides, the side aisles, which were nearly seven meters tall, albeit articulated by galleries. As a result, the lengths of the white cubes placed there were decreased and their heights reduced as well. Hence the series of built-ins forced the projecting effect of the architecture, playing with the quotation of monumental axis, an effect that turns into its opposite on the way back. In order to break up the symmetry of the side aisles, the units opposite each other were shifted back a distance equal to one segment of the columns.

The hermetic quality of the exhibition architecture was mitigated by a measure stipulated for conservation reasons: all of the built-ins had to be free-standing in the room, without any ties to the brick walls or columns. Nor would it have made any sense technically to connect a geometrically linear form to a slightly buckled and round column. So, to the left of the corridor, there was a slit between the existing fabric and the white spaces, while on the right the walls were set in from the row of columns in order to create self-contained units that would offer a suitable frame for the works by Yuri Leiderman, Roman Opalka, and Florian Pumhösl. Taken together, the hermetic and communicative qualities are balanced in a display concept that is structurally based but flexible enough to permit free interchange with individual demands.

Maria Hlavajova and Charles Esche conceived the exhibition Once is Nothing for the first Brussels Biennale in 2008.[6] The occasion for it was a memory of Igor Zabel's exhibition Individual Systems, which prompted a discussion of the exhibition as historical model. Since the project in Brussels got by entirely without the material presence of the works shown

in Venice, it provided an opportunity to create a sensory recoupling by means of the architecture. The structural similarity of the floor plans of the two exhibitions supported this. In Venice, it was the tripartite, monumental rope-making factory of the former republic; in Brussels, it was a quadripartite floor of a modern but nonetheless abandoned mail-sorting center at the southern train station. Both buildings were historical landmarks, and a significant residual texture pointed to their respective former uses. Because the intervals between columns were of similar dimensions in Venice and in Brussels, there was no problem transferring the basic structure of the spaces of Individual Systems to Once is Nothing. In the mail-sorting center, too, the direction of access determines the architectonic structure. For example, on the right hand side there is a complete row of three units; the second row, this time not shifted, is shortened by the stairwell, which projects into the rectangle.

The exhibition architecture for Individual Systems and Once is Nothing, respectively, is characterized by a systematic structure using similar premises. Nevertheless, the sensory experience of each differs. Not only did the curatorial concept rule out a repetition, the glass façade of the mail-sorting center represented a situation open to the outside, in contrast with the Corderie. Hence, from the perspective of the exhibition display, memory has an ephemeral fleetingness. Lines of sight between blank walls open up a view far into the grounds of the train station and into urban space. Along the line of intersection between inside and outside, with a view over the platforms, was the only work that had been added after Venice: a fantasy story by Patrick Corillon, presented on twenty tables lined up in a row.

The lack of other exhibits—only the labels of the works shown in the Arsenale were applied to the walls, and catalogs with reference material related to the project were made available to visitors to take with them—lent a sculptural aura to the functional level of the display. Walk-in spaces

were not necessary. The result was an architecture that served as a model apart from any concrete demands on its use and, more so than in Venice, one that was indebted to semantics rather than pragmatism. The one space formed solely by four walls was not accessible but could be viewed through small slits between the walls.

When the architectonic structure stands freely in the space, the only attractor other than the wall labels is the surrounding space—that is, the building and the other parts of the exhibition—they become the frame for the reconstructed frame of the exhibition. What is the frame for a frame with no content? To what extent does the sculptural nature of the exhibition walls overwhelm their potential as a communicative structures inherent in the exhibition design?

The architecture for Once is Nothing was based on the logic of the exhibition concept, but with only a rough knowledge of the architectural plans for the neighboring exhibition, Show Me, Don't Tell Me, which was organized by the Witte de With. The two exhibitions share a floor level and represent a dialectical duo in terms of their displays. The walls in Once is Nothing imply the character of an object or installation—and also, by the way, their visual permeability can be verified from the floor plan and the other connections mentioned above. I see no problem with the idea of the wall as an expanded sculpture, which is where I would place this work within my oeuvre. The structures of the hall and the display represent two related systems. Their context is at once connection and lack of connection. The hall and the display are autonomous and together result in the exhibition architecture for Once is Nothing, analogous to the principle behind the construction of the film Rosa coeli, where the film resulted from the visual story and the textual story. Clear relationships, spatial and visual axes can be read from the plan. If they do not emerge in some individual's sensory experience, that may have to do with a subjective discomfort with admitting a systematically conceived display. Such a

systematic approach was the basis for the architectural concept of the original exhibition and hence was a logical consequence for the attempt to re-enact it.

A narration within an exhibition and hence a transfer of memory usually results from a specific path through an exhibition selected for, or forced on, the visitor. **Once is Nothing** was presented as a space that enabled viewers to behave as they wished, since it did not offer any instructions on how to act ('Walk left, look right, linger'). But what can a spatialized framework actually achieve as a model for memory? **Transgressions of the sort that derive from this set of questions are the object of artistic praxis. 'Walk left, look right, linger' sounds like an Unterhaltungsparcours (entertainment route). This project has nothing to do with that. The theme of** Once is Nothing **was the memory of the exhibition** Individual Systems**, which did not attempt to do justice to the demands of an assiduous flâneur but rather postulated systematic thinking in individual positions. The exhibition architecture was supported by a system in the sense of pars pro toto, totum pro parte, and it was revived in the model of memory. It is not the 'spatialized framework' alone but rather also its interplay with the work by Patrick Corillon that was added, also with the wall labels, with the catalogs and with the context of the mail-sorting building, that represented the narration of** Once is Nothing**.**

How do the guideline/narration and the individual experience relate within the exhibition if one is familiar with the spatial representation and the publication but not with **Individual Systems** as the reference? What expectations do you have of inscribing in memory through physical experience as opposed to a textual approach to the object of the reconstruction?

A space for the imagination—for the flâneur it could be a path optimized for sensory perception—represents a mathematical task for the structuralist. The path's parameters are not optimizing factors in the sense of entertainment but are rather explained as the crystallization of a system that has been shifted into the field of experience of the exhibition. In this concrete case, the catalog is available as the musical score that becomes the tool of a deconstruction. That is a necessary component in the reconstruction of the exhibition concept; in my view, its significance for the experience of the exhibition is analogous to the effect of studying the score on the experience of hearing a symphony.

The interview is based on a written statement by Josef Dabernig in October 2008 and an e-mail conversation, January 2009.

1 Handwritten copy of Dr. Franz Xaver Mayr's book Schönheit und Verdauung; oder, Die Verjüngung des Menschen nur durch sachgemäße Wartung des Darmes, 5th ed. (Bad Goisern, Austria: Neues Leben, 1975; orig. pub. 1920), 1977. Ballpoint pen on paper, 109 pages (54 pages measuring 19.7 x 15 cm, and 55 pages measuring 21 x 15 cm).

2 Rosa coeli, 35 mm, b/w, 24 min., 2003.

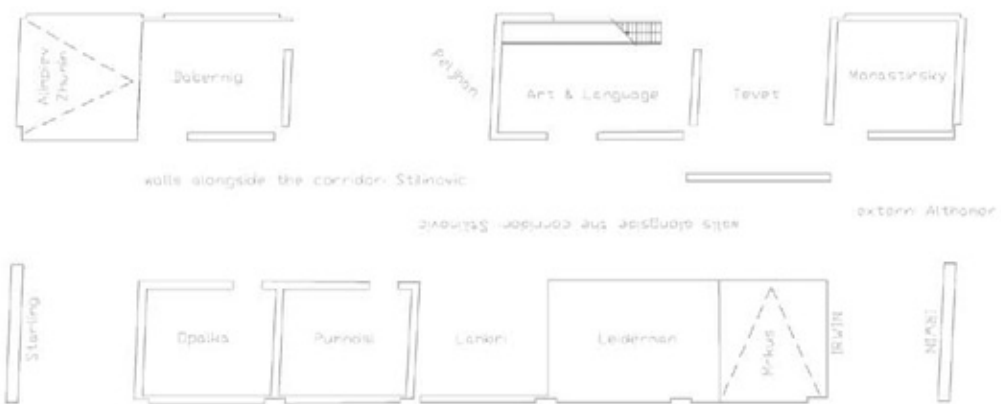3 Lancia Thema, 35 mm, color, 17 min., 2005.

4 Wisla, 16 mm, b/w, 8 min., 1996.

5 Individual Systems, La Biennale di Venezia, 50° Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, 2003. Curated by Igor Zabel. Included artists: Viktor Alimpiev & Marian Zhunin , Pawel Althamer , Art & Language, Josef Dabernig, IRWIN, Luisa Lambri, Yuri Leiderman, Andrei Monastirsky, Pavel Mrkus, Roman Opalka, Marko Peljhan, Florian Pumhösl, Simon Starling, Mladen Stilinovic, and Nahum Tevet.
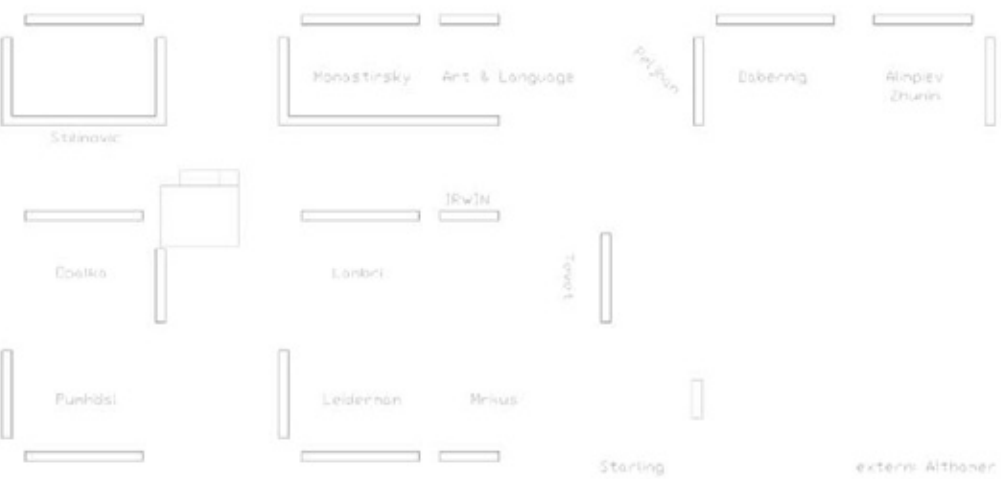
6 Once Is Nothing, Brussels Biennial 1, 2008. Curated by Maria Hlavajova and Charles Esche. A project realized in memory of Igor Zabel. Included artists: Viktor Alimpiev & Marian Zhunin, Pawel Althamer , Art & Language, Patrick Corillon, Josef Dabernig, IRWIN, Luisa Lambri, Yuri Leiderman, Andrei Monastirsky, Pavel Mrkus, Roman Opalka, Marko Peljhan, Florian Pumhösl, Simon Starling, Mladen Stilinovic, and Nahum Tevet.

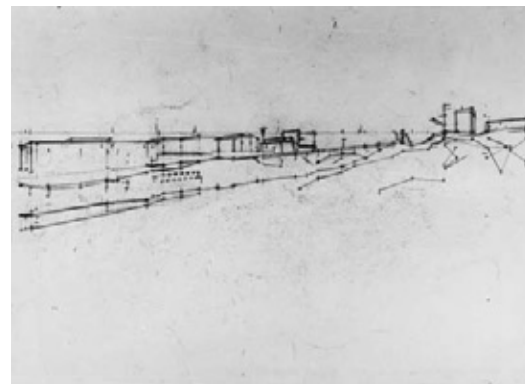Andrea Gleiniger, Georg Vrachliotis (Eds.): Komplexität, Entwurfsstrategie und Weltbild, Basel 2008.

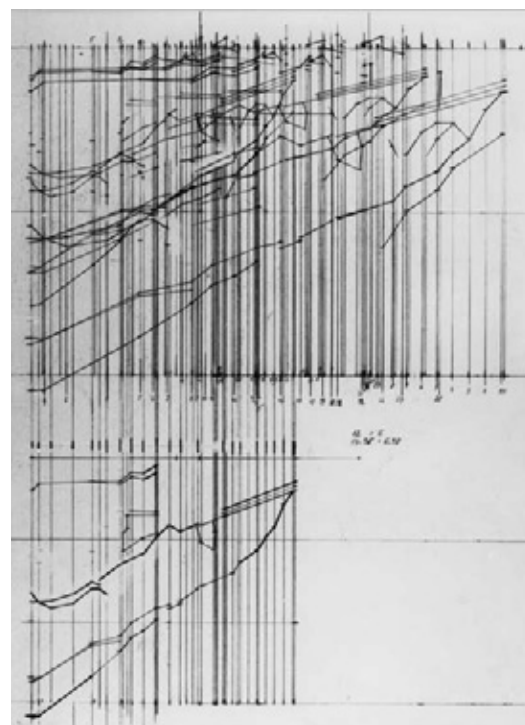Karl Gerstner: Programme entwerfen, Teufen 1963.
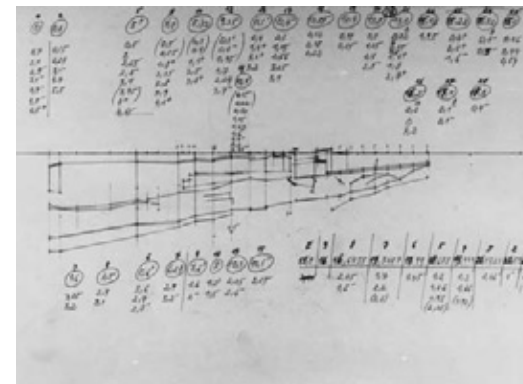
01 Comparison of the layouts of the exhibition architecture in Individual Systems at the Venice Biennale in 2003 and Josef Dabernig's reconstruction in Once is Nothing at the Brussels Biennale in 2008.

02

03

04

02 Torvaianica, 1983, pencil on paper, 240 x 330 mm.
03–04 Torvaianica, 1983, pencil and ball pen on paper, 240 x 330 mm.

Chronotope

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster: Riyo, 35mm film, 10 min, 1999.

For centuries parks have been sites for display. The English 'landscape park,' for example, offers viewing axes, footpaths, light conditions and framings that navigate through space, direct gazes and highlight objects. These parks are quintessential models of space. Like exhibition spaces, parks are designed environments which constantly oscillate between the static quality of constructed scenery and the fluidity of climate and botany. The urban flâneur finds there both a space to promenade in public and to wander through his or her own imagination. Moreover, it is a shared space for divers desires and uses. In this light, **Park—A Plan for Escape** (2002) in Kassel or **Roman de Münster** (2007) in the Skuplturprojekte Münster by the artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster showcases these tensions. Her works not only often take the park as a space of departure and exhibition but invent a writing of space. But rather than telling a story, her environmental settings demand stories that are between different spaces as well as times. Objects of different provenance are situated at polite distances from each other on the lawn of the park while visitors become further characters as participants in the setting. The scenery becomes an itinerary of journeys that then continue in the here and now. Learning from Gonzalez-Foerster, a walk through an open space is close to a 'film traveling' in which the 'narrative can take place in a different chronotope.' What can be rendered in a space like a park and not in the purpose-built architecture of a contemporary art exhibition venue?

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

Transfer

DISPLAYER In your works for the Skulptur Projekte in Münster 2007, as well as for the Documenta 11, one can find a transfer of spaces. While the Documenta contribution collected sites and situations from around the world—like a travel diary—the Münster installation was a Skulptur Projekte en miniature—a Russian doll, if you like. Is the transfer of spaces, sites and situations the origin of your work?

DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ-FOERSTER **One of the origins of the work is a strong interest in different kinds of spaces, e.g.** Espèces d'Espaces **by George Perec, and their specific potential and narratives, from domestic to public spaces, built space and open landscapes, from bedrooms to parks, including pavilions, museums, hotels, airports, planets, fictional spaces, sets … The early works are more based on analogy, the way one space looks like the other; for example, a living room and a 19th century-type museum space. The transfer operation comes later. I have been fascinated by the way the French writer Pierre Loti collected spaces from all over the world in his Rochefort house but also moments in time. China, Istanbul, the Middle Ages, all in one house. I have also been interested since a very long time in architects', writers' and artists' houses (such as the Gustave Moreau Museum) as containers for parts of their work that are considered to be peripheral. Space is the matrix but then it is nothing without the time to go through or to remember it.**

At the Documenta 11 in 2002, you created **Park — A Plan for Escape** in the Kassel Karlsaue, which consisted of a set of various pieces from the 1960s: a characteristic lantern, a windy path, a bench, a small concrete pond painted blue. A video projection room functioned as 'an outdoor cinema equipped with exotic props,' as Daniel Birnbaum put it. What is your under-standing of the term 'park' here? Is the park a place for escape? Do you see transitory inter-spaces of our daily lives there? Please also tell us about the weight of the transfer from the private, i.e. your very particular choices, to the public, i.e. the work's presentation in an open/common space.

After exploring private and intimate spaces as the exhibition of the self, biographical spaces, I slowly felt that this typology belonged more to the 19th century. Walter Benjamin wrote perfect sentences about the bourgeois apartment and what it triggers and reveals. After a while I felt that to focus on these spaces wasn't contemporary enough and that there was more to research in public space. In shared space, parks, beaches, waterfronts, lobbies, plazas, squares, streets are potential playgrounds for adults and children. Our domestic interiors become more and more technology driven and fall under the influence of a lot of external data and are less and less like a private museum of our own history. It seemed more exciting to explore another relation to space, space that must be shared with people you don't know, places that can contain some kind of surprise and chance but also differ-ent possibilities for the body and real encounters rather than the experiences of dvds, videogames or the internet. But of course even this open space is transformed and contaminated by technology—in the film Riyo **(1999), which takes place on the side of the river Kamo in Kyoto, we can hear the mobile phone conversation of two teenagers and the way it contaminates the landscape but also the way this urban situation along the river generates a specific choreography.**

What importance do you find in the ambivalence between view and reflection, open nature and enclosed spaces, geometric building plans and uncontrollable perceptions? What happens in these places of transition or rather, in these non-places?

I never liked this 'non-place' definition, although there can be a lot to say about the difference between a space and place—I don't believe in non-places—some places are more under control and about control, others seem to be able to provide more potential and unexpected experiences in D. W. Winicott's sense (playing and reality/the potential space). The idea of Central Park in New York is an incredible invention. The connection of the organic—plants, water, stones—with the sensa-tion of freedom and possibility is an obvious one. This is why I'm fascinated by tropical environments where nature still plays a bigger role. In the past years I have been more attracted to unbuilt open air environments rather than overly finished and planned architecture.

Your work **Parc Central, Taipei** (2000/2007) shows a park as the foundation of your research but already entangled with an additional narration through the intersection with the Taiwanese film **Vive l'Amour** which was shot there. At the same time it becomes the setting for a new observation—a visually and aurally captured walk influenced by the rain, by the as-found situation. Which potentiality does the tension between the accidentally found and the precisely selected reveal? Please elaborate more on the consequences of selecting certain sites and times.

Art, art, art …

In particular the **Roman de Münster** shows an intrinsic connectedness not only to a particular space (site) but also to time. Quoting previous artists' works for the Skulptur Projekte leads to something new. However, they also remind one of something old. To what extent does the concept of time play a role in your work? How do you assimilate historical time in space? How do you deal with different time scales?

After exploring the planet and urban, or non-urban, situations for years, I have slowly become more interested in exploring time. At the moment I'm more into timelines than geographical maps. But also the palimpsest that appears if you start to superimpose different moments of a specific space, which is also a natural condition for some urban spaces.

In **Parc Central, Taipei** the viewer becomes the eye of the camera—there is again a moment of transference but much more bodily and inhabited by speaking and imagining from the 'I,' by the first-person narrator. How important is the involvement of the viewer for you?

50/50. As I often say in a Duchampian way, I see the viewer as a reader. I provide some clues, a structure, but then there is still a lot to do, that's why some works don't seem to 'work' some-times.

Historical traces today

In your work, you bring various narrations about time and space together, which evolves to a third nature, i.e. a nature that emerges through artifacts, institutions, and technologies and that shift fundamental forces of fauna and flora to self-reflective and symbolic spheres of thought. How would you describe a third nature—or maybe better: a third space—under specific temporal conditions?

Maybe as a post-architectural condition, based on narrative, chance, heterogeneity, and 'the aesthetics of diversity,' as Victor Segalen calls it.

Among others, Dan Graham, Ludger Gerdes or Ian Hamilton Finlay were the ones that ushered in a 'renaissance' in the garden as a location as well as material for art in the 1980s. What made you use this topic in your work?

It's a place of display and design, a set, but also a playground that contains this possibility to walk around, sit, run, lie down, and also to approach the aesthetic experience in a very different mood. Probably the feeling that it has something to do with the history of exhibition but almost like a parallel story. That's also an idea Dorothea von Hantelmann is exploring through her research.

If we take Dan Graham, it is apparent that the pavilion acts as an intermediary between architecture and nature, between the material manifestation of a stony construction and the light weight of ephemeral and transient structures. Would you suggest that a sym-

bolization of the crossover of urban to rural is found in your work as well?

It's a good question, 'rural,' I'm not completely sure if it's really this—but a kind of crossover for sure.

The Park/Garden as Exhibition Space

Take the English Garden: if one were to follow the paths, the line of sight (visual axes), the thorough positioning and framing of trees as well as statues, the space appears generous, almost boundless, and highly organized when you walk through it. In particular, the relation between framing and positioning in space allows one to draw a conjunction with the logic of the modern exhibition space. Would you see this kind of garden as the first featured exhibition space in the context of exhibition history?

As I said before, I think of it as a parallel history, because exhibition has its own history that goes back to panoramas and many other fascinating spaces.

Seeing the garden as a whole, one lingers from stage to stage, from scene to scene, and thereby re-activates certain memories and allegorical images. What do the precise conventions of a garden provide which an art space cannot?

Fresh air …

Garden/park as an irritation—between white cube, living room and green field. Is it a plea against the metropolitan attitude of separation and alienated living conditions?

Well, sometimes I would think about it as a possible 'green cube,' after the white cube and the black box (video), a need for a space that has some parts which are alive. Yes, I do feel trapped in an overly mineral and constructed environment. Yes, I have a fear of everything being transformed into artificial material without any naturally growing or changing parts. W.G. Sebald was very concerned by this, the end of an organic world and its replacement by something totally artificial and controlled by humans.

The designed garden could be considered as a three-dimensional art object, as well as a non-institutionalized place for meditation and imagination. Does it become an alternative model to reflect aesthetic and social content?

Foucault introduced the concept of 'heterotopia'—it is surely a desire to explore and provide that dimension and possibilities. A place that is not your own but in which you might be able to experience more dimensions. Obviously because it's much larger and shared with others but maybe also as an escape from our over-controlled and secured interiors.

Since the invention of the English Garden, the garden has become a multi-media installation. Since its beginning it is a simulated image of nature, using quasi-rhetorical concepts. Today especially computer-generated scales of time and space create an immersive access to a virtual nature that becomes real. When seen as places for art, do they stand face to face with traditional sites of art display and mediation such as museums and showrooms?

It's interesting to go back and forth between some virtual and more real environments. I'm still convinced that an experience relying on your own bodily motion and your will and desire to move around, stop, think, watch, maybe talk, which is forbidden in Western theater or cinema situations, is something to explore. The exhibition situation for a viewer is as close as possible to any other which makes it incredibly difficult but also has the potential of offering a valid dystopia or playground.

In your new work at the Tate Modern, the transfer of places occurs again but under different spatial conditions. Keeping in mind the 'park as a plan for escape:' are the large-scale museums our contemporary parks? In which locations and spaces do you see the potential for a 'third nature' in a cityscape?

Not in all museums, but a place like the Turbine Hall as opposed to the museum galleries nearby certainly has this capacity, it is about sheer size, the amount of people that go through, a certain urban

flux … Size means more time to walk through, like a film traveling, the narrative can take place in a different chronotope …

Daniel Birnbaum: Running on Empty: The Art of Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster. In: Artforum, issue November 2003.

Lucius Burckhardt: Warum ist Landschaft schön? Die Spaziergangswissenschaften, Kassel 1980.

Brigitte Franzen: Die Vierte Natur. Gärten in der zeitgenössischen Kunst, Köln 2000.

Udo Weilacher: Ein Gartenreich als politischer Erfahrungsraum. Little Sparta in Stonypath. In: Udo Weilacher: In Gärten. Profile aktueller europäischer Landschaftsarchitektur, Basel Berlin Boston 2005.

Daniel Kurjakovic, Kunsthalle Zürich (Eds.): Ein Raum ist eine Welt /A World Within a Space, exhibition publication, Zürich 2001.

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (Ed.): NOCTURAMA* Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, exhibition catalog, Barcelona 2008.
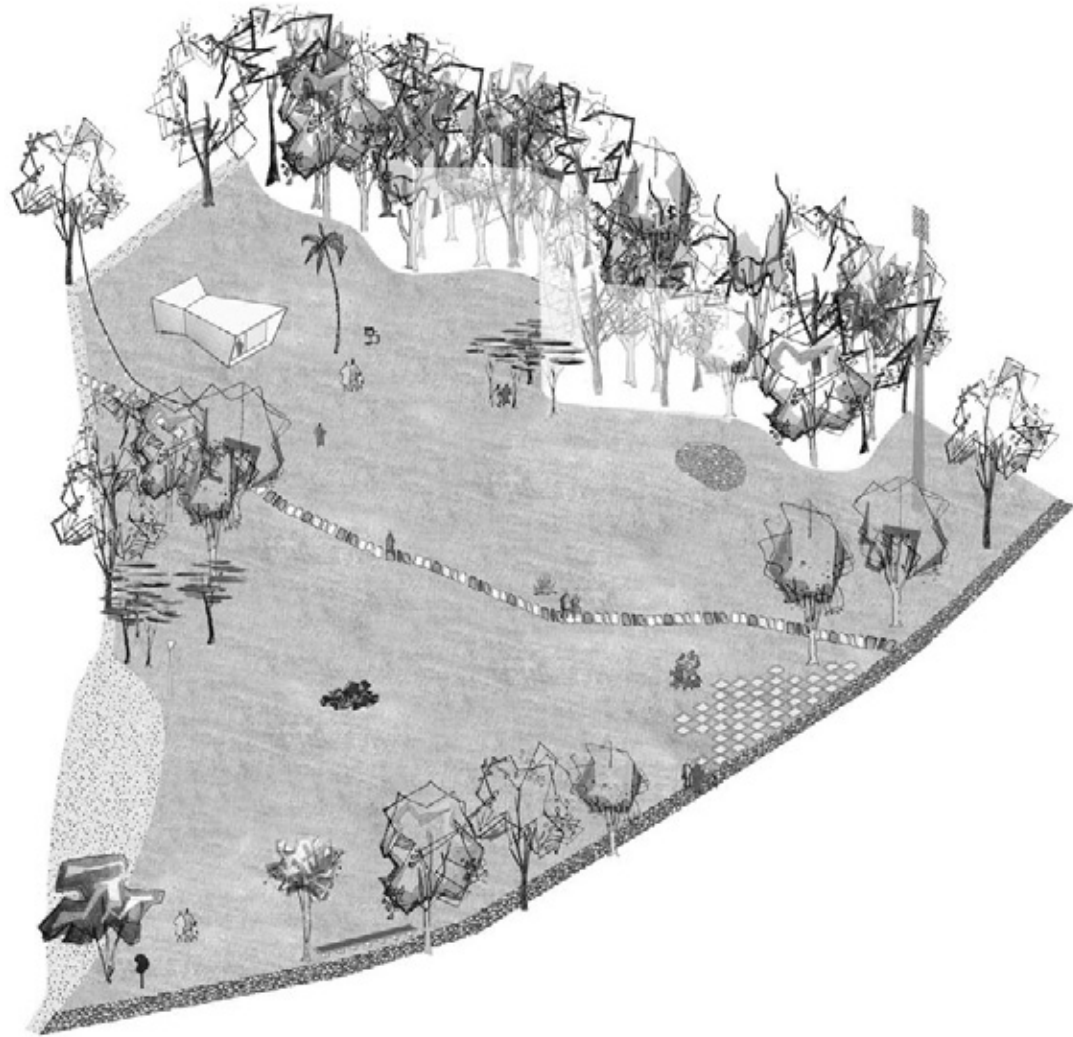
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster: drawing of Park—A Plan for Escape in the Gardens of the Orangerie in Kassel, 2002.

Archival Architects
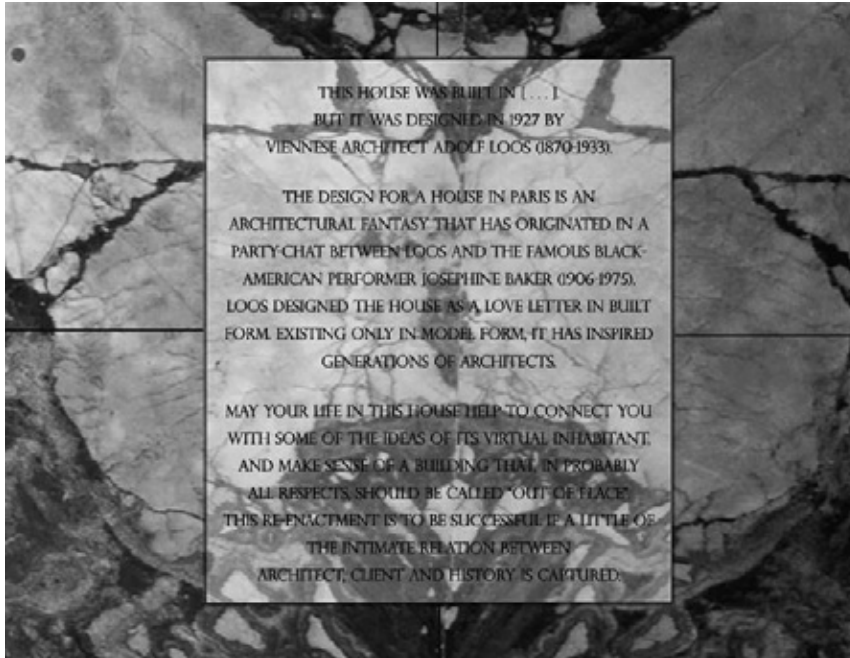
Dedication plaque of the architects Ines Weizman and Andreas Thiele for their design of Adolf Loos' Baker House in Ordos, 2009.

Reconstruction in architecture might be carried out by re-drawing existing plans or re-building an object. Considering the built environment as a space where collective memory can be projected, such modes of reconstruction are inevitably also re-enactments of the discourses and histories connected to particular buildings, becoming a critical inscription in the surrounding architecture. Architect and theoretician Ines Weizman refers to these issues of re-enactment and reconstruction from the standpoint of an 'archival architect.' Her decisively critical practice is informed by theoretical investigations into the possibilities of architecture as a form of dissent. In her paper **Squares, Streets and Towers—the Architecture of the Political Spectacle**, she discussed architectural spatiality as ideological projection site and proposed a way to interrogate history in view of its visible repercussions for the built environment. These thoughts have also influenced her and Andreas Thiele's current participation at ORDOS 100: a site in the desert of Inner Mongolia that is being developed to house 100 villas within the curatorial masterplan of Ai Wei Wei, while Herzog and de Meuron have invited predominantly Western architects to submit proposals—one of the conditions that served to introduce controversy into the plan. Ines Weizman and Andreas Thiele's proposal reflects on such conflicts through the themes of authorship and reconstruction and makes one consider whether dissent from the existing ideological framework must be proposed through physical re-enactment of a historical plan or whether the process of re-drawing is sufficient? Also, what forms of responsibility emerge with the practice of reconstruction in architecture?

Ines Weizman

Archives

DISPLAYER In view of the important dialogue between practice and theory, object and process in your work, it is interesting that you have described yourself as an 'archival architect.' How does the notion of the archive, which in theoretical discourse has often been discussed as something unfinished that allows for uncertainties and for an ongoing investigation rather than being a fixed representation of something—how does this notion of the archive become a carrier for critique in architecture?

INES WEIZMAN I am fascinated by the concept of the archive. I understand it both as a wonderful storage place that could be opened at times like a cabinet of curiosities in which we could wander around, but also as a tool for analysis, representation and critique. Archives are used as shelters of information. Certain data is stored in particular boxes, files and envelopes. We know those collections as encyclopedias, medical charts, seed banks, public accounts and police records. Those collections are not innocently or thoughtlessly grouped together. Taxonomies always both represent intentions and value judgments that decide whether a gesture is to be included or excluded or where it is to be positioned in relation to others. Foucault defines the archive as 'the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events.' It demands a system of 'enunciability' and a system of 'functioning,' that is, a theory of the institutional and political implementation of the archive. The archive can reflect the very mechanisms of a society forming its discourse and possible field of action, but it can also function as an important laboratory for a critical cultural, or political discourse.

When I speak about the 'critical archive' or the 'archival architect,' I try to promote a practice that can mobilize memory, ideas and data into forms of action and modes of operation. The work with the archive as an institution can never be complete and thus always has to be immersed in the process of continuous restoration, reconfiguration and questioning. I understand this kind of complicating of initially relatively simple relations as a form of practice of criticism. Architects work a lot with given archives. These might be historical archives, planning archives and handbooks for technical regulations. Yet normally, the archive is only seen as a beginning or an end to a design project. What I am trying to promote here is a kind of synthesis almost hard to imagine between memory and critique—a synthesis that can mobilize action.

Re-enactment

An archive is also able to offer documents and data—a kind of a script—to the reconstruction of a historical event. You are working with the notion of 're-enactment' which for us has also been an essential way to think through the reconstruction of architecture. Your paper **Re-enactments of a Non-Existent Revolution in East Germany** offers an analysis of urbanism in East Germany shortly after 1945 and unfolded 're-enactment' as an ideological strategy for urban planning in East Berlin. How do you think through 're-enactment' in your own practical work?

For me it is important that re-enactment has manifold manifestations. We know re-enactments of historically relevant events, often staged at the original location of the event and possibly with original props. Their meaning then goes beyond the original and gains momentum in their displacement in time and space. Also, we know the concept of re-enactments from criminology. In the Monsieur Poirot detective stories, the narrative famously culminates in re-staging the scene of crime. The more he is able to illustrate that scene and to locate individual characters, the more the wrong-doer recognizes the impending prosecution. The novel Remainder by Tom McCarthy (a weird story of a re-enactment) is presented as an attempt to recover a lost memory. A man has lost his memory and tries to reconstruct

it by reconstructing spatial fragments—a kind of 'inverted mnemotechnique.' The book asks how authentic a re-enactment can be and how real a copy might become.

We also know re-enactments in an archaeological sense, where it could be a kind of test of the working techniques. One of the most convincing arguments I heard about the re-building of the Dresdner Frauenkirche was a lecture in the '90s by an architect who, as part of his diploma in the 1940s, analyzed the cracks and fissures in the cupola of the church. His results were that basically Georg Bähr's Frauenkirche was not executed in the way the architect had planned it. There was a mistake in the construction, which contributed to the collapse of the cupola on the morning of the 14th of February 1945 after the Fire of Dresden. The architect argued then the cupola should be rebuilt to prove that it was working. This professional justification seems to me a much more beautiful argument for reconstruction than the mere historicist rebuilding of a lost image of the city.

Then again re-enactment might be a strategy to seduce people to a collective will and idea. The famous re-staging of the storming of the Winter Palace in 1917 was conceived as a public spectacle that worked on the level of desire and sentiment. Anatoly Lunacharsky, the minister for propaganda, in 1920 described it as 'the masses becoming a spectacle unto themselves.' We know that sentiment as well from similar experiences like rock concerts or football games, where emotions are collectively shared. In my paper for the workshop I presented a study of urbanism in East Germany from 1945 until its collapse, and particularly how, after its reconstruction following WWII the city was turned into a gigantic stage set that would allow for the regular re-enactment of an imaginary revolution—a revolution that in fact never took place. In East Germany, revolutionary re-enactment in public spectacles for national holidays or, specifically, the May Day demonstrations were meant to justify a state that ought not to be—a state which was not created

through a revolution but through an occupation. So, the early idea of the Soviets was to introduce rituals very quickly into the everyday of East Germany. The conceptual re-enactments functioned to reinstate the political reasoning of the present. The ideological spectacle as we know it from socialist revolutionary practice worked less on a carefully detailed reconstruction of an original event than through the individuals' immersion in a collective desire. Obviously, the re-enactment of history presents also a form of appropriation of the past for an ideological purpose.

In your current participation at ORDOS 100 you negotiate both the notion of re-enactment and authorship as instruments of critique with your proposal to realize Adolf Loos' 1927 drawings for the Josephine Baker Villa originally intended to be in Paris. What was your initial reaction to the invitation by ORDOS 100 and how did your participation come about?

The project began with an invitation to participate in probably one of the strangest and potentially most challenging events of architecture—it was undertaken in the Gobi Desert in Inner Mongolia, China. The city of Ordos is prophesied to grow from today's number of one million inhabitants, becoming a megacity by 2020. A new city district for 200,000 people is currently being built. Part of that development will be reserved for a private initiative to build an exclusive settlement with a museum, a clubhouse and artists' residences surrounded by 100 luxurious villas. The master plan was developed and curated by Ai Wei Wei's studio in Beijing. Ai Wei Wei is known for his works that often take a critical position against China's communist state, especially immediately before and during the Olympic Games in Beijing. He asked the office of Herzog & de Meuron to select 100 architects from all over, but mainly the Western world.

Around the time of the invitation I was working on another installation together with Eyal Weizman, my partner. The curator Francesco Bonami had asked 10 architects to design each a prison cell in Torino

for an exhibition. We wanted to reject the invitation altogether, until we had the idea of collecting books written in prison. Our installation consisted of a shelf on two walls, where the books were exhibited, accompanied by two screens that displayed a web archive. One screen showed an interview by film-maker Angela Melitopolous with Antonio Negri in prison. We developed a cataloging system that presented the books according to the time the author spent in prison in order to produce the piece of writing. A series of maps showed where the books were written but also showed writers that are still in prison. Most of them we could find in China. Just about the time of the beginning of the Olympic Games we realized that more dissidents and critical writers were put into prison. While we were learning about the individual fates of those courageous critics within a political regime that generally did not allow for freedom of speech in China, the invitation to ORDOS 100 arrived.

Here, paradoxically, it was the particular intention of the organizers to invite Western architects to be creative without constraints—a freedom of design was offered that we only knew from first year architecture studies. The master plan reminded us of different absurd city projects, archipelagos and gated communities familiar in many Western countries. The investor had already managed to create a large water system into this desert. So, 100 architects were invited to design a villa of one thousand square meters each. The only conditions were a swimming-pool and parking facilities for two cars and an opulent room schema that in its anonymity (the house would be built without a specific client) rendered questions about the cultural context and purpose generally meaningless. Creating a new 'form'—to add another design concept seemed to me corrupt and ignorant of the situation in China as well as of general global concerns about sustainability.

The question I struggled with was: 'How to react to a brief for what would indisputably be an urban monstrosity? When do you start refusing?' To

express discontent first of all you had to take part in it. And in some ways you had to create a conflict that would reveal the unspoken limits of this project. Together with the Berlin based architect Andreas Thiele, our proposal was to realize Adolf Loos' drawings for the Josephine Baker Villa in Paris, made in 1927.

Apart from the fact that it had never been built and its copyright had become free 75 years after the author's death, what made you chose the Baker Villa by Loos? The project came about first of all as a spontaneous idea. I discussed this project with my students and suddenly realized how the brief for Ordos matched Loos' villa for Josephine Baker. What interested me in the project was the mobilization of the past to question the present. The villa was never realized so there could be no direct observation, it was only an image in the media. So the idea to 're-enact' the house for Josephine Baker was intended as a point of reference in the past as well as a parody and a kind of critique. The idea was to relate this late neo-liberal project to the very beginning of Modernism. The fact that the Ordos project was commissioned in 2008, the year when Adolf Loos' copyright expired, gave another dimension to the project and made it conceivable to realize. We called the project Chinese Whispers to refer to that game where you whisper a story several times and its meaning changes with the mistakes in communication. At the moment I would describe the project as an archival/architectural actualization, or reification.

Your proposal at ORDOS 100 complicates the notion of authorship: the proposal shifts the focus from the architect-author to a critical debate, particularly when also taking into account that you might withdraw your authorship of the proposal altogether. On different levels, then, your intervention at ORDOS relates to the concept of dissidence, which you have proposed as another term of critique. Does your conclusion 'once a dissident—always a dissident' depend on particular

political conditions or do you rather understand it as an instrument of critique on a more general level? I used the term 'dissidence' in my writing and research on architects, particularly in communist and post-communist societies of Eastern Europe, who tried to find different modes of practice that would contest the political reality of their environment. When I said 'once a dissident—always a dissident,' I meant to describe a character who practices a kind of 'autocritique' that would prevail in different governmental structures or political regimes. 'Dissidence' here is supposed to mean a form of political practice that does not seek to overthrow and replace a government, to take over power, to govern, (thus distinguishing it from revolutionary politics), but one determined to radically and fundamentally contest the way in which subjects are governed. The idea is to read 'dissidence' as the possible politics of the governed, and dissidence articulated through architecture and spatial practices as a possible mode of contestation. To appropriate a sentence by Judith Butler: 'Power (the city) not only acts on a subject but, in a transitive sense, enacts the subject into being.' Accordingly, citizens constantly reproduce new constellations of space and hence new parameters of political participation. In my work on architect dissidents I aim to analyze a particular position in the rather large and complex field of citizenship. It concerns the 'duties' and responsibilities of the urban professional and her ability not only to participate (through her architectural practice/praxis) in politics, but in fact her ability to avoid the 'paradox of subjection' through dissidence. Dissidence describes a very important strategy and indeed moral necessity of non-violence in the social and political arena that appears essential in constructing citizenship.

Particularly working in and with the free market economy it seems sometimes too 'corrupt' to offer new 'creative forms and gestures.' The idea of the 'new' has to be entirely questioned. Uncertain about whether and how to react to the historical, economic, political and geopolitical context of this project in

China we decided not to offer new forms, but to propose a known building and a known author, reflecting thus on the very condition of reproducibility of contemporary architecture.

Responsibility in Dissidence

Architects' choices can signal responsibility towards the public. Considering the importance of archives, which link a researched site back to its history and inevitably make the present more complex, and dissidence with respect to your work, how do you understand the relation between responsibility and dissent? Yes, ideally architects, like any other professionals, should be responsible towards the public. Yet, often our practice is caught in dilemmas that make it difficult for us to decide about the ethics of our work, in which the consequences of our actions and possibly design proposals cannot be foreseen or where the dilemma is not even recognized as a dilemma, but as a rather banal question with which any architect could be confronted ('but before I lose the commission I prefer to do the job'). Yet, increasingly (at least up until the current credit crunch), architects and urban planners are invited to design projects that are to be embedded into an existing master plan. Some architects are even invited to design whole master plans for cities or city extensions. Like many of the large-scale urban modernization projects in history, those new master plans are developed and 'curated' on behalf of 'the public' or 'community,' in favor of 'sustainable environments,' etc. If we look at Baron Haussmann's dramatic transformation of Paris we could argue, that indeed, the city has become much cleaner, hygienic and better organized and that the beautiful bourgeois houses and boulevards give the city its characteristic image. But we could also read the re-organisation of Paris as an action of disarmament. We could contend that Haussmann's transformations deprived the working classes of their biggest weapon—the dense urban fabric in which they could set up autonomous, self-governed zones protected by barricades.

Often we cannot fully assess our complicity with the political or economical intentions that generate certain planning schemes and routines. One way of preventing such involvement is of course to refuse to participate—an option Hannah Arendt described as a valuable political gesture. Another option to deal with a dilemma in practice might be to complicate the discourse and to allow for a wider field of judgment. Foucault said somewhere that practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult. For the work of the architect this might mean to open up private or privileged relationships—like the one between client and architect—to the public and to allow for a more transparent discussion. Planning practice, public participation or further professional involvement can all be really challenging undertakings, to the point that no practical decisions can be made. But who can measure what is more important, the realized project or the discourse?

The interview is based on a seminar workshop on January 14, 2009 at Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe.

Robin Evans: Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays, London 1997.
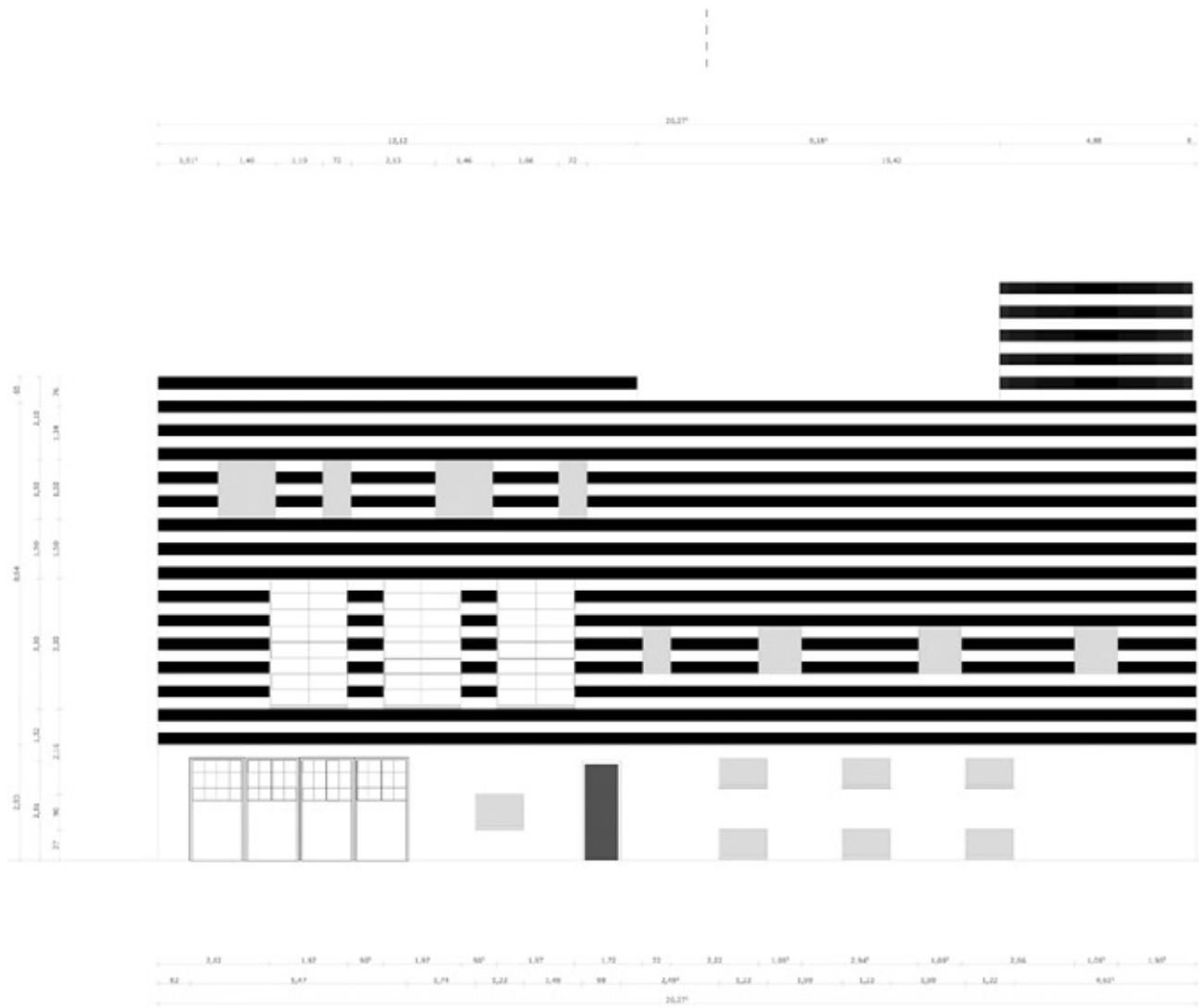
Marine Hugonnier: THE RESTORATION PROJECT, ongoing work of art on paper since 2005. www.marinehugonnier.com

Peter Kahane: Die Architekten, feature film, 107 min, GDR 1989/90.

Tom McCarthy: Remainder, London 2006.

Eyal and Ines Weizman: Mobilizing Dissent: The Possible Architecture of the Governed. In: Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns, Hilde Heynen (Eds.): Handbook of Architectural Theory, London 2009.

Ines Weizman: Architecture's Political Spectacles: Revolutionary Re-enactment and the Urban Arms Race in Cold War Berlin, AA Files 59, London 2009.

Kersten Geers, Moritz Küng, Ines Weizman

MORITZ KÜNG When you were speaking about your proposal at ORDOS, I was wondering how do you understand re-enactment here? I really would question the term of re-enactment. In your case it is not a re-enactment, because Loos' design for Josephine Baker from 1927 has never acted, it has never been built. It is a project that comes out of an archive in Vienna. I like that idea of building an unrealized project, the research you do and all the details you put together. But it becomes very speculative, so for me it is a speculative construction, although the architecture is not speculative—it is about Adolf Loos.

INES WEIZMAN It is a re-enactment of a special kind. We carefully researched and investigated the original plans by Adolf Loos. When we began to retrace the drawings, we also began to reconstruct the architect's thoughts that were inscribed into the very ink on paper. At some point we made slight corrections to the plans, but we tried to do as much justice to Loos' work as possible. To make decisions about the materialisation of the building, we had to reconsider the whole archive of Loos' work. His drawings, letters and built projects together with the academic literature about them would be the only references for us. We wanted to understand the questions Loos had when designing this project. And to understand, you had to change the perspective on the project from the historian or critic to what we called an 'archival architect.' It was a bizarre relation and we also felt responsibility for the decisions we began to make. There is a fantasy about this un-built project that made it such a requisite in architectural education. Young students are regularly invited to imagine this aquarium-like view into the swimming-pool, where Josephine Baker would swim, being watched from the salon. There is also the male view in that house that Beatriz Colomina discussed. And not least it is

a 'love letter' in built form. To build it seems to be an affront; there is something absurd about it.

MK When you say it is an affront, I think it is a very correct notion. It would destroy the fantasy.

IW Yes. To build it might indeed destroy the project's imaginary character. But we were not so keen on that part of the project. First of all, we wanted to 'dive into' a known project and understand it from the inside. The hesitation to realise it is only a result of having become more sensitive to the original. The practice of re-drawing and researching for the historical references—the re-enactment of the drawings—became a new love letter of sorts.

KERSTEN GEERS But this is what you decided. I like the project a lot, Nevertheless you present it and make a big step by saying: I am going to build it. It has never existed so it is not a reconstruction like the Barcelona Pavilion; there are a lot of people who already forgot that it is even a reconstruction. Why do you think that Ordos is the right place to make this affront?

IW It sounds as if we were looking for a right place for an affront. But rather it was the Ordos project which I found problematic. Ideas often come through a question to which you are exposed. Typically for neo-liberal constructs, also in Ordos there was a general happiness with and acceptance of the brief and I sought for a conflict that could help us towards some form of communication with the clients, with the regime to 'reveal' itself. This project is probably one of the worst neo-liberal urban projects. It creates this gated community, which creates a whole archipelago of other floating cheap labor service communities including architects, which will surround this 'island of beauty.' So there is a huge problem I have with this project, and it is not only about China. If you don't have any discourse or possibility of communication, the design process becomes a kind of dead end. It becomes as well a personal or moral question, about participating in such a project at all.

A second ago, Moritz whispered in my ear with disbelief 'Can one do this at all?' (Darf man das?).

This is a question to which architects rarely have to answer, but I find this almost legal dimension about architecture very interesting. In this project we were also interested in the question about the role of architectural reproduction within the history of modern architecture: reproduction as a space not only as an image—although in this project—more than any other—we believe that architecture functions as an image. To build this building in Ordos, together with the possibility that the architectural community allows this building to be built (because the copyright expires 75 years after the authors death), is both an affront to Loos, but at the same time his work is used as a reference point. It stands awkwardly in the present. But the awkwardness lies not in the good or bad imitation, but in the unmasking of the spiritual poverty, the crisis of values and other acts of deception that are allowing this urban design to be realised.

MK But where is the critique? You are constructing a house, based already on speculations, since the original project has no plan of execution. By building it, it looks to me much more as if you admire this particular project, rather than you criticize it, or its new, again speculative context.

IW I am not sure if it will be built. We are still producing details and complex plans for the specification of the project, but it might become impossible to build it.

MK I am wondering if there is a necessity to build it, since you became a co-author and the original source of Loos will be blurred …

IW At the moment we think of our role as 'archival architects.' We are the authors of the re-enactment.

KG Every choice is a decision, you decide for a roof and so on. You could have sent the old plans to China and tell them to build it the way they want. But you didn't and that's very interesting. But the weird thing is, I consider your building far more interesting in the debate on the actual architecture of it. The decision to take the Loos house is particular, and given the context, strange. The house was meant to be on a street corner in Paris and you put

'There is something that still needs to be said about materials. I have been accused from an authoritative quarter that I, even though I emphasise the vernacular aspect of the house on the Michaeler Platz so strongly, have imported marble from Greece. Well, the Viennese cuisine is Viennese, even though it uses herbs from the distant orient, and a Viennese, of the copper roof has come from America. But the objection cannot be easily dismissed. To execute a building in brickwork in Vienna would be false. But not because we do not have bricks (for we do have them), but because we have something better: lime render. I might very well be permitted to use the rendering technique in Danzig, but in Vienna I am not allowed to leave the walls in a raw state. I am allowed to bring material from anywhere, to exchange the technique at any time for one that is considered better.'

Adolf Loos

In: Yehuda Safran (ed.), The architecture of Adolf Loos, An Arts Council Exhibition, London, 1987, p. 113

Windows: Adolf Loos, Villa Müller, Prague, 1928-30
Image in: Leslie van Duzer & Kent Kleinman (eds), Villa Müller. A Work of Adolf Loos, Princeton
Architectural Press, 1994 p.76
Photographer of original image: Pavel Stecha ©

Detail on original drawing, Adolf Loos, 1927
Reads: black and white marble
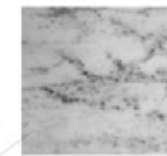
Exterior Walls:
reinforced concrete framework infilled with brick masonry
Interior:
reinforced concrete supports
Ceilings:
reinforced concrete
Windows:
Steel (colour: black)
Facade Ground Floor:
smooth plaster on Brick, painted (colour: eggshell)
Facade above GF:
Marble Mosaic in black, grey and white tones according to the pixellated image of the original model on plan 18

Bianco Carrara
Measurements: 35x35x10 mm
http://www.europeanheritage.co.uk/stone.outfitter/type07.4

Nero Marquina
Measurements: 35x35x10 mm
http://www.europeanheritage.co.uk/stone.outfitter/type07.ht
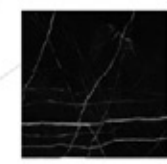
Josephine Baker Villa, Paris (1927), Architect: Adolf Loos, A (Re-)Enactment by Ines Weizman and Andreas Thiele. Detail of page 16 of the construction plans (as of May 2009) that will be used for the building to be realized in Ordos.

1907 … after the party

1907…after the party, OFFICE Kersten Geers David van Severen, patio space of wall with confetti, 11th Venice Architecture Biennale 2008.

'Give the existing building, as part of its immediate surroundings, an architectural use and function that can be experienced on a scale of 1:1 with regard to its location (a public park), history (of the Giardini) and/or context (an international platform for architecture).' With these lines curator Moritz Küng invited thirteen Belgian architects to participate in a competition for the Belgian Pavilion at the Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2008, continuing his curatorial approach of investigating the potentialities of displaying architecture within a complex of conditions as well as in conjunction with the arts. The young OFFICE Kersten Geers David van Severen's contribution **1907 … after the party** not only exhibited the building as such but also activated a transfer between the inside and outside of the building. In their work they search for an architectural way to consciously intervene in the present conditions of culture and society. Strongly influenced by their knowledge of architects like Donato Bramante as well as artists like Ed Ruscha and John Baldessari, their work results not in the invention of fancy new designs but rather in a treatment of architecture as architecture: a composition of walls, openings and spatial relations. Where does this exhibited architectural content meet the condition of the exhibition space itself?

Moritz Küng

How to curate architecture is a question that has occupied me for a while. I worked for a long time as a free-lance curator and, since 2003, at deSingel in Antwerp. deSingel is an international cultural center that focuses primarily on presenting the performing arts. Here concerts—of mostly classical music—make up almost 50 percent of the program, contemporary dance and theater approximately 35 percent, and exhibitions 15 percent. The exhibition department that I run has been around since the center began operation in 1985. It has always focused on presenting contemporary positions in architecture.

One of my favorite quotes on space is from the New York poet and phenomenologist Michael Palmer: 'Space begins because we look away from where we are.' This refers to the dynamic interaction between a place (object), an observer (subject), and her or his observation or recollection (synthesis). This is an arrangement that is essential to the interpretation and experience of architecture: movement.

It is characteristic of architecture—and a privilege for those who experience it—that it only reveals itself on the spot, through a physical approach, by walking through or around it, which means that only then do its haptic, spatial, or ideal qualities become tangible. Not only does architecture always emerge from a specific context, but the context itself is always inseparably linked to architecture: the topography of the site, its geographical location and the climate, the client's vision, the function the building has to fulfill, the resources available, possible lobbies, and so on. Thus architecture only reveals itself at a particular place, and its space only appears because we look away from the place where we currently are.

Looking at architecture can take place on two levels: the real, and through the media. In real observation, the viewer is confronted directly with the built mass. This encounter can contain many highly diverse registers of perception—aesthetic, political, social, financial, technical—and it also evokes a context, for example urban planning. Architecture stimulates (or excites), smells, vibrates, and enthralls or disgusts people. Architecture is an image (what the architect had in mind), but at the same time becomes another image (what the observer sees). In addition, architecture also becomes mediated: photographed, analyzed, and described in periodicals and books, on the internet or in powerpoint presentations, reproduced, and multiplied.

In the course of this process architecture is converted into a new and different reality. The filter of the media means the presentation of architecture is also an interpretation. At this point, architecture is no longer a vital source of images generated on the spot, but only a static representation. This representation (plan, model, computer simulation, or photo) is manipulated, and often idealized or trivialized, since certain aspects of reality are accentuated or eliminated. In the setting of the mega event in architecture, the Venice Biennale, one has to wonder whether architecture can actually ever be exhibited in an authentic way.

I've always thought this is impossible because architecture doesn't want to be exhibited like autonomous art: it wants to be constructed. In terms of architecture it seems more important to me to convey its mentality or even its physicality rather than exhibiting its typical representative 'surrogate products.' This actually means presenting architecture on a 1:1 scale. In taking this approach, one gets of course quickly caught up in the building process itself, which is a bit of a contradiction in terms of the temporary exhibition. I would like to show how I deal with this contradiction by presenting five current individual exhibitions featuring architects and artists.

Belgian Pavilion, Venice Biennale of Architecture

In organizing the presentation of the Belgian Pavilion at the 2008 Venice Biennale of Architecture, the Ministry of Culture called for a public competition for curators and architects. I took part in this competition and my proposal consisted, absurdly, in organizing another competition, but this time for a specific group of thirteen young architects with whom I had organized a series of exhibitions between 2005 and 2008. The title of the proposed project, **1907**, refers to two separate facts: the year when the Belgian Pavilion was unveiled in the Giardini della Biennale, and its usable volume (more or less) in cubic meters. It was completed in 1907 by Léon Sneyers (1877—1949, a pupil of the Art Nouveau architect Paul Hankar) and was the first foreign national pavilion ever completed in this park.

The reason behind my calling for a competition was, on the one hand, to draw attention indirectly to a 'collective,' and, on the other, to establish a network that supported the presentation of the Belgian Pavilion. Hence an international jury was assembled consisting of the architects Petra Blaisse (Inside Outside, Rotterdam), Stefan Defoldere (A+, Brussels), Mike Guyer (Gigon & Guyer, Zürich), Anne Lacaton (Lacaton & Vassal, Paris) and Adinda Van Geystelen (Brussels); a publication was created in the form of a special issue of the magazine A+; the organization of the exhibition was secured through deSingel in conjunction with the Flemish Architectural Institute, and finally a debate on 'Curating Architecture' was organized for the opening days. It included Wouter Davidts (architectural theorist, Ghent), Thomas Demand (artist, Berlin), Juan Herreros (architect, Madrid), Andrea Phillips (professor, Goldsmiths, University of London), as well as the architects of the Belgian Pavilion, and myself.

The competition directive for the Belgian Pavilion read: 'Give the existing building, as part of a strongly defined surrounding environment, a use and an architectural function that can be experienced physically in 1:1 scale with regard to its location (public park), status (cultural embassy), history (the Giardini), and/or context (international architectural platform).' Here I was interested in the requirement that one should be able to enter and move around the architecture that was to be constructed, and that it should be presented by itself in a specific location. The pavilion originally consisted only of a porch and a large hall, but in 1930 the side and rear were extended and in 1948 the whole building was thoroughly transformed by the Venetian architect Virgilio Vallot. In 1996 the Antwerp architect George Baines restored and modernized this dignified building as a commission from the Flemish Community in order to optimize it for exhibition use. It is the present, expanded volume that, as if by a miracle, turns out to correspond to the year in which it was built: 1907 m^3.

In taking an entirely different approach to the competition, the project by OFFICE Kersten Geers David van Severen managed to impress the jury the most. They were the only architects not to concentrate exclusively on the pavilion's interior, focusing instead on the exterior space, the front gardens, as well as addressing the historical context. The **After the party** project consisted in re-framing the existing pavilion with a six-meter tall prefab concrete wall. For financial and logistical reasons, the concrete wall was in the final version replaced by a double-walled scaffolding construction that made the complexity of their design even more powerful. Thus it was not only possible to walk around the new structure but through it as well—the 'rented new construction' was completely recyclable. It was a simple intervention that provoked a chain of multiple associations. The penetrable 'wall' isolated the old pavilion from its immediate surroundings, but created a new space at the same time, converting the front gardens into an enclosed patio. Visitors accessed the side entrance of the old light-flooded Secessionist pavilion through a darkened arcade. Thus the actual main entrance became the main exit through which one accessed the new patio. Except for a few loose elements, the Belgian Pavilion was left empty in order to present the architecture in as pure a way as possible. The added elements—two tons of confetti strewn over the floor, as well as 50 loosely distributed chairs—linked the existing exhibition rooms with the new patio space.

Finally the Office KGDVS exhibition was completed by two 'guest contributions.' First a monumental photo, **Terrasse** by the German artist Thomas Demand, which

had provided the architects with an atmospheric source of inspiration for their competition project and became the only object to be displayed in one of the side-spaces of the pavilion. Second, an existing picture of Hedi Slimane, the former creative director at the fashion enterprise Dior, which was used as a 'campaign image' for flyers, the web site, and the catalog cover. All these elements illustrated in their way the title of the project **After the party** in creating the somewhat desolate feeling that lingers after a party has ended—in this case the 100-year existence of the Belgian Pavilion that had been completely forgotten the year before (2007).

SANAA & Walter Niedermayr, Antwerp, Bordeaux, Innsbruck, Mendrisio

Around the same time, three days after the start of the Venice Biennale of Architecture, another exhibition opened in Mendrisio (CH). It was a collaboration between the Japanese architects Kazuyo Sejima + Riue Nishizawa / SANAA and the Italian photographer Walter Niedermayr. Conceived for deSingel as an in-situ project, it unexpectedly traveled after this, which actually ran counter to the original concept. Thus each exhibition became something new, and featured the addition of a specific contribution by SANAA. The main components were 12 large-format photo works (diptychs and triptychs) by Walter Niedermayr. His brand of pictorial invention illuminates more the mentality of SANAA's architecture than the architecture itself. Adding to these rather abstract impressions were furniture prototypes, i.e. models in 1:1 scale, and specific spatial adaptations by SANAA. At deSingel in Antwerp, SANAA created an installation with an 80-meter long white and translucent curtain—a wall, if you will—which was only a half-millimeter thick. In Innsbruck, a new, 12-part table ensemble was realized, and in Mendrisio, an installation with tropical plants. This exhibition also touched upon the principle of allowing architects to directly impact the site, to analyze it, interpret it, and redefine it.

Christian Kerez, Antwerp

Following the exhibition opening in Mendrisio, again three days later, the first exhibition of Swiss architect

Christian Kerez outside his home country opened at deSingel in Antwerp. I should mention here that this concentration of openings is also very unusual for my work. In the case of Kerez the primary consideration was not to realize one but four small exhibitions with an additional screening; not to present a cohesive overview of the work, but to show just four specific projects and realizations. Secondly, Kerez wanted to present aspects of his architecture that normally wouldn't be displayed in an exhibition. Thus five themes were defined: **Politics, Conflicts, Construction, Privacy, Obsession**. In addition to large models in 1:10 scale, **Politics** was illustrated by means of a competition for the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, which Kerez had won, but which had provoked unusually harsh criticism in the local press because the international jury had declared a 'minimalist market hall' the winner rather than a 'flamboyant landmark.' The criticism in the media that followed was illustrated with 15 selected articles that had been published in the Polish press. **Conflicts** presented the two-family dwelling project House with One Wall with a selection of hundreds of sketches and notes that were created during meetings with skeptical building contractors. **Construction** represented the construction of a school building in Oerlikon with engineering plans in the form of an 80-meter long leporello as well as a digital slide show depicting the steel construction process. **Privacy** was represented by a multiple-family dwelling in which the architect lives and was depicted through a series of digitally projected photographs that Kerez himself had taken of his building. This 'representative' part is interesting for the exhibition publication mostly because Kerez—also an accomplished photographer— has published here only unfocused and very private snapshots of his building, a style that stands in stark contrast to current architectural photography. And the final part, **Obsession**, consisted of a compilation of over 120 film fragments that the architect and film buff had watched during the preparations for his show.

In my curatorial work I'm also interested in fine art positions that have an affinity for architecture. Precisely because art is autonomous and architecture heterono-

mous, i.e. externally defined, the question of how one 'exhibits' becomes latent.

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Antwerp

With the exhibition **Alphavilles?** in 2004 at deSingel in Antwerp, the French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster not only refers to the film of the same name by Jean-Luc Godard (1965) in which he describes a computer-run city, but also to a model of a high-security urban enclave that was built in 1974 by a contractor in Brazil. The artist is fascinated by the global urbanization through which the earth is gradually becoming covered by 'Alphavilles,' a world in which the climate, modern life, regionalism, and tourism make up a cocktail that sometimes bores, and sometimes amazes. In Antwerp, with eleven— partially large-scale—interventions in the building and on the campus of architect Léon Stynen, a one-time student of Le Corbusier, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster once more elaborated her intentions of a 'tropicalization.' The in-situ works not only form a sometimes ironic commentary on the modernist architecture of the West, which she finds colorless, but through the associative reading and the atmosphere it evokes they create a geographical dislocation. The entrance columns painted bright pink, which open the exhibition, are a good example of this. Not only does this specific color refer to the work of the Mexican architect Luis Barragan, it also undermines the architectonic severity of the complex. The ten other interventions throughout the campus (in spaces such as halls, pond, gardens, walkways, foyer, and the forest in the immediate neighborhood) have been determined according to various color applications (blue, green, yellow, orange, red, purple, silver, and gold) that again refer to other places (Brasilia, Havana, Chandigarh, Rio, Istanbul, Kyoto) and architects (Le Corbusier, Lina Bo Bardi, Oscar Niemeyer, Garret Eckbo, or Isamu Noguchi).

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster succeeded as an artist with her now subtle and then imposing transformations in making one aware of the existing architecture. In that sense **Alphavilles?** was not an exhibition but rather a glance at a tropical moment.

Heimo Zobernig, Antwerp

In concluding I would like to briefly introduce the current exhibition, the project **Stellproben** by the Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig. The title is a theatrical term that indicates a provisional 'substitute-stage' on which actors can rehearse while the actual stage is being built. Zobernig had five concise architectural settings of the deSingel building recreated as monumental fragments in 1:1 scale—up to 42 meters long or 8 meters high—and positioned these in front of their corresponding 'originals.' His architectonic imitations were doublings—built from the old panels of previous exhibitions— which heightened the provisional character of the fragments, but also pointed to a central strategy in the oeuvre of the artist: alter ego, mock up, doppelgänger, copy, mimicry, mimesis, remake, and surrogate. In the lead up to this exhibition Zobernig created a simple computer simulation of the deSingel building that ultimately played a strategically important role in the exhibition. The film showed all of the institution's public zones that visitors could walk through, but not true-to-life, rather in a consciously simplified graphic representation that left out details and color. This film was shown at the end of the tour so that visitors were confronted, so to speak, with an 'after-image' of the architecture that they had just walked through. One was presented, if you will, with an architecture of memory. I think that precisely this momentum is extremely crucial to an exhibition of architecture: that one feels the architecture, or senses it rather, and is thus made aware of it as if for the first time. Precisely the slowness, the delay, so evident in Zobernig's case, can deepen and solidify the impression in a lasting way.

This text is based on a workshop held on January 14, 2009 at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe.

1907 ... after the party, special issue of Belgian architecture magazine A+, Brussels 2008.

Along with curating the exhibitions, Moritz Küng published for deSingel publications on works by Christian Kerez (Conflicts Politics Construction Privacy Obsession, Antwerp 2009), Heimo Zobernig. (Stellproblemen, Antwerp 2008/09), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (Tropicalization, Antwerp 2007) among others.

Kersten Geers

KERSTEN GEERS For us architecture is not able to solve anything. We believe that architecture is always standing in the way. It is an obstruction. In the case of our contribution for the Biennale in Venice, by building a fence around the pavilion we made a temporary intervention in the context of the Biennale, which consciously didn't look temporary. The architecture of it tries to stand in the way as much as possible. It is there. You cannot avoid the architecture. You have to walk around because otherwise you never will enter the pavilion. Also in our proposal for a 'new administrative capital' in South Korea, the architecture is not making images of a certain kind of architecture in the strictest sense. It is not a representation of a strictly modernist architectonic image. We are not suggesting another Brasilia. It rather is a project for a 'grammar for the city,' an urban vocabulary, a spatial type. The architectural idea is always a particular aspect, which at most frames the life that unfolds in it. It cannot represent it.

DISPLAYER Your proposal for South Korea shows a very strong grid design for the whole city. Is there a flexible aspect to the way people enter the space and what do you expect them to do in the space you create?
Of course it is a very big city. These white cut-outs represent the organizing frame without really designing the buildings. We use white cut-outs, inspired by Baldessari's work Two Crowds (With Shape of Reason Missing)**, to represent an organising frame without really designing the buildings. The exact appearance of the buildings is not important for us in this case. Here urban architecture functions as urban design. It is funny in this regard, that when we went to Korea afterwards it appeared to be full of these slab buildings, ten stories high. They are practically everywhere! The only difference**

to our project is that they are typically organized in a modernist lay-out, in series. They give them numbers and on the ground floor they put some trees. So you could interpret our project as an attempt to simply re-arrange these buildings in a more interesting urban lay-out.

In the sketch from the Korea project, some of the walls are irregular and very near each other. Why are these walls so different to the very clear structure of the spatial conceptualization articulated by a rigid grid of crosses?
Well, that was almost accidental at that time. There is one thing, and that is probably one of the main reasons why I wanted to show you some work by Ed Ruscha. It's not a very special thing to say that you like Ed Ruscha; I think the whole world likes Ed Ruscha by now. I don't know if you read the Leave Any Information at the Signal **interview book with him. It is fantastic. They interviewed him like a hundred times and every time he seems to add a little more information to the riddle of his work. The key element for me here is in regard to what he said about the moment he turned to making his paintings. Being a student in an abstract expressionist period, he felt very uncomfortable to stand in front of the canvas without any preconception of what to do ... For him it was the switch when he realized he wanted to think first what he wanted to do and then paint it. That doesn't mean of course that while knowing what he wanted to paint, he had a clear idea on why he was doing all this ... in a certain sense you could say that by doing something, he gradually developed a certain narrative, a set of themes. In the interview book, he often denies obvious explanations, but if you read ten or twenty interviews, you realize that you actually get pretty close to what drives his work. Architecture should not have to explain itself in all details; that kind of explanation kills it. Therefore I also showed this perspective of Bramante's Belvedere by Maarten Van Heemskerk in the beginning of my lecture. It is in large part a matter of perspective. One should**

develop one's own language to be able to survive whatever interpretation is made. You can read the South Korea project, for example, as an attempt to redo 'le plan voisin' by Le Corbusier but by putting the crosses closer. But it is not really important. It's an aspect of it but it's not always very conscious. I also liked this in the collaboration with Moritz Küng. He has a set of ideas about making architecture exhibitions dealing, for example, with the Belgian Pavilion, which was the first national pavilion in the Venice Giardini (built in 1907) and our project coincidentally fitted Moritz's contextual approach. We didn't want to make an installation inside the pavilion because we attempted to do that for the same competition inside the building four years ago. So in a way it's a very subjective and almost ridiculous decision. As a result, we were the only office doing something outside the pavilion. Another anecdote is about the confetti. We were really stuck; we wanted the inner space to become the same as the outer space—the idea to take confetti as a connector came really late. We wanted to experience the rooms rather than the building and its surrounding so we needed something. At a certain point, somebody came up with this idea of confetti and the first reaction was: it is like after the party! This is really stupid, but suddenly the whole thing switched completely. We put the image** Terrasse **by Thomas Demand as a reference in the pavilion and the whole project became in a way about something totally different. I think if architecture is able to be itself it should be able to survive this changing of meaning and that is very difficult, because it still has to be very consistent.**

When I was there it was close to the Biennale's end, it was really interesting because the confetti was everywhere in the Giardini area. Is confetti another frame around the built wall?
Of course, that was a very interesting result, and when you see the result you can say 'yeah, that was good' but things don't work like that—you don't design something with all its consequences. This

has also to do with the notion of standing in the way—you make something and this has a set of consequences. What I really dislike is architecture in Holland in the 90s, which tried to build from a set of diagrams of a building which seem to represent the way a building should be used. Some of them are interesting nevertheless because they were made by good architects but as an idea of architecture this is extremely poor. So there is always ambivalence between what you make and the way you use it. We often make the distinction between building and infill, which we call 'furniture,' something far more ephemeral. In this regard, you can understand the confetti in Venice as the 'furniture' of that project. We are also very interested in the idea of dirt and pollution. How can you make a project that is instantly polluted or deals with its pollution? But there is one thing we are worried about. How can you design pollution ... you can't. The confetti was the closest you could come to designing pollution without being absurd—it's very delicate. It shouldn't be too much of a mise-en-scène. And somehow the confetti came in this process out of the blue, by accident. There is always this kind of unavoidable ambivalence about letting go and directing.**

The confetti is really a crucial element because it marks the space and connects the inner and the outer space. **For us what was fundamental is that the confetti was inside and outside and through that it defines an equality in the initial situation of perceiving the space. When Moritz talks about the same project he has a set of interests which we can approve but which we would never mention at first. For us the gesture of cutting away, setting ourselves apart from the Biennale, was important. We are out of the Biennale: you can sit in the garden and it is calm there. But of course all these things are very delicate. The place actually needs a calm space so when we do a party at the opening the actual spatial logic is put under pressure. All these things are extremely difficult. We planned a space with**

a few people and than there are too many people. We never expected that people would get crazy by throwing confetti over each other. That was not necessarily the slow calm place we had in mind, but still it worked.

You said at the beginning that you are not so interested in making speculative architectural proposals but in a physical manifestation of architecture. You say that architecture is its best when it is itself as an object.
I think there are always different positions, e.g. of the curator, and of an architect. We have a different position because we worked with a certain set of principles so I would give you another answer than what Moritz said, which is good, I think. We are aware that we work with a very simple and reduced framework of what architecture can be. You have to be extremely open-minded to other kinds of ways of thinking about architecture to deal with it. I don't think the physical manifestation of a project is crucial. We consider the project the most important. A project can be a set of drawings, or a built building, it really depends on the project itself. Still, with any project it is somehow clear when it is finished, when the project is done. The Biennale project, for example, had to be built.

Let's take your project for South Korea: On a conceptual level, you implement architecture in a way that makes the governing aspect of architecture apparent. What is happening there in terms of the organization of space and territory? I see myself walking through and walking through for ages not within an installation but within a living area!
When we presented it in the beginning, people would accuse us of being spatial fascists because we made this stark and tough intervention. That has a lot to do with the graphics, and the graphics have the potential to provoke. But finally, it is a fairly realistic spatial organization of the ground which makes space for a different set of in-fills, other developments. So something that direct is at the same time a very simple and realistic project.

On the other hand, the idea that architecture is that powerful, if it is itself to have that direct a political impact … I'm really ambivalent about the rights and wrongs of such a project. It's exactly by taking the architectonic challenge seriously that you take responsibility as an architect. You show what you can do, what your tools are. With the project on the border of Morocco and Spain, Cité de Refuge at Ceuta, where we made an attempt to build a border crossing zone as a real building, we try to deal exactly with this ambivalence. The project is direct but again it doesn't solve anything. It deals with this problem, with this border and with this in-between zone. It deals with the ambivalence of the border of Europe. Despite the harshness of the idea, and the amounts of people dying in an attempt to cross it, it is very invisible. The project tries to counter that, by making a very visible city-state, a bridgehead to Europe. It doesn't solve the political échec (defeat) but it shows it, as an aporia. This is of course very scary. We use architectural tools to make things very physical.**

The interesting thing about South Korea is that it makes for a total uniform layout. Firstly, there are no streets anymore. There are no places anymore for demonstrations and marching. It makes spaces that are flowing. Secondly, you have these special buildings like auditoriums and town-halls and they don't fit into the grid. They stand freely inside of the spaces like furniture. You can orientate in and remember the space. The question about content is very tricky here. The formalization is content but you can read it exactly as the opposite. You have only squares where you can see every movement and you know where everyone is at the same time because there are no possibilities to hide. But you can turn the whole thing and flip it over right away. This shows that the whole content-form debate within architecture doesn't work that simply.
Let me answer your questions with the work of the Italian Renaissance architect Donato Bramante. We are very interested not only in the Vatican's Cortile del Belvedere but also in the Santa Maria

della Pace. This is a very small square patio next to the Santa Maria della Pace church. Bramante is interesting as a late Renaissance architect. He was not yet a mannerist but he was just at the turning point. Bramante tried to work with the principles he thought he encountered in the fragments of classical Roman architecture. While building upon the found principles he somehow knew that it was impossible to succeed, he would evidently fail. The requirements of the day were already too different for him to be able to 'remake' using exactly the same methods and structures. I think that is fantastic. You could argue that maybe failing is essential to cultural production in that sense. The fact that you fail as an architect—you never quite get anything 'resolved'—by definition gives the work a certain value, since it is exactly that which puts it outside the logic of production. You would judge production by the fact that you know how you make it and it works and it's ok. But this cultural kind of production fails by definition. In Bramante's case, for example, at Santa Maria della Pace he wants to use the three column-orders, Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, in an inner court. First he has the problem with the three floors, which he solves somehow, then he comes to the corners. He tries to make this corner and he realizes that column kind of disappears because it is on one side of the corner and on the other, so what does he do? He tries all kinds of tricks and then the solution he makes is so beautiful. He shows the inability to solve the corner but still he solves the corner in a way. This is amazing. This is architecture. You see just this left-over element of what is supposed to be the Doric order in this corner of the patio. He has two floors and three orders so he tries to find a trick to incorporate the three orders into two floors. So by adding this kind of fake, let's say, Doric order in his arches he somehow solve the problem and keeps the three floors he needs.**

And in your own projects: where is the failure?
It is an aspect of dealing with the physical limits of

architecture, dealing with the tension between what you want to make, and what you can make, and showing that somehow. The perfection of a project and the imperfection of reality. For example the columns in the Summerhouse in Ghent try to disappear, but show that this is by definition impossible. You have columns where the roof stands and you have the emphasis you want to put on the perimeter of the patio and garden space. Still, there is this roof and you have to make the columns disappear. But how do you do that? You know that is never going to happen. It is a kind of mise-en-scène: you show the fact that you want the columns to disappear. Of course, they never really disappear, but this idea that the columns showed us is fundamental, I think.**

How do you understand working with collage in the visualization of your projects? When does this kind of visualization not provide the essential means anymore, urging you to go into the 'real' space?
I think the Biennale project is a good example. Conceptually it could be a concrete wall but in retrospect the project only acquired extra significance through its actual materialization, with the steel panels which are put up to become the façade. So with the collage you can only convey the idea of making a wall around the building and that's it. In this case, the actual success of the project lies much more in its materiality. In its development it got that kind of weird materiality with different grids. When we introduced the steel structure we started to make the corridor, so the project got sharper, we believe.

When you talk about and publish the Biennale contribution today: do you still show the collages or do you show photographs?
That's a very interesting question. We are now working on this exhibition in deSingel which starts in March 2009 and we have to make decisions there. I'm not sure if I can give you a correct answer yet. We often discuss with Bas Princen, our photographer, about this. In the exposition in deSingel

Bas Princen's pictures are shown as another interpretation of the same work, they don't replace the collages, they are different work, done by a different author. We believe the collages have an entirely other status, they represent the intention of us as architects. In my opinion they survive the confrontation with the built work. In case of the Biennale, I notice we often publish the photographs of the built pavilion, but it certainly doesn't make the collages obsolete.

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1907 ... after the party, special issue of Belgian architecture magazine A+, Brussels 2008.

Moritz Küng/de Singel (Ed.): OFFICE Kersten Geers David van Severen: Seven Rooms, Antwerp 2009.

Ed Ruscha, Alexandra Schwartz (Eds.): Leave Any Information at the Signal: Writings, Interview, Bits, Pages, Cambridge MA 2004.

Robert Venturi: Learning from Las Vegas, Cambridge MA, 1972, revised 1977.

Robert Venturi: Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, New York 1977.

01 Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa (SANAA) / Walter Niedermayr, curtain and chairs by SANAA, deSingel, Antwerp 2007.
02 Stellprobe (1), Heimo Zobernig, installation main entrance, 941 x 537 x 62 cm, deSingel, Antwerp 2008.

03 Fault Fold (Seoul), Aglaia Konrad, installation main entrance, deSingel Antwerp 2006.
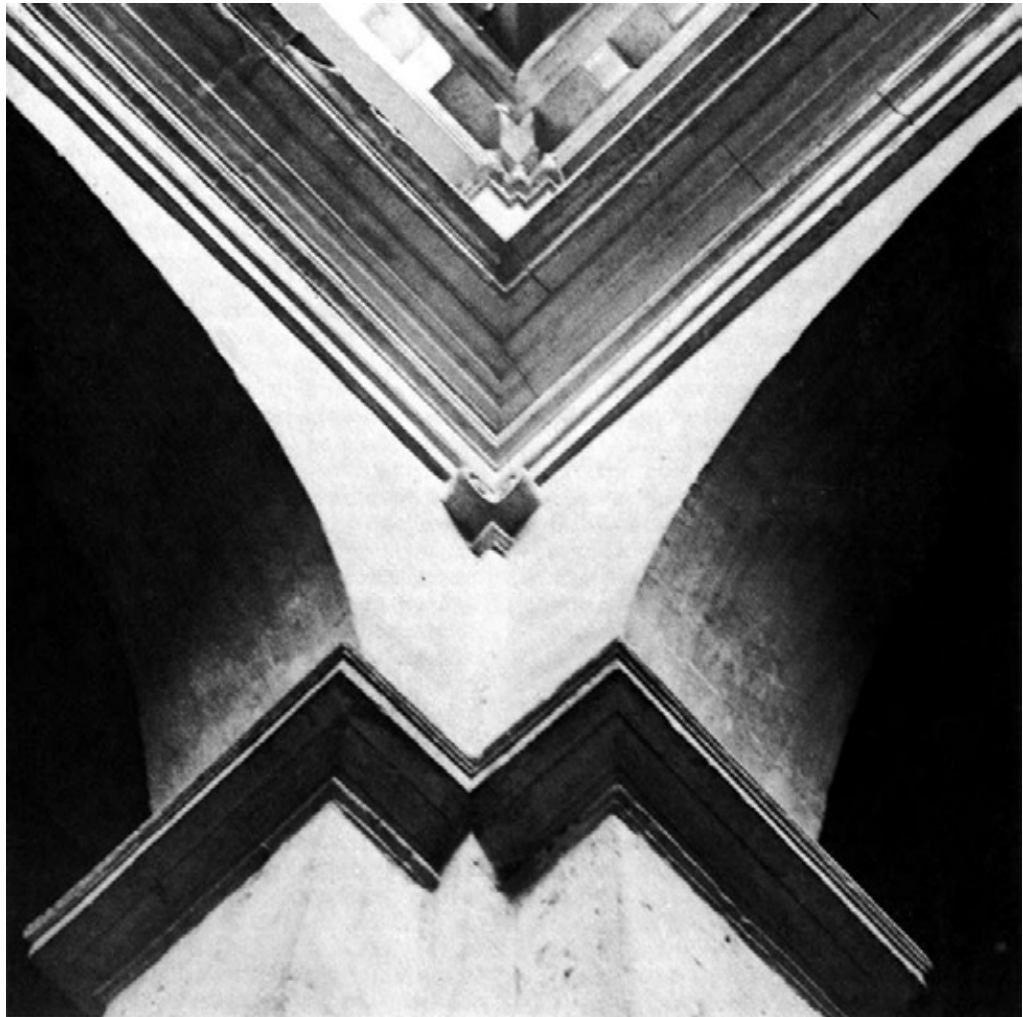
01 Donato Bramante (1944 – 1514): Santa Maria della Pace, built in 1500–1504.

02–05 Office KGDVS: New Administrative Capital South Korea 2005.
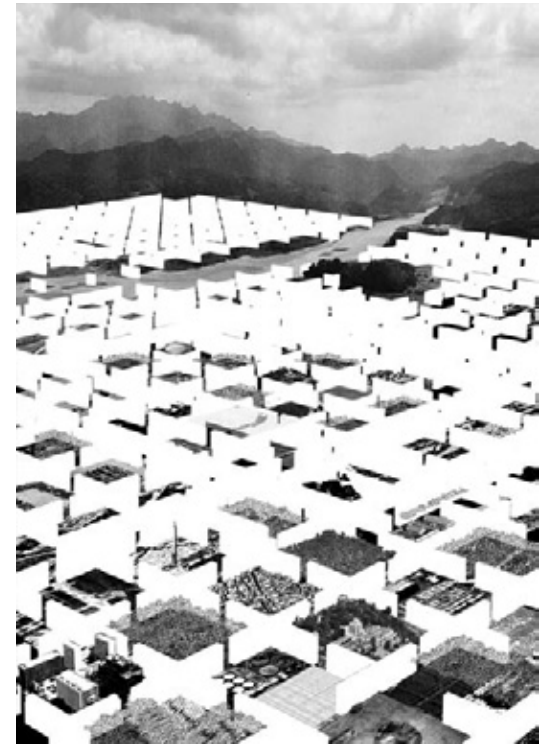
Reconstructions
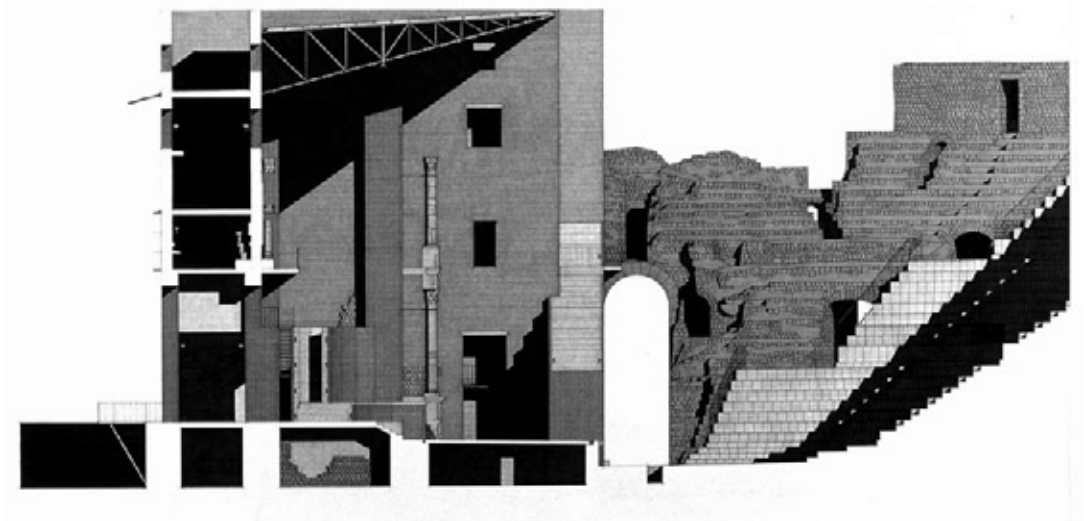
Cross-section of the Roman theater after reconstruction, Teatro de Sagunto, Giorgio Grassi, 1986–1994, Sagunto.

What are the reasons for reconstruction? How does reconstruction alter the use and meaning of the heritage site? Which roles do the site and, more importantly, the imprint of the architecture on the site itself play? To what extent must a reconstructive design comply with additional urban development? In 1985 Giorgio Grassi and Manolo Portaceli were awarded the contract to restore the Roman theater in Sagunto, Valencia. By the time the project got underway many restorative measures and alterations had already been carried out so that the ruins looked like those of a Greek theater. Grassi and Portaceli reconstructed the theater based on well-maintained documentation and the manipulated remains. At the heart of their work was the desire to make legible the idea of the Roman theater once again. Since Spanish historic preservation laws were not adequately observed, it was decided on January 19, 2008 to tear the reconstructed Roman theater down within the next 18 months. Five years ago, when the reconstruction of Walter Gropius' Director's House in Dessau was up for discussion, Guillaume Paoli used the situation as an opportunity to more closely examine the notion of reconstruction. Here form is crucial, as with many reconstruction projects, but also in Dessau the question of use still remains unanswered. However, not only use but also tourism and the reception of history are aspects that aren't taken into enough consideration by the builders of fallen monuments.

Giorgio Grassi

Reconstruction In Architecture

My relationship with architecture and its practice is based on the (admittedly schematic) idea of an architecture founded on the specificity, autonomy, and substantial unity of its experience in time. And this in the sense that for me, that experience is exclusively accountable to itself, to its own materiality and physicality as an autonomous and independent fact, and to its essentially self-referential character, all of which makes it, precisely, an experience that is fundamentally unitary in time.

That this is the case is demonstrated by every work of architecture worthy of the name. But every such work also attests to the fact that it is conditioned by or even dependent on those that preceded it, even when it seems to have superseded or refuted them. All historical experience of architecture is based on this premise: the uninterrupted bond with ancient architecture from the Renaissance on (in this connection, it is worth recalling the beautiful words of Adolf Loos: 'For as long as humanity has felt the greatness of classical antiquity, the great architects have been bound together by a single common idea. They think: the way I build is the way the ancient Romans would also have built. We know they're wrong. Time, place, purpose, climate and milieu thwart this ambition. But whenever architecture is pushed further from its greatness by the small ones, the ornamentalists—as happens again and again—the great architect is there to lead it back toward antiquity.').

What was said above naturally has consequences precisely for the subject of **reconstruction**. The first and most obvious consequence is that for me, there is no significant difference between **construction** and **reconstruction**. If the relationship to historical experience is a necessary and inescapable condition of a project, then all projects—even if they proceed from different, even very different conditions, are in reality reconstruction projects. Another consequence that flows from these assumptions is that the fragment (whether archaeological or not)—and that is exactly what a monumental ruin is—has no architectural value in itself. An architectural fragment is always merely part of a whole, part, that is, of a work that was designed to express itself in all its completeness as an architectural work. And as such, the fragment only has value as part of that work.

In this sense, the original ruins of the theater of Sagunto were the point of departure for our project—they were literally the stones on which we built. And this we did—in the first instance and in the most general sense—with the exclusive aim of restoring to those ruins what for us was their sole legitimate task, to bring to light the **true form** of the Roman theater of Sagunto.

All the rest—everything that can be said about the ruins as such, about their value as a historical memento, collective or individual, about the evocation of the past, the myth of the origins, etc., all of which in fact belongs exclusively to the realm of intellectual reflection on, or sentimental identification with, the world of the ruins—has nothing to do with the ruins themselves or the architectonic fragment as architecture.

Our reconstruction effort was first of all based on the original ruins of the theater of Sagunto, and then, of course, on the **type of the Roman theater** (perhaps the type of public building defined more precisely and canonized by the entire experience of Roman civic architecture). We built a theater 'in the manner of the Romans,' and we naturally did so with the means, the culture, and the eyes of our time (with our own eyes): thus, it is precisely **a Roman theater built today**.

In the 1960s and '70s, Sagunto underwent interventions whose object was not the Roman theater but its ruins, and whose aim was clearly to develop them into a spectacle in their own right, to make them showier and more prominent. Faced with these interventions, we chose to eliminate those that led to a distorted reading of the ancient artifact, while on the contrary preserving those that did not conflict with its reconstruction 'as it was:' essentially, even if they were the product of a belated Ruskinian interpretation of the ruins, they too now belong to the building's history, and to eliminate them would have meant destroying a piece of that history unnecessarily.

With respect to the Greek theater, the Roman theater was something entirely new and absolutely extraordinary. Its objectives were quite distinct, and hence the result could only be a different, indeed completely different, thing. Whereas the Greek theater is above all its site, the Roman theater is exclusively its form—a form that is capable of adapting to and imposing itself upon any site whatsoever. It is this absolute primacy of the form in the Roman theater that led, indeed virtually obligated us, to reconstruct Sagunto.

While there are innumerable more or less well preserved Roman theaters scattered throughout the vast area of the former empire, there are very few (Aspendos, Sabratha, perhaps Basra) that are still in a position to restore to us the specific quality of the Roman theater as architecture.

The idea of the Roman theater is entirely contained in its architecture, in its unmistakable volume and the dizzying space of its enclosure, in its artificiality, which is so obvious, so open and unabashed with respect to its various objectives, so in keeping with its practical purpose and subsequent development (the Renaissance theater and the **teatro all'italiana**). Even the political idea of the Roman theater, its civilizing as well as conquering function in such a vast territory, is entirely contained in the canonical forms of the physical structure of the theater.

The extraordinarily innovative character of the Roman theater as physical structure contrasts—and not without reason—with the modest inspiration that, on the contrary, characterizes much of Roman theatrical production when compared with that of the Greeks. Which only confirms the primacy of the building's architecture over every other aspect of the theater in Rome.

There is a curious and revealing anecdote that is worth mentioning in this context. At a conference held by E. Souriau in Paris in the 1950s on the theme of 'Architecture et Dramaturgie,' among the various influential figures who spoke were Le Corbusier and Louis Jouvet, respectively the most famous architect and most influential man of the theater of the time, both of whom spoke on the topic of the theater as architecture. The peculiar thing—but not that peculiar on closer examination—is that Le Corbusier argued that the entire meaning of the theater lies not in its site but in the theatrical action (for example, he describes the **campielli** in Venice as theatrical sites), whereas Jouvet attributes to the physical structure, to its unique and remarkable space, the deepest and most authentic meaning of the theater, the very special bond that links the spectator to what takes place on the stage ('Whether ancient or modern, it is in these deserted structures [arenas, amphitheaters, or theaters], as one suddenly enters them and is penetrated by their strange emptiness and silence, that one can approach an authentic idea of the theater.').

It certainly was not our aim in reconstructing Sagunto to propose a model solution, something that might teach others 'how it's done,' something that might serve as an example for other projects, something that might be repeated.

We had identified a few specific conditions in the theater of Sagunto that seemed to us to be necessary and sufficient for its reconstruction in keeping with our aims (the completion of its volume within the context of the city of today as well as that of its internal space on the basis of what its remnants had to offer before our intervention). These included the state of the ruins, which had been irreversibly compromised by crude mimetic interventions, and the relationship between the ruins and their surroundings, which had fortunately

preserved the conditions of the original structure vis-à-vis its site: the theater's ruins separated the area of the forum, which lay above it, from the ancient city on the hill below it.

Taking as our point of departure the idea of architecture and of the relationship between project and historical experience described above, our aim, right from the start, was to put that idea and working hypothesis into practice as directly and explicitly as possible in their most didactic form, so that the procedure could emerge clearly and unambiguously. The result and the result alone would justify the procedure.

Only the realized project would show whether or not we had been able to establish a coherent and positive relationship with that extraordinary moment in the historical experience of architecture that was precisely Roman architecture. It alone would show whether or not our project had succeeded in re-establishing that 'alliance with the ancients' that we find in all the great architectural works of the past, without giving up the specificity of our training and our affiliation with our time but on the contrary binding ourselves to it even more firmly; without, that is, giving up the freedom to express ourselves with the means at our disposal today, without concessions or expedients of any kind.

Why perform a comedy by Plautus or a tragedy by Seneca today? Why do so if we have no idea 'how' they were performed at the time? Our words, our gestures, our intonation, even our technical means—masks or microphones, natural or artificial light, etc.: everything separates us from them; everything is different. The means we use to express ourselves are our means; they are those of today—and they could not be otherwise. Do we then lose something of those texts by performing them? Or on the contrary, isn't that the only way to rediscover what unites us and what permits us to recognize and see ourselves reflected in them? And if that is the case, why should we refrain from doing so, since the only legitimate way that we have to perform those texts is our own?

But if that is the case, then why is there such an outcry when there is talk of reconstructing an ancient monument? And why should we refrain from doing so, if the only legitimate way that we have to reconstruct such monuments is our own?

The result in the case of Sagunto may or may not be to one's liking (that is none of my business), but it cannot easily be claimed that it constitutes a perversion of the ruins, a misunderstanding of their meaning and material, or an improper use of them, or that something they formerly possessed has been taken away from them and lost (isn't that just like maintaining that Plautus cannot be performed today because we don't know how it was done at the time?).

The Roman theater is a well-defined architectonic type; the period of its construction in the Roman world did not last long—little more than a century; but its vital role has never ceased (the process of developing and deepening the virtuality that was preserved by the architectonic type of the Roman theater has never been interrupted). It has reappeared whenever the theater had need of it again: in Italy in Parma and Vicenza; in Spain in the **corrales**; in London in the Globe; and so on through the **teatro all'italiana** and its extraordinary spread throughout the world. Whenever the theater decided to take up residence at a site, it took shape in the form that, although it was the first, already had within itself everything it needed to adapt without changing, without altering what, for Louis Jouvet, is the very meaning of the theater of all times and places: precisely its form, which is always new but in reality always the same.

As for the Berliner Schloss, the situation is obviously completely different. For example, one would be hard pressed to maintain that it is a typical castle, a typical example of a castle among the many in Germany or Europe, that is, that it reflects a distinct and recognizable architectonic type. This is because in reality there is no determinate type of the castle (in a certain region, for example, and a certain time). Moreover, the Berliner

Schloss is exquisitely **composite**; its construction was subject to a diverse, indeed extremely diverse, array of influences over time (due to the clients, the architects, changing economic conditions, etc.).

In other words, unlike the Roman theater of Sagunto (and it is surely no accident that with very few exceptions, Roman architecture is an architecture without individual architects), the Berliner Schloss **represents only itself**. And from the point of view of its architecture, that makes it unrepeatable, practically but also theoretically.

The only alternative would be to construct a copy of it—an exact copy, as similar to it as possible in its good points as well as its bad. That is what was done, for example, with the reconstruction of the campanile of San Marco in Venice after its sudden collapse, an approach that in this case was justified by the desire to restore the architectonic composition of the square. It is also what was done with the reconstruction of the historic city center of Warsaw; in that case, by contrast, it was justified by the powerful ideological and political motivation to put the war in the past. In both of these cases, however, the architectonic value of the reconstruction was clearly nil, since neither of the two responses reacted in any way to the fact that they were nonetheless still responses at the level of their architecture.

Both of these theoretical motivations are at work in the reconstruction of the Berliner Schloss. The ideological and political one is certainly the more powerful, even if that of the architectonic restoration of the Lustgarten is obviously the one it is easier to win acceptance for.

On the other hand, treating monuments as if they were merely political symbols is not just simplistic but politically childish; and it is also always an act of gratuitous violence. That is what the GDR did when it destroyed the Berliner Schloss and built the Palast der Republik in its place (a banal example of contemporary architecture, perhaps unworthy of being preserved but an

important piece of history nonetheless, which does not vanish painlessly). But it is also what the city is preparing to do today in an effort to 'put things back in their proper place,' as the saying goes—formally in their proper place, and yet in the process obliterating a piece of the city's history, which belongs to it in spite of everything.

In fact, I believe that the point of view of the city and its history is the proper one from which to view the issue of the reconstruction of the Berliner Schloss. The castle is an important part of the city's history, and in this sense it is its mirror. Whatever is ultimately done (whatever is constructed, destroyed, or reconstructed), the castle will continue to represent that history faithfully. We must acknowledge this and accept it as a fact that is independent of us, and decide if it is our task today to make a futile attempt to blot history out by reconstructing the castle in an uncritical—deliberately uncritical—manner, or to highlight the special quality that the building possesses by dint of having for so long been a privileged witness to the history of the city.

I realize that this is something with which architecture has very little to do, or at least on an issue like this one, it is not in a position to express itself using its native means. Nevertheless, architecture can draw from this issue indications, suggestions, but also concrete elements for a critical reconstruction that is as valid as it is necessary, helping to ensure that the new castle's forms are able to recount those changing and dramatic events which they are no longer in a position to bear witness to directly.

What, then, should we expect at this point from a reconstruction of the Berliner Schloss? Certainly not a building that is proud of itself and proud to be back as if nothing had happened, the result of a hasty decision to do whatever it takes to ensure that, in the end, the building is in its place again and shown off to its best advantage. Nor, however, should we expect a large commercial and cultural center on an international scale, a cultural hub, a convention center, etc., with

all the amenities, that is, a large and complex structure that could not possibly stand in any plausible relationship with a castle, be it old or new, and especially not with a castle disguised as the old Berliner Schloss. Nor even—to return to a hypothesis already tried in its time in provisional form—a system of stage sets designed, on the one side, to delimit the Lustgarten 'as it was' (but are we sure that that's the best solution for the Lustgarten?), and, on the other, to hide behind them an entire series of more or less necessary functions.

In my opinion, none of these responses is worthy of the city of Berlin, neither of its new situation nor much less of the city 'as it was' before the demolition. I believe the only viable alternative is the one that has already been mentioned, that is, to replace the old castle with a new one. A castle for Berlin on the same site, not bound to the old one except by the fact that it too attempts to present itself as a castle, not necessarily bound by the forms or even the dimensions of the old one, a castle that, while faithful to the aim of reconstruction, also assumes the task of responding to the Lustgarten of today, the elements of whose composition are the same as they were when Schinkel built his museum, with the sole exception precisely of the castle. A Berlin city castle constructed today, with today's eyes and means (for that matter, is there an alternative?). Frankly, an almost impossible challenge, in my view at least (however, one in which more than a hundred architects were involved). A challenge posed to contemporary architecture by an old monument that the Berliners themselves perhaps never particularly liked and that they may even have almost forgotten, a monument that

not long ago they stupidly tore down, convinced that they would be able to replace it with something more suitable and appropriate to the times.

With a similar degree of faith in their resources and a certain amount of thoughtlessness and presumption, they are now preparing to reconstruct the Berliner Schloss, with stage sets on two sides to delimit the Lustgarten and the Kupfergraben, additional sets to define the internal space of the Schlüterhof, and behind and in the midst of this improbable system of stage sets virtually all that the area of the old castle can possibly hold, which is necessary to finance the costly operation.

And all of this despite the fact that the Berliner Schloss—that old, exaggerated, and unwieldy structure—is not at all the unique and irreplaceable piece that it is said to be (with all due respect for Schlüter, Eosander, etc., what was lost was certainly no masterpiece, at least in my opinion). It was a freestanding structure capable of holding its own beside the many other ambitious freestanding structures in that area (including the cathedral, the Nationalgalerie, the Pergamon, the Bode, etc.), but certainly not beside the Altes Museum, which faced it and which seems to have attempted to ignore its unwieldy neighbor in its own design. It was a building, one imagines, that Schinkel would have preferred not to have before him when designing the Lustgarten.

The text is based on questions via e-mail, Milan, March 05, 2009.

Guillaume Paoli

A New View of the Past
DISPLAYER It seems a specter is haunting architectural Germany: reconstructivism. Buildings long thought to be extinct have been and are being built anew: the Braunschweiger Schloss; the Potsdamer Stadtschloss; in Berlin, the Alte Kommandantur, the Bauakademie and the Stadtschloss; in Dresden, the Frauenkirche. How do you explain the success of reconstructivism?
GUILLAUME PAOLI A new view of the past seems to have arisen, and the reason is that our view of the future has changed. There are no more avantgardes and no more hopeful prospects; this is true in all areas of life. And with our perspective on the future we also change our perspective on the past. The past becomes a retrospective prophecy. The process of reconstruction begins at the precise moment when the past is seen as a prophetic construct. The paradox is that while reconstruction promises on one hand to revitalize the past, on the other it is an annulment of history. The devastations and upheavals of the twentieth century are simply erased.

How do you rate the influence of tourism on reconstructivism?
Highly. Tourists are people who are always looking for authenticity, especially when it's a matter of seeking out contrasts to home. A good example of touristic reconstructivism is the Goethehaus in Frankfurt, which was rebuilt in the fifties. But in this connection I also think of the caves of Lascaux, which were closed because the hordes of visitors grew too big, only to be reconstructed a short distance away from the original. Millions of tourists see these cave paintings, and many have no idea they're standing in a fake. This raises the question: Why were the copies created just a few kilometers away and not somewhere else entirely? I haven't been to the caves myself; I could look at them just

as well in a book or on a souvenir. There's no point in making a pilgrimage to a fake.

Is the term 'tourist' even applicable to imitation tourist attractions? Aren't tourists the ultimate authenticity-seekers?
Yes, probably the term 'post-tourist' is more fitting—a neologism coined by the Bauhaus cultural theorist Regina Bittner. Post-tourists are the ones who visit replicas, reconstructions and copies—after all, most tourist attractions are replicas somehow, at least in part. But why rebuild these inauthentic sites in the same location when you could easily place them somewhere else entirely? Of course, today lots of reconstructions are virtual; you don't even have to travel anymore. For a few weeks now it's been possible to take a virtual walk in the Roman Forum on the internet, which you can't do in real life. Post-tourists could be people who stay at home and create their trips in cyberspace. That fits right in with global warming and the energy crisis, too: You save money, you stay home, and you can discover the world without emitting CO_2.

Destructions
Are there reconstructions you consider wise or unwise? What do you think of the reconstruction of Dresden's Frauenkirche, for example?
The critical factor here is the political aspect. The Frauenkirche was destroyed by Anglo-American bombs, and thus for the 'good cause' of democracy. The reconstruction would have had fatal undertones of revanchism had it not been financed in part by English contributions—as reparation, so to speak. Not so the Berliner Stadtschloss. Because it was demolished for the 'bad cause' of socialism, this symbol of Prussian militarism can be restored without a qualm. Some graffiti on the destroyed Palast der Republik made the message quite explicit: 'The GDR never existed.'

What do you think of the idea of rebuilding Walter Gropius's Direktorenhaus?

First of all, I don't think Gropius would have been in favor of rebuilding it. I considered the subject four years ago, when the calls for reconstruction became insistent. I incline to the proposal made by Filip Noterdaeme, the artist who runs the Homeless Museum in New York. He proposed rebuilding the Direktorenhaus, giving it a ceremonial dedication in 2026, having a plane bomb it into the ground in 2045 and then having the GDR house rebuilt in 2056. Remember: The Direktorenhaus was built in 1926, then destroyed in a bombing raid in 1945, and in 1956 a GDR house was built on the site, complete with gable roof. So Noterdaeme envisioned repeating the act of destruction every hundred years. I think that kind of dynamic historicization is great—a sequence of reconstruction and redestruction. Re-enacting the course of history as a loop would be more authentic and honest than a simple reconstruction.

Why do you think so much reconstruction is being done in Europe?
The preservation of monuments is a European idea. In Asia they destroy a lot and can't understand why we have so many old buildings and rebuild the ones that have been destroyed. Africa is a whole

subject unto itself, and for a long time the USA hasn't particularly pursued the idea either, although there was a tendency there to rebuild European palaces as copies. But that phase is over now, because the Americans have their own identity and no longer regard themselves as ex-Europeans. The idea of a cultural heritage that must be protected originated in Europe. History is the only thing the Europeans have left; they no longer have the status of a world power, and economically they're not the strongest either. That's why it's becoming more and more important to cling tightly to the past.

The interview is based on a public panel on December 02, 2008 in Leipzig.

Matthias Hollwich, Rainer Weisbach (Eds.): UmBauhaus – Aktualisierung der Moderne, Berlin 2004.

Norbert Huse (Ed.): Denkmalpflege: Deutsche Texte aus drei Jahrhunderten, München 1996.

Werner Schmidt: Der Hildesheimer Marktplatz seit 1945. Zwischen Expertenkultur und Bürgersinn, Hildesheim 1990.

Walter Benjamin: Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit, Paris 1935/36.
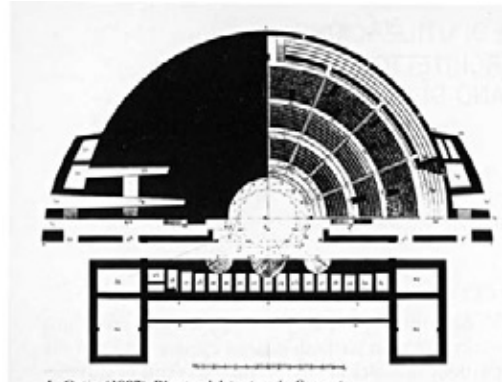
Giorgio Grassi: Hypothese einer Benutzung und architektonischen Wiederherstellung des römischen Theaters von Sagunto. Und: Apropos der Restaurierung von Sagunto. Both in: Michele Caja, Birgit Frank, Alexander Pellnitz, Jörg Schwarzburg (Eds.): Giorgio Grassi Ausgewählte Schriften 1970–1999, Luzern 1986.

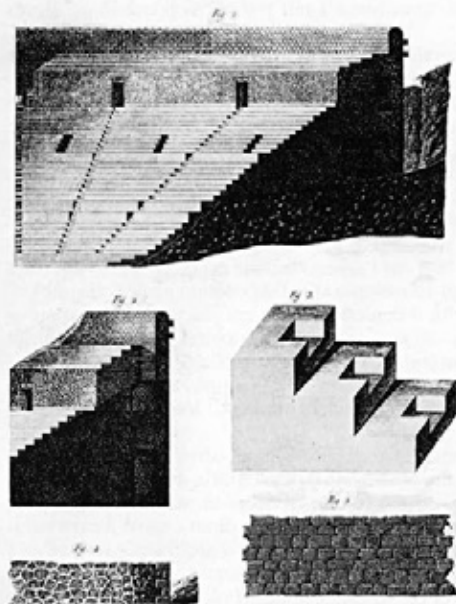Nikolaus Bernau: Die Berliner Museumsinsel, Bauwelt, issue 22, Berlin 1994

01

J. Ortiz (1807) Planta del teatre de Sagunt.

J. Ortiz. Elements constructius del teatre de Sagunt i reconstrucció de la Summa-càvea (1807).

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01 Plan del teatro saguntino. Plan with exact particulars of the individual parts of the Roman theater.

02 Detailed sketches of elements from the theater by J. Ortiz, 1807, Sagunto.

03 Aerial view of the construction site at the beginning and near the end of the re-building of the Roman theater.

04 Aerial view of the stage and the stands, Teatro de Sagunto, Giorgio Grassi, 1986–1994, Sagunto.

05 Depiction of Pulpitum, Parodoi, Orchestra and Cavea, Teatro de Sagunto, Giorgio Grassi, 1986–1994, Sagunto.

06 Detail of a original pillar with added parts, Praecinctiones in the background.

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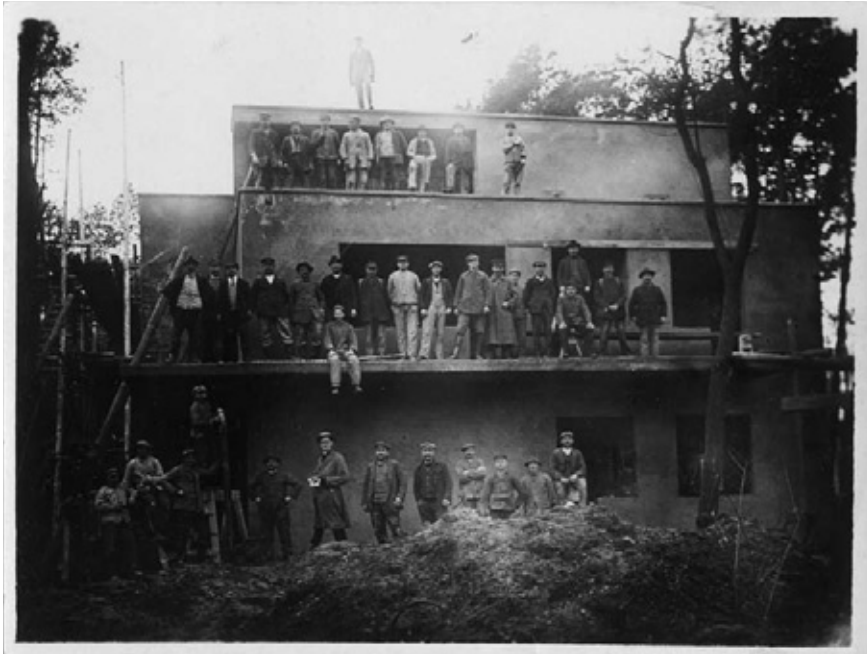
08 Roofing ceremony of the Meisterhäuser in Dessau. The houses designed by Walter Gropius for the Bauhaus professors were finished in 1926.
09 The house of the director in the year 1931. Six years later, it was completely destroyed.

10 Gropius House, 2001: the house with the double pitch roof has been there for the last 40 years.

Display Architecture

Balustrade	48.250,00 €
Hauptgesims	73.750,00 €
Mezzanin (ohne Adler)	65.600,00 €
Paradegeschoss	76.400,00 €

Förderverein Berliner Schloss e.V. (Eds.): Wiederaufbau Berliner Schloss. 2. Katalog der Fassaden- Schmuckelemente, 2006, detail of p. 47.

The replication of Goethe's house in Weimar next to the original in 1999 was an experiment that raised the issue of display architecture: Does the original house have an aura that is lacking in the copy? Is it possible to replicate space? Does architecture have an ideal transferable value independent of its non-transferable physicality? These questions apparently did not play a role in the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche in Dresden. However, they are pressing issues in the debate surrounding the Humboldt-Forum and the process of re-erecting the Baroque façades of the Berlin Castle. In the course Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice at the School of Design in Karlsruhe this topic has been examined on both theoretical and practical levels and the competition entry by architects Kuehn Malvezzi, whose non-conformist design received a special commendation, has remained controversial even after the competition. Is it possible to consider the questionable Berlin competition of 2008 as a call for display architecture? As a form of display, architecture also functions as externalized memory. The human brain is dependent on establishing relationships with external space. But what specific role does reconstruction play in the externalization of memory? Can architectural reconstruction be couched in rhetorical terms? Why should we even discuss a matter considered to be indisputable by many architects and preservationists? According to Heiner Mühlmann, reconstruction provides an X-ray image of cultural deep structures, which reflect the organization of culture as a whole. How can we assess the complexity of projects like the Humboldt-Forum from this perspective?

Heiner Mühlmann, Stephan Trüby

Display Architecture

STEPHAN TRÜBY What's interesting about reconstructivism? Why should we discuss a topic that many architects and preservationists can't talk about?
HEINER MÜHLMANN We should be interested in reconstructivism mainly because it is having so much cultural success right now.

ST Do you have a sense for why it is currently successful?
HM Let me back up briefly. Architecture is, in a way, a memory system, an externalized memory. We rely upon the externalized memory of architecture because the human brain alone is incapable of remembering so much complexity. It's just not possible to do everything in your head. The human brain relies upon interconnections, and external spatial configurations are very important aids for memory in this regard. Architecture doesn't exist, only this topographical memory system does. With the example of mnemonics, one recognizes that architecture is best suited for retaining the contents of memory: artists who work with memory invariably work with topographies: spaces, rooms, and urban structures.

ST And what is particular about the externalized memory system of 'reconstructivism?'
HM Memory systems display something like a self-healing automatism: if something drops out somewhere, if an illness crops up somewhere, if a gap opens up somewhere—then a dynamic is initiated that seeks to offset these gaps by itself. Rebuilding would happen throughout Western culture—especially in Europe—if as much had been destroyed overall as in Germany. If a sensitive gap opens up somewhere, the desire to fill in these gaps will always exist.

ST How do you read Kuehn Malvezzi's competition submission for the Berlin Schloss from this perspective?
HM The design features a two-channel structural configuration: on the one hand there's the technical channel—the technical core of the building, the brick corpus—and then there's an application channel or display channel of theatrical behavior, the ornamental elements. This structural division is found not only in architecture.

ST You're alluding to rhetoric, the 'mother' of all two-channel systems?
HM Yes. Rhetoric exported its two-channel structure into theater, into literature, into music, into architecture, etc. All cultural expressions rely upon a technical channel—which is categorical and semantic—and a display channel—in which recognizable linguistic elements are handled. What emerges in reconstructivism is in some measure an x-ray image of this deep-seated cultural structure: it can't be architectonic; it also can't just be linguistic; it has to go deeper. It actually has to have something to do with cultural organization.

ST Your differentiation between technical and display channels was known in the architectural theory of the mid-19th century as the differentiation between 'core form' (structure) and 'art form' (ornamentation). This differentiation comes from Carl Bötticher. Linked to Bötticher toward the end of the 19th century is Joseph Bayer's architectonic image of ornamentation and structure. In contrast to Bötticher, for Bayer the relationship between structure and ornamentation is already loosened. Bayer states: '[…] indeed the wondrously ornamented historical shells fell away, they were shed forever and the new structure stepped blank and clean out into the sunlight.' Here Bayer verbally draws Le Corbusier-style white cube architecture out into the sunlight a few decades in advance. What remained was a liberated structure that stood blank and pure, geometrically unambiguous, timeless, and everlasting. Werner Oechslin saw this evolution honored in Adolf Loos' architecture. At the same time he yearned for a 'Greek idea' of architecture that remained unaware of the division between core and art form, or structure and ornament. Does display-less architecture exist?
HM There's just as little of that as there is pure architecture. Greek architecture is also display architecture: its stone architecture employs forms that only make technical sense in wood architecture: for instance Doric triglyphs—small tablets that are designed to prevent water from seeping into wooden support beams. Here it's about a projection of wood architecture into the medium of stone architecture—about a self-imaging architecture. Similar to how the new Fiat Cinquecento is a self-imaging of the Fiat Cinquecento of the 1960s. A law of design evolution goes: at a specific point it always comes down to self-imaging, and if you're at a loss then you give way to a double-articulated system. The double-articulated system is an invariant natural structure.

ST You're part of a scientific research group called TRACE (Transmission in Rhetorics, Arts and Cultural Evolution), which conducts neuro-scientific architectural experiments. Which neurological research findings make it easier to understand reconstructivism?
**HM In our experiments we examined two building families that we had selected according to the principle of decorum. With decorum I mean the sum/collection of rules of correct ornamentation according to ranking systems. We compiled the first group according to a 'high-ranking' level of decorum, and the others according to 'low-ranking' decorum. The ancient Greeks would have called our two building families 'hypsos' and 'tapeinos.' We predicted that the human brain would differentiate between both building families on an unconscious level, and that 'high-ranking' buildings would trigger a particular response in the brain.
I don't want to go into all the details of the experimental setup here, but will provide just the following brief summary: ornamentally lavish buildings, called 'high-ranking' in our experiment, trigger the response 'familiarity' and 'intimacy' on a seemingly** non-conscious level of cognitive activity. Buildings lacking ornamentation activate the response 'newness/importance' (novelty detection, relevance detection). The neuroscientists also called the familiarity response the 'butcher on the bus effect.' It's difficult to recognize the butcher on the bus because he's not wearing a white smock, and because he's not standing in his shop. But you recognize that you know this man somehow. The term 'déjà vu' would also apply here.
In terms of reconstructivism this applies to ornamentally lavish buildings like the ones in our experiment. This architecture triggers a déjà vu effect, even if you're only seeing the actual building for the first time. This is pleasing to the cognitive system. It transmits something like a sense of security. By contrast the 'novelty detection' response associated with 'low-ranking' triggers something akin to a warning signal.
While discussing our experiment we talked about prototypical memories that could be carried over in the dynamic of cultural transmission from one generation to the next. In this context you could also talk about a cultural instinct.

ST How do you evaluate the complexity of reconstruction projects like the Berlin Stadtschloss?
HM In the realm of design codes a design like Kuehn Malvezzi's has undoubtedly greater structural complexity than a typical building of current 'star architecture.' You taught us that in the language of architecture one differentiates between design codes and building codes. Building codes refer to structural engineering, construction techniques, etc. Here the towers of star architecture are undoubtedly highly complex. But in terms of design codes, for star buildings it's a matter of simply detecting the attributes that vary on a basic sculptural level. The entire building is supposed to become a distinctive sculpture. Here the limits to systems based on distinctiveness are quickly reached. Thus for me this means I'm always mistaking one star building for another.

Star architecture functions with only one channel at the design level. A building like the one designed by Kuehn Malvezzi is doubly articulated. First of all there's the technical core structure that formulates the building as a self-contained design. Second, there's the ornamental level, a second level of representation that integrates the building into the first representational level. Double articulated systems are more complex than single articulated systems. What's new here is the representation of the reconstruction process. To a certain extent the time axis itself is represented. It no longer has anything to do with artistic transcendence and timelessness. Kuehn Malvezzi are no longer artists. They are evolutionary engineers.

The contribution is based on a public conversation on January 28, 2009 at Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe.

Françoise Choay: Das architektonische Erbe, eine Allegorie (1992), Bauwelt Fundamente 109, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1997.

Barbara Jakubeit, Barbara Hoidn (Eds.): Schloß, Palast, Haus Vaterland: Gedanken zu Form, Inhalt und Geist von Wiederaufbau und Neugestaltung, Basel/Boston/Berlin 1998.

Heiner Mühlmann: Ästhetische Theorie der Renaissance: Leon Battista Alberti, Bochum 2005.

Heiner Mühlmann: Die Natur der Kulturen – Entwurf einer kulturgenetischen Theorie, Wien/New York 1996.

Werner Oechslin: Stilhülse und Kern. Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos und der evolutionäre Weg zur modernen Architektur, Zürich/Berlin 1994.

Wilfried Kuehn

'It was neither the intention nor the aim of this film to explain or justify cinema; instead the film was intended to demonstrate a few actual possibilities of how one could arrive at this point. That does not mean that this film had to be made. It simply means to show that everyone who wants to make a film must necessarily go down one of the paths shown here.'
Jean-Luc Godard, **Le Gai Savoir**

Pain

'If the demolition of the castle is to be considered the symbol of the victory of the GDR, then the reconstruction of the castle would be the symbol of its failure.'
Joachim Fest (1991)

'The original can never be regained, even if one finds thousands of individual pieces to incorporate into the new building. However, there is no other possibility of saving the city as a city, and therefore in a painful good-bye one must reproduce what was lost, not with triumph but resignation.' Wolf Jobst Siedler (1993)

After the fall of the Berlin Wall the idea of re-erecting the castle took root in the circle surrounding the journalists Fest and Siedler, both native Berliners born in 1926 who have childhood memories of the former Hohenzollern castle. Memory and politics at least apparently have quite a solid relationship here: The individual stories of Fest and Siedler as citizens of Berlin and the political history of the city as the capital of various obsolete empires and states come together in a painful yearning for the return of the lost, although the fact of this disappearance has long since been accepted with resignation.

Façades

Ten years after the journalists' appeal an expert commission recommended the reconstruction of a part of the Baroque façades in combination with a new contemporary building—a surprise to preservationists and architects alike. The German Parliament followed the recommendation by passing a resolution on July 4, 2002 by a two-thirds majority in the first ballot to reconstruct three external and three courtyard façades. The longing for the ultimate disappearance of the GDR and its architecture, exemplified by the Palast der Republik, meets with the yearning for a 'historic city center,' which now seems to be attainable through quite ahistorical means.

Trompe l'oeil

'Donate for the reconstruction! Buy a castle building stone—as easy as that. Building stones starting at €50. Decorative façade components starting at €850 and continuing up to well over €1 million. Take your pick!!' A call for donations by the Friends of the Berlin Castle (2009)

It began with a cloth mockup of the castle in 1993. In the mode of a talented trompe l'oeil painter the Hamburg businessman von Boddien presented the castle as an illusionary façade and founded an initiative to support the reconstruction of the Baroque decorative façade. A catalogue of all façade ornaments was published for the occasion and depicted each with an item number and price, which citizens are called to purchase just like from a mail-order catalogue. Like most of his fellow supporters of the castle, von Boddien was too young to have any personal memories of the building and thus is completely free of the resignation and pain such as experienced by Wolf Jobst Siedler. He only knows the castle as an image, and he wants to reconstruct it as such. A simulacrum, Disneyland or a new form of media architecture?

Competition

'In architecture the answer must always contain the problem. A good architectural solution is always a clear expression of the problem out of which it was born.' Giorgio Grassi (1986), Member of the jury, Humboldt-Forum Competition

A competition is a means of finding the right answer to the wrong questions. The process begins with an inaccurate title: 'Reconstruction of the Berlin Castle.' The clear contradiction in the competition mandate illustrates the fundamental problem that makes a hidden minefield out of the grey area between reconstructing the façades and a desire for the castle itself. This problem is carried over into the contrast between the structure of the façade and the arrangement of the space within. How does one create a decorative façade out of reconstructed Baroque elements in conjunction with a new museum building, which represents the largest cultural building project of the Berlin Republic and which will serve as its contemporary architectural self-portrait? Is this a new outgrowth of what Rem Koolhaas diagnosed as the 'lobotomy' of the modern high-rise: the absolute separation between interior and exterior, content and form of an immensely large building?

Retroactive Architecture

The demolition of the Palast der Republik in 2008 is rooted in the tradition of tabula rasa urbanism. Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin for Paris (1922-25) and also Oswald Mathias Ungers' idea of a green urban archipelago in Berlin (1977) are the artistically outstanding urban models with a history of city planning that includes demolition, new building and reconstruction: urbanism as curatorial practice that views buildings as objects on display and the city itself as an exhibition. The Plan Voisin explicitly made room also for historical buildings; once historical monuments had fallen victim to the tabula rasa approach, they could, according to Le Corbusier, be rebuilt at any other random location in Paris. In his urban archipelago Ungers planned—subsequent to the destruction of entire city neighborhoods—to reconstruct historical architectural projects unrealized until today. These ranged from Mies van der Rohe's glass high-rise to Adolf Loos' Chicago Tribune Tower. These urbanistic designs of early and late modernism are brought together in the intention to carry out reconstructions in which authenticity is not a question of material correspondence but purely a matter of concept: a monument without any patina, emancipated from Alois Riegl's long-dominant idea of age-value. The notion of retroactive architecture represents a challenge

for conventional preservation, in which the traces of history are just as important as the conservation of the original state and certainly rank higher than any reconstruction. As with the Japanese Ise Shrine, the kind of material rebuilding proposed by Corbusier and Ungers does not mean the negation of the original but, in contrast, the guarantee of its authentic preservation: based in concept and not material substance.

Model

Museums are places for the preservation of authentic works of art; originals that cannot simply be copied—not because a copy would be impossible in terms of the technical skill involved but because of an agreement that protects the original from being reproduced. Nevertheless, our museums are full of copies. Created for the purpose of research and study or with the aim of creating a realistic presentation of ruins and fragments, such replicas are considered legitimate: reconstructions, casts and models are not forgeries. What generally differentiates these original copies from others is their being produced from molds like the plaster cast of a stone sculpture. They are one-to-one models, which faithfully correspond to absent originals in terms of form but decidedly differ in terms of content: a thing that has no history, no age and no author, in contrast to the original. The reconstruction of Mies van der Rohe's pavilion in Barcelona that was carried out fifty years after its demolition could be thus defined as a one-to-one architectural model.

Display

The Humboldt-Forum is not a replica. As a museum and building for public gatherings it will be an original, and it thus necessitates an architect. Its repetitive elements must also entail a kind of update, in which the illusion of history must be simultaneously worked through together with the disillusioning experience of the present: the conscious incongruity between form and content will be important at first glance, similar to the effect of illusionistic architecture in trompe l'oeil. It will be a form of architecture that thoroughly and utterly adheres to the laws of display. A kind of display archi-

tecture that functions on different levels: in correspondence with the surrounding building shells, such as the Bauakademie, as a true-to-life, walk-through model of the city, the content of which is not the buildings themselves but the space between them. By contrast, in terms of its museum interior it will function as an exhibition apparatus for the ethnographic collection. Situated between these two unrelated forms of display, the new architecture emerges as something that exhibits itself. The architecture of the Humboldt-Forum represents the moment between presentation and the presentation of itself, in which the entire tension of the façade is being concentrated. In this in-between moment the mediatory façade of the castle once again may turn into architecture, the image again may become a building and the ahistorical illusion become a living instance.

Kuehn Malvezzi: A Design

The two-dimensional concept for the façade in the competition brief is countered by a three-dimensional structure. As exposed brickwork construction, the perimeter structure between the museum and urban space is an autonomous building that incorporates historical portals and stairways as well as the façade of the Schlüter courtyard. At the same time, the autonomous perimeter allows the footprint and shape of the museum building to depart from the historical plan, and interior spaces can be configured sensibly for the cultural venue, collection and library of the Humbolt-Forum. In direct correspondence to Museum Island and the Schlossfreiheit,[1] the brick perimeter structure serves as a membrane in which the ground floor windows extend all the way down like door openings and are completely open on the west side of the structure. The result is an extensive entry hall and gathering place in the area of the former Eosander Courtyard, where the building is brought into generous relationship with the city through a podium and where the brick façade makes its full impact felt on the interior. Thus, the urban space between the castle façade and the Altes Museum already addressed by Schinkel, once again becomes a focal point, and a corresponding opening up in the castle façade, not yet possible in the nine-

teenth century, now can find a contemporary solution. Within the cityscape the structural arrangement of the exposed brickwork looks like a completed building shell, similar to the side façades of the Neue Wache—a precise stereometric model of the former castle. It is deliberately left up to later phases of construction to what extent the façade will be clad with stone components, which allows this aspect of the architecture to become a process of negotiation about the final appearance of the Humboldt-Forum—not just based

on the availability of donated funds but as a political question in and of itself.

The text is based on a public presentation on January 28, 2009 at Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe.
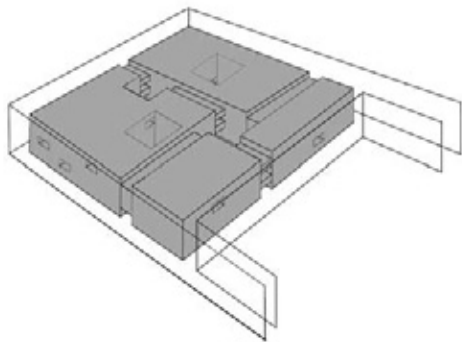
1 Translator's note: The Schlossfreiheit is an open area to the west of the building, where a row of houses stood in close proximity to the palace up through the 19th century.
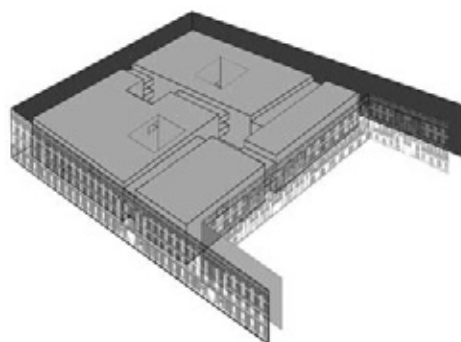
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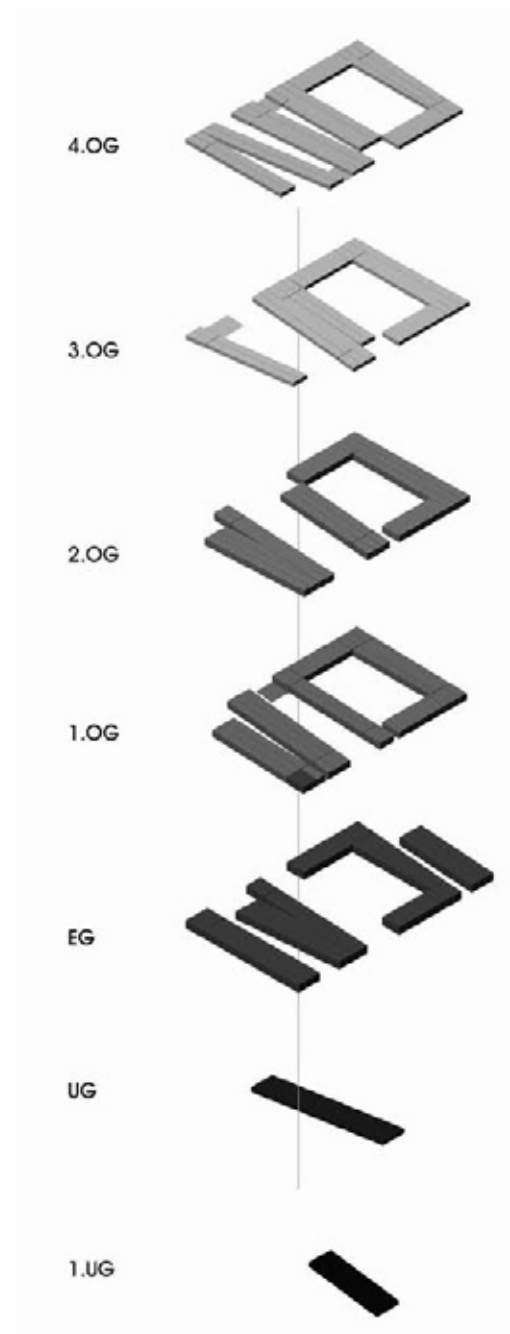

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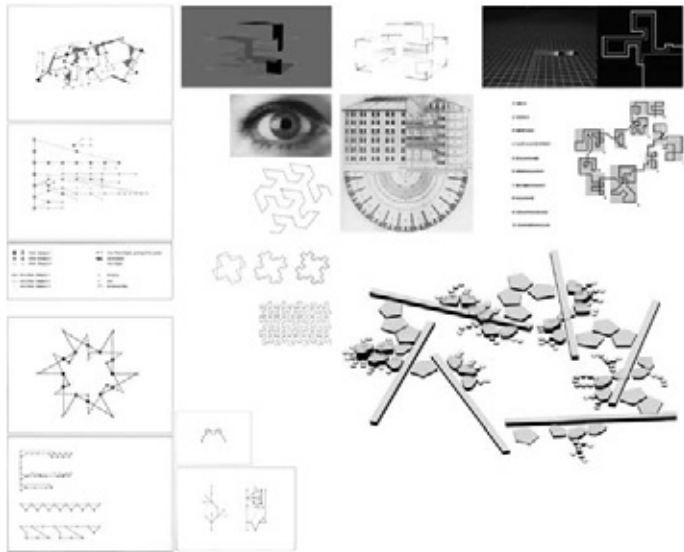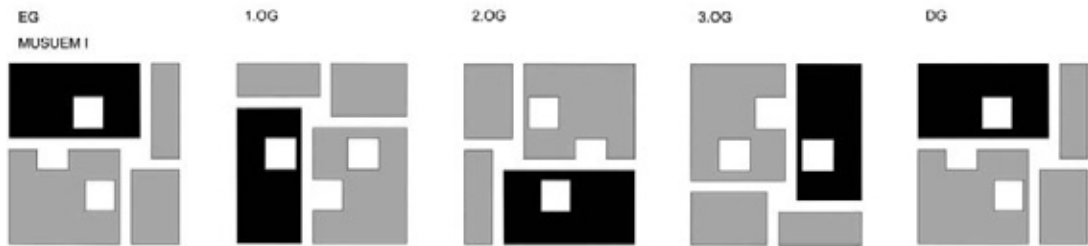
Selections of students' projects, developed at the course Models of Space II on the reconstruction of the Berliner Schloss, summer term 2008:
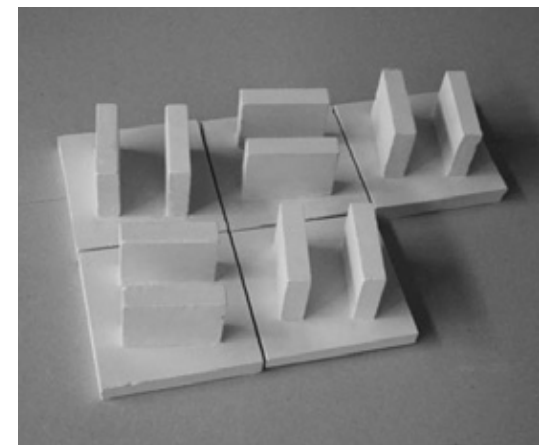**01** Samuel Korn: Rekonstruktion Superdisplay.
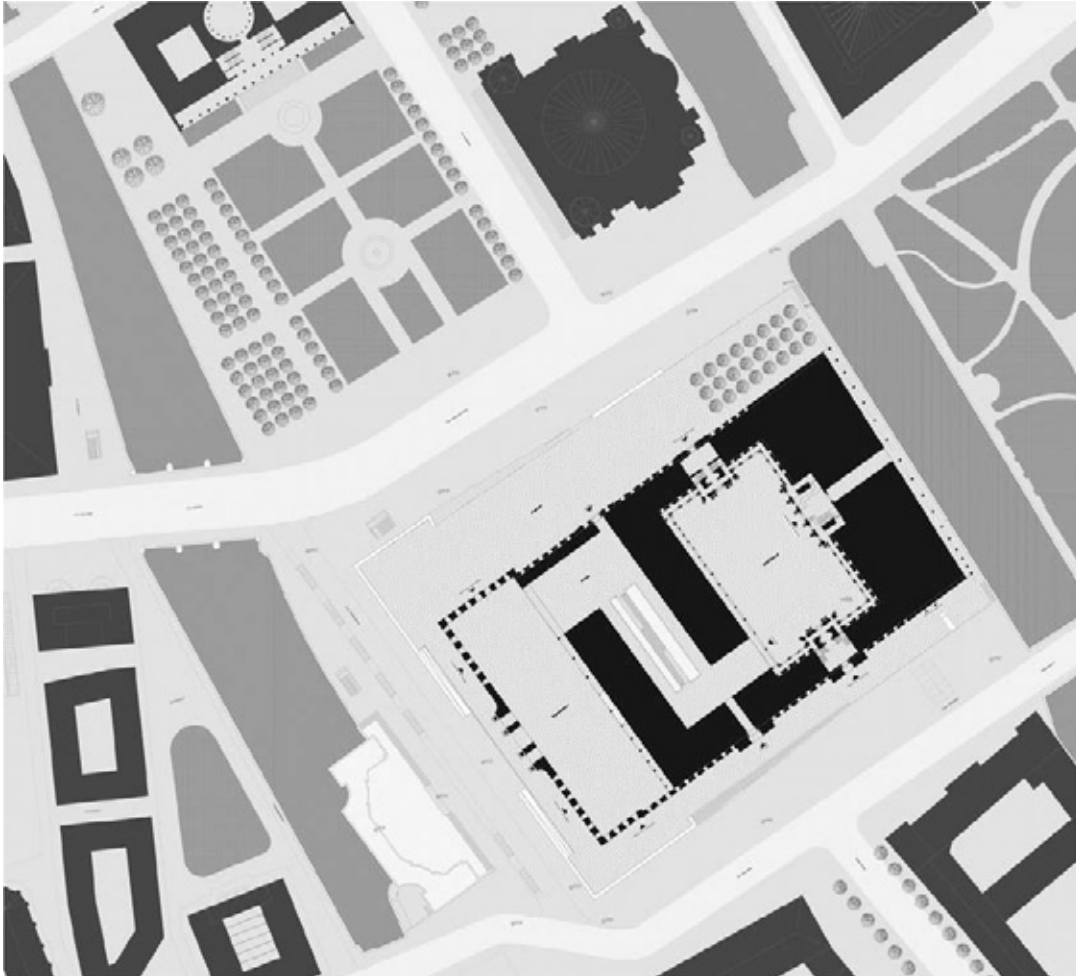**02–04** Johanna Hoth: Annexion.

05 Kristina Moser: Keimzelle.

06 Nicolas Rauch: ReKon+ (software programme).
07 Kilian Fabich: Good Content.

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01 Kuehn Malvezzi: Site plan of Humboldt-Forum Berlin, 2008.

02 Kuehn Malvezzi: View into the covered entrance court (part of agora), 2008.
03 Kuehn Malvezzi: View from the covered entrance court to Schinkel's Altes Museum across the Lustgarten.

Alfred H. Barr, the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art and the inventor of modern art narrative, suddenly reappeared many years after his death in the form of a cover letter to the editor of the below-papers magazine (1993), which was accompanied by Duchamp's story Visiting Schwitters. A few years later he showed the new Museum of Modern Art in the exhibition Museutopia (KEOM, Hagen 2000). The museum was subsequently exhibited at the Venice Biennale (2003), Galerie 35 in Berlin and Kunsthaus Dresden (2003) and was included in the exhibitions What is Modern Art? (Kunsthaus Bethanien Berlin 2006) and Museumsbauhütte—Twelve art museums and museum designs (Werkbundarchiv—Museum der Dinge, Berlin 2008). The Museum has been a permanent exhibit of the Museum of American Art in Berlin since 2004. This year Alfred Barr has given lectures in Lüneburg, Berlin and Belgrade titled Kabinett der Abstrakten and Modern Narrative. www.museum-of-american-art.org

Martin Beck (*1963) is a New York-based artist whose conceptually driven exhibitions and projects engage with questions of authorship and historicity—often drawing from the fields of architecture, design and popular culture. Recent exhibitions include Panel 2 – Nothing better than a touch of ecology and catastrophe to unite the social classes…(Gasworks, London 2008), The details are not the details (Orchard Gallery, New York 2007), Information at Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, in collaboration with Julie Ault (2006) and Installation (Secession, Vienna 2006). Beck's publications include an Exhibit viewed played populated (2005), About the Relative Size of Things in the Universe (2007), and with Julie Ault, Critical Condition: Selected Texts in Dialogue (2003).

Walter Benjamin is a well-known philosopher and theoretician of art history, whose work has addressed the issues of originality and reproduction. Many years after his tragic death he reappeared in 1986 to hold the lecture Mondrian '63–'96 at the invitation of the Marxist Center in Ljubljana, and he appeared again the following year on the TV Gallery in Belgrade. He later published the theoretical work On Copy (2003) and the interview My Dear, This is Not What it Seems to Be (2005). Benjamin co-curated What is Modern Art? (2006) together with Inke Arns. www.museum-of-american-art.org

Pablo Bronstein (*1977, Buenos Aires) is a visual artist. He studied at Goldsmiths College in London and has received fellowships from Grizedale Arts in Cumbria, UK and Südhausbau in Munich. He has participated in the Tate Triennale (London 2006) and Performa 07 (New York 2007) and has had solo exhibitions at Lenbachhaus (Munich 2007), Gallery Franco Noero (Turin 2008) and Herald St Gallery (London 2008). He lives and works in London. www.heraldst.com

Josef Dabernig (*1956) is a visual artist and filmmaker. His exhibitions include Manifesta 3, (Ljubljana 2000), Ausgeträumt... (Secession, Vienna 2001), the 49th Venice Biennale (2001), Proposal for a New Kunsthaus, not further developed (Grazer Kunstverein 2004), and Design of the Kunstraum Lakeside, Lakeside Science & Technology Park, (Klagenfurt 2005). He has also designed exhibition displays for Individual Systems, the 50th Venice Biennale (2003), Once is Nothing (Brussels Biennial 1, 2008) and Artur Zmijewski BAK, basis voor actuele kunst (Utrecht 2008). www.galerieandreashuber.at

Omer Fast (*1972, Jerusalem). Lives and works in Berlin. My work looks at how individuals and historical events interact with each other in narrative. In the past, I've searched for documentary subjects with problematic credentials: individuals with first-hand experience of inauthentic or staged events. These persons' stories were then complicated through various editing and installation strategies. More recently, I've tried to strip down the

process to create beautiful things that speak about the human condition more simply. This led me directly to anti-depressants and therapy. Recent exhibitions include the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art in Vienna, and the Pompidou Center in Paris. www.postmastersart.com www.arratiabeer.com

Paul Gangloff (*1982, Altkirch) studied graphic design at the ERBA in Valence (FR) and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (Amsterdam, NL). One of the three initial collaborators of the graphic design bureau OneDayNation, he now cooperates with artists and theorists through speaking, writing, reading and designing printed matter. Currently his work takes place within the Faculty of Invisibility and the Department of Reading. Paul Gangloff teaches graphic design at the preparatory course of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and at the Academy of Art & Design in Arnhem (NL). www.onedaynation.com

Kersten Geers (*1975, Ghent) studied architecture at Ghent University and the Esquela Tecnica Superior de Arquitectura in Madrid. In 2002 she founded OFFICE in Brussels in collaboration with David van Severen. In 2005 they initiated the 35m³ young architecture series in deSingel, which was also their first solo exhibition. Publications by OFFICE Kersten Geers David van Severen include Seven Rooms (2009). www.officekgdvs.com

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (*1965) lives and works in Paris and Rio de Janeiro. She has come up with an extremely varied range of work ever since she started in the early nineties. It includes film projections, photography and spatial installations, but she also enters into joint ventures with fellow artists such as Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, Ange Leccia and Maurizio Cattelan. Gonzalez-Foerster is interested in the aesthetic and action-oriented functionality of fragments and rooms, which she re-enacts and interprets in her works. Recent solo exhibition include TH.2058, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London (2008), MUSAC, Léon (2008) and Expo-drome, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (2007). She participated in Skulptur Projekte Münster in 2007 and Documenta 11, Kassel in 2002. www.estherschipper.com

Giorgio Grassi (*1935) is an architect. He studied at the Politecnico di Milano. He has designed numerous international projects, including a student dormitory in Chieti (1978) and the Italian Pavilion for the Venice Architecture Biennale (1988). He won first prize in the competition for the addition to the Neues Museum, Berlin (1994), and he has been honored with the Heinrich Tessenow Medallion (1992) and the Berlin Architecture Award (2003). From 1969 to 1976 he was a professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Pescara and has held a number of other guest professorships. www.g-grassi-associati.it

Hans Hollein (*1934) is an architect, exhibition designer and visual artist. As an artist he has participated in the Venice Biennale (1977) and Documenta (1987), among other exhibitions. His curated exhibitions include the Austriennale (Milan 1968), MAN transFORMS (New York 1976), Türken vor Wien (Vienna 1983) and the Venice Biennale (1996). Among his most significant museum buildings are the Abteiberg Municipal Museum, Mönchengladbach (1972-82), Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt (1982-91), the European Center for Vulcanology, Auvergne (1994-2002) and the new entrance area of the Albertina in Vienna (2001–03). In addition to other awards Hans Hollein received the Grand Austrian State Prize. He lives and works in Vienna. www.hollein.com

Charles Jencks (*1939) is an American architecture critic and designer. He studied English literature at Harvard and architectural history in London. He coined the term 'post-modern' in his book The Language of Post-

Modern Architecture (1977). Jencks has lectured at over forty universities throughout the world. He is further known for his garden designs, which have been elaborately described in his books: Towards a Symbolic Architecture (1985), The Architecture of the Jumping Universe (1995) and The Garden of Cosmic Speculation (2003). The latter is a critique of natural science models, which he remodels in domesticated nature. www.charlesjencks.com

Ines Katenhusen (*1966), cultural historian, is an assistant professor and officer of international relations at Leibniz University in Hanover. Her research focuses on the German-American art historian and museum director Alexander Dorner. For this work she has been awarded several research fellowships by US and German institutions. From 2007–09 her research was funded by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture. Her articles on Dorner and other cultural and social historical topics have been published in German, US, Russian as well as French journals and books. One of her most recent articles is Kasimir Malewitsch: Suprematistische Komposition, 1919–1920 in Das verfemte Meisterwerk. Schicksalswege moderner Kunst im 'Dritten Reich,' ed. Uwe Fleckner (Berlin, 2009). www.hist.uni-hannover.de/lehrende/katenhusen/

Eva Kraus (*1971, Munich) lives and works in Munich. Since 2007 she has been the artistic director of the Munich gallery Steinle Contemporary. Trained as a designer (University of Applied Art, Vienna), she now works as a curator and theorist in the fields of visual art, design and architecture. She has worked at a number of international institutions as a designer and curator (including the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, the Neue Galerie, New York and MAK, the Museum of Applied Art, Vienna). From 1999–2003 she directed the Friedrich Kiesler Center in Vienna. www.steinle-contemporary.de

Wilfried Kuehn (*1967) is a partner in the architectural firm Kuehn Malvezzi in Berlin and Professor for Exhibition Design and Curatorial Practice at the School of Design, Karlsruhe. Founded in 2001 by Simona Malvezzi (*1966) and Johannes Kuehn (*1969), Kuehn Malvezzi is primarily active in the field of museum and exhibition architecture. Their projects include the renovation of the Binding Brauerei for Okwui Enwezor's Documenta 11, Kassel (2002), the addition to the Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum of Contemporary Art for the F. C. Flick Collection, Berlin (2004), the Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf (2007), and the reconstruction of the Museum Belvedere in Vienna (2009). www.kuehnmalvezzi.com

Moritz Küng (*1961, CH) studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. Since 2003 he has been working at the deSingel International Arts Campus in Antwerp as director of the exhibition program. He has organized solo exhibitions of the architects Abalos & Herreros (E), Christian Kerez (CH) and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (F), among others. In 2003 he also established the long-term project Curating the Library. His published work includes Christian Kerez: Conflicts Politics Construction Privacy Obsession (2009), Heimo Zobernig, ed. Moritz Küng (2008/09), A+ special issue: 1907 ... after the party (2008), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster: Tropicalization (2007). www.desingel.be

Achim Lengerer (*1972, Tübingen) was educated at the Academy for Film and TV, FAMU, Prague, the Städelschule in Frankfurt and the Slade School of Fine Arts, London. In 2006/07 Lengerer was a researcher at the Jan van Eyck Academie, NL. He is currently artist-in-residence at the Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam, NL. Lengerer's work deals with performative aspects of language and speech as well as the transformation of language into spatial constellations within an exhibition context. Lengerer runs the showroom and instant publishing house Scriptings in Amsterdam, opened in June 2009.

Katrin Mayer (*1974) studied visual art, among other subjects, in Hamburg and was a fellow of the Hamburg post-graduate program Deconstruction and Design: Gender. Her artistic work concerns installation-based emplacements in specific discourses and spatial contexts, for example in 2009 at fake or feint (Berlin), Come in friends, the house is yours! (Badischer Kunstverein), Space Revised (GAK, Bremen), Visuelle Lektüren – Lektüren des Visuellen (co-editor with Hanne Loreck, textem publishers/Material publishers); in 2008 passer qc en revue (Library Apartment A.-C. Gebbers, Berlin), To show is to preserve—figures and demonstrations (Halle für Kunst, Lüneburg) and Not right but wrong (Jet, Berlin 2007).

Heiner Mühlmann is a cultural theoretician. He has been a professor at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal since 1997, at Zurich's University of the Arts (ZHdK) since 2003 and at the School of Design, Karlsruhe since 2004. His major publications include Ästhetische Theorie der Renaissance—Leon Battista Albert (1981; new edition Marcel Dolega, 2005); The Nature of Cultures: A Blueprint for a Theory of Cultural Genetics (Springer, 1998), MSC: Maximal Stress Cooperation—The Driving Force of Cultures (Springer, 2005), Jesus überlistet Darwin (Springer, 2007) and Countdown—3 Kunstgenerationen (Springer, 2008).

Sina Najafi (*1965) is the editor-in-chief of Cabinet. He was the co-curator of The Museum of Projective Personality Testing (Manifesta 2008) and curator of Philosophical Toys (Apexart 2005). www.cabinetmagazine.com

Guillaume Paoli (*1959) is a French philosopher and sociologist, who has been living in Berlin since 1992. He is co-founder of the 'Happy Unemployed' movement and editor of its magazine müßiggangster. He has published numerous essays (for the FAZ, taz, Freitag, Theater Heute, to name a few) and has held lectures and performed interventions as a demotivation trainer. His most recent publications include Du bist nicht allein, Sklave (Berlin: SuKuLTuR, 2008) and Éloge de la démotivation (Paris: éditions lignes, 2008). Since 2008 he has been working as the house philosopher for the Centraltheater in Leipzig and as the founder of the Testing Society for Meaning and Purpose.

Stefan Römer works as an artist and art theorist in the fields of (de-)conceptual art, the critique of ~~public~~ space, the relationship of image and text in art and new media and transculturality. Since 2003 he has been Professor for New Media at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Previously he was an assistant professor at the School for Media in Cologne and headed the research project Information Technology, Art Theory and Artistic Practice of Digital Media (1999–2002). Since 2007 he has been a guest lecturer at the Cultural Studies Institute at Leuphana University, Lüneburg. www.conceptual-paradise.com www.lrz-muenchen.de/~roemer.

Tilo Schulz (*1972, Leipzig) lives and works in Berlin and Leipzig and has been internationally active as an artist and journalist since the early 1990s. Among his most recent solo exhibitions are Formschön (Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig 2007), Sweet Dream (Magazin4, Bregenz 2007), Stage Diver (Secession, Vienna 2008), I Was Shot in the Back (Blackwood Gallery, Toronto 2008) and Ghost Rider (Institute of Contemporary Art, Dunaújváros 2009). www.tiloschulz.com

Milica Tomić (*1960), artist, has participated in international exhibitions including the Sao Paulo Biennale (1998), Venice Biennale (2001), Venice Biennale (2003), Istanbul Biennale (2003), International Cetinje Biennial (2003), Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2004), Sidney Biennale (2006), Prague Biennale (2007), Gyumri Biennale (2008), etc. Tomić's work has been exhibited at the GT Innsbruck, MMK Arnhem, Vienna Kunsthalle,

BildMuseet Umea, Moderna Museet Stockholm, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Fundacio Joan Miro, MOCA Belgrade, Freud Museum London, KIASMA Helsinki, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, etc. www.charimgalerie.at

Stephan Trüby (*1970) is an architect, theoretician and curator who studied architecture at the AA School, London. He is Director of the Master of Advanced Studies Program in Architecture and Scenography at Zurich's University of the Arts (ZHdK). From 2007–09 he was Professor of Architecture at Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. Amongst his many publications are architektur_theorie.doc: Essays since 1960 (with Gerd de Bruyn, Birkhäuser, 2003), 5 Codes: Architecture, Paranoia and Risk in Times of Terror (ed. Igmade, Birkhäuser, 2006), Exit-Architecture: Design Between War and Peace (Springer, 2008), The World of Madelon Vriesendorp (with Shumon Basar, AA Publications, 2008) and Hertzianism: Electromagnetism in Architecture, Design and Art (Fink, 2009). He heads the architecture, design and consultancy firm Exit Ltd.

Ines Weizman (*1973, Leipzig) is an architect and theorist based in London. She is director of the MA/PhD Cities Design and Urban Cultures at the Department of Architecture and Spatial Design, London Metropolitan University. In recent years she researched utopian visions within the context of urbanism after the collapse of the Iron Curtain. She published articles on the political and ideological spectacles enacted by Soviet-era architecture, on the urban historiography of what was East Germany as well as on various fates of post-communist cities. A recent project together with Eyal Weizman includes Celltexts. Books and Other Works Produced in Prison, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2008). www.celltexts.org www.bakerhouse.org