OPEN SECRETS Grand Opening Performance

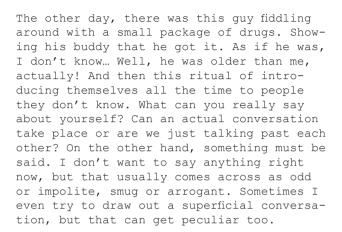
Barbara Buchmaier and Christine Woditschka

B: Again and again, thousands of artist parties, openings... We've been doing this for ten, twenty years now, and some of us don't even realize it. It's not about the exhibition anyway, it never is. We meet, euphoric, celebrating the fact that someone got an exhibition or is opening a gallery. Above all, the fact that we all know each other. At the same time, we know that the young gallerist probably isn't even able to talk about the exhibited works. The people I'm talking about are probably here, among this audience.

In the evening they look different to me than they do during the day, when I meet them on their own. Is it because they are all artists and I am not? None of us have a family. No children we have to look after. What are we looking for? It seems like everything is still a bit like back then, when we were sixteen, seventeen, going out on a Friday night - it was nice and it still is, sure.







C: Celebration - and not belief - is, as the sociologist Emile Durkheim stated 100 years ago, the basis of all religions. During celebrations, different rules apply. You need to revel, apparently without accepting any limits, because it wouldn't be a party otherwise. In search of an insight, of a flashing idea in the dark of night driven by the eternal promise of intensity. Shine on, you crazy diamond. The imperative of partying is a nonchalant transgression that makes you forget about work, about being all set all the time, although you can never lose that. Everyday life becomes more bearable, and yet you wake up the next day in the afternoon





Christine Woditschka, 2010



with a headache, realizing that nothing has changed since yesterday, even if you got to meet W.T. ... And it goes on and on like that.

B: Although, celebrating became an everyday thing a long time ago.

C: We are on the go. In the afternoon, I meet M.F. and M.C. at a café. They brought along A.L., a friend of theirs who is also a painter and lives close by. We talk about ourselves, about our work, etc. It gets late, we're drinking, hopping from bar to bar. At 3:30 in the morning, everything is shut down. A.L., the painter, tells us that he's broke, but has a pallet of champagne at home.

* * *

B+C: In the eyes of the world that you feel are watching, you spin around in the spotlight, looking at yourself PARTYING.

* * *

CHORUS:

Capitalism is a religion.

WE the People!

Power to the People!

None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.

For a Renaissance of Ethics.

Wake up!

Make love not money.

Fight, fight, fight!

What is our demand?

We are too big to fail.

We are the 99%.

Agitate, Educate, Organize!

Bang!

People, not Profit!

Banks are Cancer.

U.S. in Distress.

Tear down this Wall Street.

A few prosper, billions suffer.

Stop Capitalism!

I love humanity! Let's figure this shit out together...

* * *

C: M.C. just had a gallery exhibition in New York. Only upon request she tells us that she sold all her work. A fellow artist is listening, also the part where D.S. talks about the huge solo show he will have next year, and you can tell from the way he cringes in reaction, that a whole palace is collapsing before his eyes. All of a sudden, three or four among them are earning ten times as much as the others, becoming well known, standing out in the crowd, and still they are all partying together. Everyone pretends that they are all equal, still knowing perfectly well where they are standing at the moment. It becomes clearer and clearer.

B: Sometimes, you don't even notice that you are participating in this, you don't realize how much you participate and function. Whoever joins in has to stay as long as possible. On the next evening, we'll meet again anyway. A constant flow. You better stay in bed the whole next day, then. Everything else doesn't matter. Problems are postponed. Later on, you'll complain about how fast the week passed without having accomplished much. The only problem is that I haven't accomplished more, either. What do you want to accomplish anyway? Of course, everything could be more effective. Everything should be more effective.

C: Everyone feels awesome, mirroring themselves awesomely well among other awesome people. To assure oneself, reassured within the group, hoping for a potential conspiracy. All the time.

* * *

CHORUS:

M.C. says: "We are the Clement Greenbergs of our own meta-management operations, our secret political groupings become sinister and paranoid strategy planning meetings to exclude anyone younger than ourselves."

* * *

B: What struck me again yesterday at this event, about myself: So, all of the commissions I accepted - obligations - I carry them with me constantly like a bundle on my back. That generates a certain heaviness. The lightness that others feel when they go to art events and meet up to party, to celebrate whatever, seems funny to me.

C: On the other hand, they are all so aware of their problems. No one would say that they feel light. H.L. is a cool kid, but he also knows that it's not enough to only be a cool kid.

B: The fashion show exhibition opened on Friday, but I ended up leaving at around eleven and they haven't contacted me since. That's the question, actually: Does it make any difference if you always stay until the end?

C: It goes on without you, too.



I WAS READY TO JUMP 1999



B: J.P. was there too, by the way. Once again I got the real picture of how arrogant people can be. We were all sitting there on a bench and then she came in, joined us, and talked to the artist, who shortly introduced me to her. Later on during the evening, when we ran into each other again, there wasn't a hello or anything. I had even thought about approaching her. After all, we have common friends.

C: I met her once, when she thought she would need me for something. She was so nice on that occasion. She's cold as ice.

* * *

REFRAIN:

Let's celebrate. Let's celebrate. Let's celebrate the Grand Opening. Until 3 A.M.

* * *

C: All the printed cards, invitations, printed in large quantities for eternity, only to be trashed. Press texts, brochures filled with mistakes, for the dumpster. But who's going to notice the mistakes? All that matters is that something is there that looks like text.

B: Fighting with the cramp. Old urban garbage cans from the scrapyard hang on the wall of the exhibition space. One could enjoy that too, dented trash bins. The used ready-made. Mass-produced used-look. Used-made. The guy gives me cramps, even though he has already been called an alpha male. All these overly cerebral approaches can only be explained through texts. That's why I have to meet the artist again tomorrow to better understand his newly developed shrink-wrap procedure.

C: What kind of move is that? Greetings to the better-known colleague S.P., with minimal nuances polished for the insider's pleasure. Or do the works simply have no context whatsoever? To me, the whole thing is becoming more and more a research on one's own performance, his works being the biggest brooches, buttons, ingredients of the own habitus, of the narcissistic ego.

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B+C: "In light of the complete absence of thematic, formal, stylistic, procedural, or ideological coherence, it is often quite obvious what holds together those artists who are supported by a dealer, critic, curator, or fellow artist. In this context, every judgment turns into an assertion not about the object, but rather about the dominance of the judging individual. It is art when I say that it is - a statement that needs to be defended all the more in order to conceal the arbitrariness of its assertion of quality and relevance."

* * *

B+C: The ego-thing in contrast to the demoromanticism. Or: the ego-thing and the demo-romanticism.

B: Sometimes demo-romanticism can still represent a way out. An excuse, a short reflex.

C: After all, even psychoanalysis represents such an attempt at looking for an ability to act in the inability to act, to work on the relation to the self, trying to reflect that in art.

B+C: Depression and creativity. Depression and creation. Depression and creature.

* * *

CHORUS:

"BANKS ARE BAD"
"FASHION IS SCHIET?" [sic]
"DIE COLLECTOR SCUM"
"FUCK"
"DIE ARTIST SCUM"

¹ Merlin Carpenter, "The Tail that Wags the Dog," 2008, www.merlincarpenter.com/tail

² Andrea Fraser, "Es ist Kunst, wenn ich sage, daß es das ist, oder...," in *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 20, Nov. 1995: 35-40.

³ Merlin Carpenter, *The Opening* (Berlin: Sternberg-Press, 2011).

⁴ George Baker, "Die Artist Scum," in *The Opening*, Merlin Carpenter (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011).

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HERBST WINTER 2011





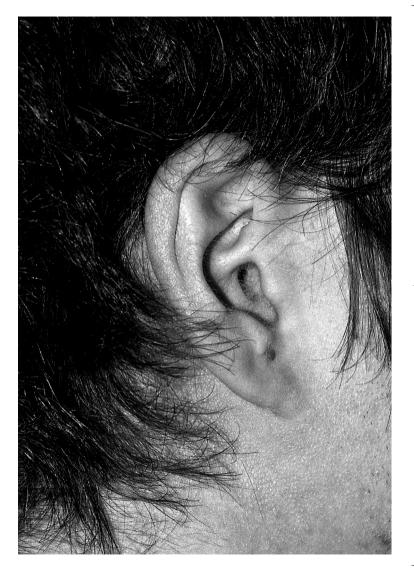


















5 EKTO-MANIFESTO

Ein Vortrag von Dominik Sittig

im Rahmen der Ausstellung

PSEUDOPARADIGMATIKA

17. November 2011 - 17. Dezember 2011

KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE

WÄHRINGER STRASSE 59 1090 WIEN





For the exhibition *PSEUDOPARADIGMATIKA* at the Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna we have selected works by seven young internationally based artists from our private art collection, which we consider a component of our extended art practice.

The contributions were selected based on conceptual affinities and relevance in terms of a critical analysis of contemporaneity. The works are installed in a separate room, conceived as an exhibition within the exhibition. This simultaneous act of exclusion/seclusion and of appropriation of other artist's works for an art installation sets a counterpoint to PSEUDOPARA-DIGMATIKA: The presentation of the NBDBKP Collection in this context is to be read as a critique of the idea of the artwork as ornament and of the artist as a consumer, through an over-affirmation that simultaneously reinforces and questions these assumptions. However, the decision to display works from our collection within an exhibition as an independent artistic statement is to be understood also as a reaction to





the power relations generated by the circumstance itself of being invited as artists to provide "art works" and in a broader sense as a commentary on the role of the market in the production and perception of contemporary art today.

It is our intention to offer irritation rather than clarification and to raise a variety of possible questions: What kind of relationship exists between the collected artists and the collector artists and what is the difference - if there is one between appropriation, use of found footage and this assumption of ownership in terms of an artistic strategy? To which degree are the works on display being co-opted by the collector artists? What individual relevance do these single statements still maintain being used as material for an installation and what becomes of the artist's identity and of the motivations behind their pieces in the process? Moreover, does the conventional presentation of the different artist's works within an isolated "white cube", in the context of PSEUDOPARA-DIGMATIKA actually increase the readability of the installation itself or is this neutrality rather deceiving, intentionally obliterating even more the "hallmark" of the collector artists through a style mimicry?



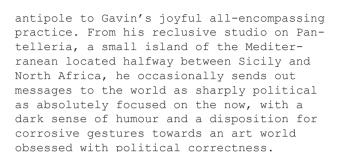


This openness and the uncertainties associated with it can be read as a mere exercise of power from our side, but they can also have an empowering effect, forcing the audience to make up their own mind about that what they are confronted with.

The artists and pieces selected for this first public presentation of the NBDBKP Collection offer different clues in regard to these and other questions, whereby the superordinate construction of the installation remains conceptually dominant. Nevertheless, after accessing the separate room created for the collection within PSEUDO-PARADIGMATIKA, the "exterior" as well as the intention behind the installation itself are somehow bracketed out, allowing the focus to fall on the single works.

Zosa Gavin's approach is absolutely contemporary, precisely because it is purely built on references, fluctuating between nihilist spirit and meditative concentration on form. Although aware of the aleatory nature of her re-combinations, she enjoys the game to the fullest, her imagery ranging from Bauhaus to Bowie, from minimalist sculpture to Kate Moss.

Manrico Lai - a self-declared manic-depressive and pessimist - seems to represent the

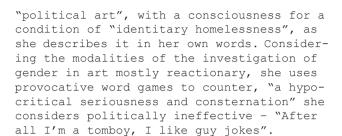


Hugo Alejandro Perez considers himself more a philosopher than an artist, although acknowledging to art the function of a descriptive illustration of thought costructs. Sharing a fairly gloomy vision of the world with Lai, he works with scale models, which rather serve as food for thought than as messages to an audience. In fact, the message is that there is no message to convey beside the awareness of the impossibility to decipher the ambiguity of existence and the complexity of the world.

Ralitsa Schorlemmer's take on a certain feminist tradition is irreverent, but needs to be read in part as homage to some of her heroines - woman artists as diverse as VALIE EXPORT, Eva Hesse, Carolee Schneemann and Louise Bourgeois. Her work is an example for an attitude that combines both acceptance and refusal of the history of







Also the practice of the Norwegian artist collective UnDefinedBroadCast is centred on a concern with the political potential of art, alongside a consciousness of the impossibility of achieving a truly communal statement. The works by the members of the collective are often chaotic and heterogeneous, organically in progress and deliberately unfinished. The aim is that of making the audience ideally a part of the collective, extending it unrestrictedly and dissolving any content to the point of making it disappear altogether.

South African artist Jonas van de Merwe goes even further by denying any possibility of the political in art, literally "dismembering meaning" in an attack on the exploitation of issues of race and ethnicity and the trivialization of postcolonial theory, African American and African Studies in contemporary art. He plays the part

of the wise fool, stating that "ignorance really is bliss" and willingly perpetuating stereotypes in order to unmask them, creating a stridently poppy and uncanny mix of high and low art to form a monstrous hybrid — a distorting mirror of the international art scene and ultimately of the society of late capitalism.

Finally, James I. White's paintings offer visionary scenarios that in their abstraction seem to combine biographical elements: the fata morgana of the verticality of downtown Dallas, Texas — as opposed to the dullness of the suburbs he was born and raised in or to the horizontality of the desert landscape — the fluorescent colours of the British acid house and rave scene of the early nineties or the gritty urbanity of grafitied walls. The Glasgow based artist is a painter who does not believe in painting and speaks of his works as "psychological architectures", able to influence and modify the surrounding space.

In our practice, we work collaboratively with other artists, architects, designers, scientists, writers and theorists from different fields to create multifaceted statements that look at specific theme complexes, analysing relationships, mechanics and politics within society and the art world.

Our exhibition projects are based on the re-contextualization of existing "mate-rial", often juxtaposed with our own works produced for the occasion, in a dialectic process aimed at raising discussion and exchange with the audience.

Niels Betori Diehl and Barbara K. Prokop









This booklet is published on the occasion of the exhibition:

PSEUDOPARADIGMATIKA

Every step is a step on the stage.

Artists, Art Critics: Barbara Buchmaier, Niels Betori Diehl and Barbara K. Prokop, Matthias Krause in cooperation with Philipp Ackermann and Paul Philipp Heinze, Tere Recarens, Dominik Sittig, Christine Woditschka, Birthe Zimmermann

Concept: the participants, initiated by Christine Woditschka

Niels Betori Diehl and Barbara K. Prokop show works by: Zosa Gavin, Manrico Lai, Hugo Alejandro Perez, Ralitsa Schorlemmer, UnDefinedBroadCast, Jonas Van de Merwe, James I. White

Exhibition: 17.11. - 17.12.2011 Opening: Wednesday, 16.11.2011, 7pm

Events

Opening

Wednesday, 16.11.2011

7pm: Fotoshooting "Weltstadtmoden" by Matthias Krause, Philipp Ackermann and Paul Philipp Heinze Lecture by Barbara Buchmaier and Christine Woditschka

Finissage Saturday, 17.12.2011

6pm: Presentation with reading of newest edition of the Berlin-based art-magazine "vonhundert" (www.vonhundert.de) by Barbara Buchmaier

8pm: Lecture "5 EKTO-MANIFESTO" by

Dominik Sittig







KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE | WUK

Director: Andrea Löbel

Media & exhibitions: Klaus Schafler Exhibitions: Lina Leonore Morawetz

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