

The Stone Road.

(On Track. Off Track. Memorising the Mid-World. Walking the Fifth-Space)

Production : Firefly (Brussels)

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May – June 2009 *The Stone Road.* in Brussels (argos & kunstenfestivaldesarts)

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(On Track. Off Track. Memorising the Mid-World. Walking the Fifth-Space.)

Orla Barry (Irl)

Wim Cuyvers (B)

Els Dietvorst (B)

Nikolaus Gansterer (AT)

Johanna Kirsch (AT)

KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE

15.11.2008 - 13.12.2008

Tu - Fr 14.00 - 19.00 Uhr

Sa 10.00 - 13.00 Uhr

www.kunsthalle.wuk.at



Johanna Kirsch (Austria, 1980) experiments and reworks individual expressions of concepts such as autonomy and freedom and takes a look at the dynamics and flexibility of the borders defining these concepts. The work deals with the discovery of possibilities for checking the in-between spaces of self-definition and self-determination in cross-reaction with the social structures of space and the validity of their existing rules, limits and borders.

This can be a very physical procedure her own body becomes a test dummy for such experiments; like crossing space using no given path or deconstructing and executing a road movie by living it or in becoming part of an environment and infiltrating it through actions like climbing, sneaking and attaching the body to it.

The last few years she has been living all over Europe and has shown her work in different contexts such as film festivals, exhibitions, site-specific projects, her work has often taken the form of installations or performances. At the moment she lives and works in situ between of the cities of Brussels and Vienna. www.schrik.info



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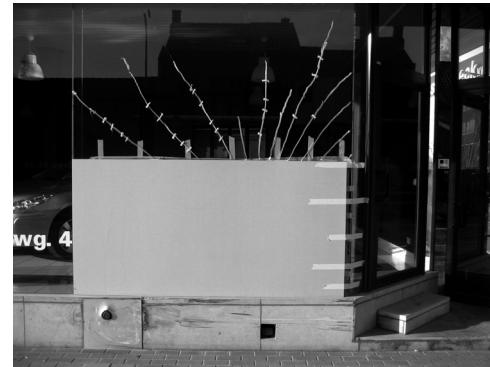
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Nikolaus Gansterer (Austria, 1974) lives and works in Antwerp and Vienna. His visual work deals with mapping processes of invisibility, often in the context of performative acts. In his installation works Gansterer focuses on the translation of processes emerging from cultural and scientific networks. By rejecting a strict differentiation of these two areas and through a consequent recombination of methods and settings from both fields, he finds unique lines of connection and division questioning the imaginary threshold between nature, culture, religion, art and civilization. Since 1998 Gansterer has been occupied with several on-going projects that explore the 'transacoustic'. He founded the Institute for Transacoustic Research and co-founded the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra.

Some recent presentations include Living and Working in Vienna II, Kunsthalle, Vienna. Sonar Festival, CCCB, Barcelona. Moving Patterns, ACF, New York. Trichtlinnburg, Salzburger Kunstverein. Architecture of Interaction, Chisenhale Gallery London, Hard Rock Walzer, Villa Manin, Udine. www.gansterer.org



Wim Cuyvers' (Belgium, 1958) way of working is about accepting the unacceptable life condition. He cannot really believe in language or institute. He wants to concentrate on the human instead of the social and sees space as something that might be able to take place between people.

He has worked in many forms including built spaces, video, texts, urban researching, speeches, shoutings, performances, installations. He cannot think of his work as projects anymore: he's going to live and work in the dark woods.

He has had solo shows in deSingel (Antwerp) and Stroom (the Hague). He participated in many (architecture and art) group exhibitions such as 'Archilab' in Orleans 2004 and 'Homeward, Contemporary Architecture in Flanders' Antwerp, Bordeaux, Rome, Venice, Plymouth, 2000. He published a monography in 1995, a nameless book together with the artist Marc De Blicq in 2002 and the book 'Text on Text' in 2005. He was laureate of the Cultuurprijs Architectuur of the Flemish Community in 2005.



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The Stone Road. Is a Firefly project initiated by Orla Barry which was set up to bring a group of artists together over a long period of time without the immediate pressure of production. The main aim of the project was to develop a working process which was related to a very specific place and to reconsider how we function both as individual artists and as a group within that predetermined space. We decided to work on the national road 'N6' which runs from Brussels to Mons, a town in Belgium. It crosses the linguistic borders of Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia. It is a trunk road laden with heavy traffic and all the typical signs of human fatigue: run-down houses and churches, deserted shops, rubbish pile-ups, heavy traffic. The whole space is infused by a sense of desolation, a place where urban design is non-existent. Europe has many of these roads, urban trails that violently cross the countryside, symbols of the failure of the urban web that is spreading out from major cities towards their smaller siblings. The N6 could be any road. A road was a good place to start.

The project was envisaged as a location to test habits, measure strengths, improvise, and ad lib. It was a place to build a group project in a state of release, to create hyperlinks in the artistic work and to use those links to move forward as a group. Working as a collective is a way of gaining power, exchanging ideas, creating a pool of research and artistic output and a way of remaining autonomous within the art world.

Efficiency has no place in this project. It is a place for the rough, the chaotic and the poetic. We used the road as a place to work and draw inspiration. As we moved along the road, some of us referred to ourselves as 'Urban Impressionists'. Others became 'Drifting Sponges'. Others walked in single file keeping on track. Our 'urban' stories are universal and exceed the concrete ugliness of the N6: they deal with walking as both action and philosophical state, they deal with the individuality of our society, the growing aggression, the solitude, the hopelessness and the continued gobbling of the countryside by the concrete web.

We all traveled this route numerous times since July 2006, individually walking or cycling alone along a road not constructed for such pursuits. Each of us progressed at their own rhythm, with their own purpose and their own box of tools. Each of us was overwhelmed by the volume and speed of traffic and the sad nature of our self imposed pursuit.

Els Dietvorst (Belgium, 1964) lives and works in Brussels. She is an artist whose work focuses on communication, collaboration and social conflict. She often returns to anti-utopian themes such as the outsider, the human condition, the symbolic prison. In her long-term film projects she works in non-places and socially contested sites where she collaborates with the people who host/inhabit these places.

She is more interested in the artistic processes than the results. In these processes she collaborates with other artists to develop and experiment with aesthetic form and meaning.

As well as film, she uses other media like drawing, writing and sculpture.

Most recent projects are 'The Return of the Swallows' (2000-2006), 'Song for a Price of a Goat' (2002-2004) and 'King's Children' (2002-2004). Her projects have been shown in the MUHKA (Antwerp), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Palais de Beaux-Arts (Brussels). Since 1999 she is the artistic coordinator of Firefly. www.fireflyprojects.be



Orla Barry (Ireland, 1969) lives and works in Brussels and Wexford, Ireland. Orla Barry's work is about language, both written and spoken. Visual deconstruction and displacement of language stands central in her work; via frequently associative techniques, she researches the semantics of her mother tongue and its cultural imbedding and implications. Her work is strongly poetic and lyrical, crossing a wide variety of media, evoking non-linear narratives, undercurrents of emotion and drawing on Irish disciplines of poetry and song. She works in many forms, including video, text, sound, and photographic installations.

She has recently had a large solo shows of her work at the Irish Museum of Modern art in Dublin, SMAK Ghent, Camden Arts Centre London and W139 Amsterdam. She has also taken part in Manifesta 2 and in group shows such as 'Sense and Sensibility' in Sao Paulo, 'Some Parts of this World' in Helsinki. She has also been awarded the prize of the Palais de Beaux Arts in the 'Prix de la Jeune Peinture Belge' in 2003. Upcoming Performances are in STUK, Leuven and Tate Modern, London. She set up Firefly with Els Dietvorst in 1999. www.fireflyprojects.be



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By the repetitions and crossovers in the work, the memory of the space grows and gains new meanings: it is transformed from reality into fiction or hyper-specific description. Walking becomes like sifting a certain space for existential gems and dysfunctional urban nuggets. An aspect the viewer will find back in all the works.

We used the 'Bienvenue' newspaper as a sort of intermediate log, used to collect ideas and show how the process along the road evolved. It became the projects' 'Parish Journal'! A style of amateur publishing which is very familiar to the little villages scattered along the N6. We also used this format to allow the project to exist outside the format of the exhibition. We will publish the second edition of the newspaper in April 2009, just before the project will be shown in Brussels.

"We know there are at least four other people out there doing the same thing alone. This gives us a sense of solidarity. We know it's not real walking, in the sense of going somewhere, it's not walking from Brussels to Mons or vice versa. It's walking from one thing to another thing in the world. Walking 'to' and 'from' is a form of learning. We keep what we learn undefined for as long as possible. We are all acting undefined along the road. We only walk for ourselves. The things we walk 'from' and 'to' make us walk. Our eyes decide the direction. Our eyes make us walk." Excerpt from the Auto Text written by the N6 Team.

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biographies

