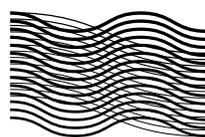


PHOBIA

PAPER



Artists invited:

**(I) TANIA BRUGUERA (II) FERNANDO BRYCE (III) JOTA CASTRO
(IV) MARTIN DAMMANN (V) REGINA JOSÉ GALINDO
(VI) RAINER GANAHL (VII) GOLDIECHIARI (VIII) HANS HAACKE
(IX) ALFREDO JAAR (X) JESÚS MARTÍNEZ OLIVA
(XI) JESÚS SEGURA (XII) ANN-SOFI SIDÉN**

I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING PERSONAL TO EXPLAIN THE FEAR SOCIETY. I DON'T WANT TO HIDE BEHIND THEORIES AND MENTION CHANTAL MOUFFE, BORIS GROYS, NOAM CHOMSKY OR OTHER IDOLS OF CONTEMPORARY ART CRITICS TO EMBELLISH THIS TEXT.

INSTEAD I'D LIKE TO TALK ALMOST LITERALLY, WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE EASIEST WAY OF RECOUNTING A JOURNEY.

I WAS BORN A LONG WAY FROM THE PABELLÓN DE LA URGENCIA (PAVILION OF URGENCY) - OVER 12,000 KILOMETERS AWAY. MY FAMILY WAS ORIGINALLY FROM THE GHETTO OF VENICE, AND WAS EXPELLED OR RATHER IN ONE OF THE NICER VERSIONS, 'EMIGRATED' TO A BETTER WORLD, WHERE TO START WITH THEY WERE CALLED "MARRANOS".

TO SURVIVE, THEY CLIMBED ABOARD THE FIRST BOATS SAILING FOR THE NEW WORLD. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE FACT THAT NOBODY, FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS, WANTED TO TOUCH THEIR WAGES (ORIGIN OF THE MYTH OF THE JEWISH BANKER), THEY BECAME ADMINISTRATORS OF THE FIRST GREAT HISTORY OF THE WEST'S COLONIAL CONQUESTS. THEY MIRACULOUSLY BECAME RICH BY ACCEPTING, AS A GIFT, TO GO AND LIVE IN THE PERUVIAN JUNGLE, THE AMAZON, THE SUPPOSED "ELDORADO" WHERE NOBODY WANTED TO GO BECAUSE OF ANCESTRAL FEARS (GREAT FORESTS WERE ALWAYS THE SOURCE OF ANXIETY AND LEGEND). THEY AGREED TO GO BECAUSE THEY KEPT TELLING THEMSELVES, UNTIL THEY WERE CONVINCED, AND ENCOURAGED BY THE MEMORY OF THE FIRST OF THE FAMILY TO GO, THAT THERE NOBODY WOULD KICK THEM OUT, NOBODY WOULD INSULT THEM OR TELL THEM THEY WERE BETTER THAN THEY.

LIVING IN A PLACE THAT WAS INSECURE BY NATURE, BUT SAFE IN TERMS OF ITS DISTANCE AND MYTH, BROUGHT THEM SECURITY AND FORTUNE. NOBODY THERE WAS SEARCHING FOR THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH YET AND FROM THE FOOTHILLS OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGES OF THE EMPIRE ALL THE WAY TO THE AMAZON IT WAS A GREEN HELL, RESEMBLING DANTE'S HELL, BUT GREEN: FIRST DAY WITHOUT FEAR.

CENTURIES LATER, THEY GOT CALLED "INDIANS", THESE RICH EMIGRANTS WHO WENT BACK OR SENT THEIR DESCENDANTS BACK TO THE OLD WORLD, HOPING TO REMOVE THEM AS FAR AS POSSIBLE FROM THE PLACE THAT HAD BROUGHT THEM RISK AND SHAME FOR FORGETTING THEIR ORIGINS.

I KNOW THAT MY FAMILY, LIKE MANY OTHERS, AND OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, SENT MONEY TO THE KINGS OF SPAIN, ITALIAN ROYAL FAMILIES AND RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SUBMISSION TO AN IDEALIZED WORLD THAT REMOVED THEM FROM THE BARBARIANISM COMMITTED BY THE FAMILY IN PERU AND BRAZIL. THEY THOUGHT THAT IF THEY WENT ON BELIEVING THEN MONEY COULD BUY THEM ANYTHING. THEY'D SEEN IT ALL: MASSACRES, TRANSCULTURIZATION, DIVINE PARDONS BOUGHT FROM THE CHURCH. AN INDIAN WASN'T EVEN WORTH HIS WEIGHT IN GOLD: SECOND DAY WITHOUT FEAR.

ONE DAY SOME FRENCH MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY CAME TO SEE THE RUBBER PLANTATIONS THAT WERE PRODUCING SUCH IMMENSE WEALTH, AND THAT MANY WANTED TO GET THEIR HANDS ON, FROM MANAOS TO IQUITOS, WHICH WERE AT THE TIME THE SHANGHAI OF TODAY. THE SAME FRENCH PEOPLE, WHO'D SOLD THEIR GUNS IN HAITI TO DEFEND THE SANS-SOUCI FORTRESS AND CREATE THE FIRST STATE DEBT THAT HAS TILL TODAY NOT BEEN REIMBURSED, STOLE GRAINS AND TREES AND WENT TO THE KINGDOM OF SIAM, TO PLANT AND CREATE THE HUGE EXPLOITATIONS WHICH WERE EVENTUALLY TO RIVAL OURS. THE GLOBALIZED AND DELOCALIZED WORLD ISN'T 17 YEARS OLD; IN THE CASE OF MY FAMILY IT'S OVER 500 YEARS OLD. THIS IS WORTH STRESSING: THAT WHAT TODAY GENERATES FEAR IN THE LARES, HAS BEEN AROUND IN THE WHOLE WORLD FOR CENTURIES, EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT THE FINANCIAL INDICATIVES THAT ALLOW ONE TO UNDERSTAND THE RISK FLOW, HAND TO HAND INVESTMENT AND RISK. IT'S DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE: IT MAKES ME SMILE, READING OVER THIS... WHAT IF ALL OF US BELIEVED IN THE SYSTEM OR IN THE DESIRE TO CHANGE IT, AND I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF THERE'S ANYBODY AROUND TODAY WHO CAN TELL ME IN CLEAR TERMS WHAT THE SYSTEM ACTUALLY CONSISTS OF? THIRD DAY WITHOUT FEAR.

MUCH LATER, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY WHO HAD ALREADY RETURNED TO THE OLD WORLD, DECIDED NOT TO BELIEVE IN THE DANGERS OF NAZISM AND FASCISM, AND STAYED ON, THUS LOSING THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY MATTERS.

HALF OF MY FAMILY LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE CAMPS, SOME IN NORMANDY, AND THE REST WERE SO TERRIFIED THEY BEGAN TO THINK IT WAS BETTER TO STAY IN AMERICA: FOURTH DAY WITHOUT FEAR.

HOW SWIFTLY IT CAN BE WRITTEN DOWN: 500 YEARS RESUMED INTO JUST SOME OF THE PAIN, FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF FEAR DISSIMULATED INTO THESE LINES. TODAY I'M THE ONE BRINGING UP THE THEME: LOOKING AT THE ORIGINS OF MY FAMILY, THE FEAR OF MY FAMILY. I LEFT THE EXTREME WEST WITHOUT FEAR, I LEFT BECAUSE AT HOME I WAS TOLD TO "CLOSE YOUR EYES IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY, AND DON'T LOOK AT THE MISERY AND THE INEQUALITIES IF YOU WANT TO HOLD ONTO YOUR WELL-BEING". SUCH A LOT OF EDUCATION JUST TO HEAR THIS, I PREFERRED TO HEAD TOWARDS WHAT WAS UNCERTAIN. "DON'T LOOK AT PEOPLE OF A FOREIGN COLOR". BUT WHAT COLOR AM I? LATER ON I DISCOVERED THAT I WAS OF FOREIGN COLOR MYSELF.

"DON'T LOOK AT WHAT MIGHT BRING YOU TROUBLE".

I CHOSE ON THE CONTRARY TO LOOK FOR TROUBLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. I ALSO TOOK A WRONG TURN IN THE WORLD, AND WAS BORN AGAIN IN THE WORLD.

TODAY THAT I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH I DID, I SEE THAT IN A SINGLE LIFE ONE CAN LIVE THROUGH MUCH FEAR: FEAR TOWARDS THE OTHER, BUT ALSO FEAR OF THE OTHER. SO MUCH TO LOSE, AND SO LITTLE TO GAIN.

TODAY I'M TRYING TO SPEAK OPENLY, REPEATING WHAT I OFTEN REPEAT TO MYSELF IN THE SOLITUDE OF MY LIFE: ONE MORE DAY WITHOUT FEAR PLEASE.

THE FEAR SOCIETY



TANIA BRUGUERA

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Interview between

Roberta Tenconi and Tania Bruguera

May 2009

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Roberta Tenconi:

One of your most recent artworks is Tatlin's Whisper #6 (2009), a performance presented in Cuba for the 10th Havana Biennial: a podium with an open microphone for people to say what they wanted. In your work, what is the relationship – if any – between individual and personal experiences, and the broader context of social and historical situations?

Tania Bruguera:

As you say, a podium, an open microphone and the right to a minute without censorship were the most important elements in this piece. But the entire description includes also other elements functioning in a practical-conceptual level, as one of the loudspeakers pointing out of the building, donating 200 disposable cameras with flash to the audience (thus creating a new and instant potential audience). As well as others functioning in a symbolic level: Two persons dressed in military uniforms who were there for those who would take the mike, accompanied them to the podium, put a white dove on their shoulder (a reference to the first speech by Fidel Castro after his triumph in 1959) and, finally, stood at both sides of the podium while their minute lasted.

The dimension of these elements is based, as with the other pieces in this series, *Tatlin's Whisper* in a collective political memory shaped and formed by the accumulation of images provided by the mass media. Images that, at the same time, are alien because they have taken place in a different moment and/or place and, or they are anesthetized images because of their repetitiveness, because of the wear and tear of their potential meaning. Images that have not been previously linked with a personal experience are staged in order to transfer what was solely an intellectual political knowledge into a personal memory.

In these pieces there is a negotiation between what is theatrical and what is spontaneous in historical

matters (in their political dimension). Theatrical seen as what a priori is presumably “effective,” what is considered proved in its specificity and ability to react, what is assumed as part of a generically shared sensitivity, a call to memory; spontaneity seen as a space to renegotiate a future that you do not accept as predetermined. What I try to do is decide which spaces I am going to pre-define and which I am going to leave the construction to the audience: I bring a stage, I open a situation. But something that is very clear to me and that I want to emphasize is that the elements I choose for my works are not based in their symbolic value, but in their practical operational capacity, in their function. The symbolic dimension, if it is political art, should come later, with the consequences of the piece, with its operational capacity. These are consequences that imply fulfilling an ethical system and placing yourself within it.

When I began to study art in Cuba, I saw very clearly that we would be the exponents of a community and that something more than individual sublimation was expected from us, perhaps instead training a collective super ego, to give it a name. What I believe important from this training stage has to do with the relationship created between what is individual and what is collective. Something very much present in my work is ethics seen within the emotional realm, as the location of pleasure. My work in many cases is the presentation of a negotiation between ethics and desire.

To live in a country where every once in a while you hear a speech informing you that you are living a historical moment of which you are a part and in which you are expected to participate makes you have a rather daily relationship with what is historical. A relationship that is either of doubt and confusion almost, or one that makes you monumentalize the slightest event in a kind of contest to have (to own) your share of historical responsibility. The main tension is perhaps to be found in who has the right to utopia. In a triumphant socialist revolution it is understood that utopia is a required stage of thinking, not the evidence of failure. Of course, once utopia is achieved and established, it calls for a new one and it is there that my work attempts to intervene.

RT:

Last year at the Tate Modern, visitors were stopped by two mounted

policemen, who controlled them with instructions and warnings as they were entering the museum. With this action, entitled Tatlin's Whispers #5 (2008), you appropriated the structures of power (people in uniform, the idea of controlling crowds, people's fear of animals) and forced the audience into an uneasy position. Can you comment on this critical intersection between art and everyday life (since it was not clear at all that this was an artwork)? How did the audience respond? And also, what was your reaction to their response?

TB:

An important thing in my work is to delay the moment of awareness of what is being experienced as art. It is precisely the moment when the doubt whether something is artistic or not is there that I believe the experience is more fruitful. This does not mean that I am not interested in a reading from the point of view of the history of art of what I am presenting; on the contrary, many of my works contain a comment on artworks I am attracted to, but I am not interested in having them assessed only in that sense, since this would reduce their intention and also because I sincerely believe that is not their main motivation, that is not what leads to them. I can say, for example, that the Tate piece also dialogued with the history of equestrian painting, but this is actually a secondary effect, not the intention of the piece. This is a dialogue, which is established later, with references and not with intentions. I am not interested in having what is artistic seen in everyday life, but in having an everyday life with a sense of the critical distance and freedom that is reserved to art.

The process I am interested in to create in my work is one in which the “audience” is transformed into “citizen” and not the other way round. To achieve this, for the dialogue established to be on ethics and on behavior, it is necessary that references come first from the world of their social and daily living experiences and not from the world of art. What interests me as art is the process, but not the process in the sense of “showing” something that is taking place in time and space, but the thinking process activated in the spectator.

You say that I appropriate power structures. Yes, I am very interested in that, but not as a contemplative exercise or as an extension of the linguistic possibilities of art.

I appropriate the structures and some mechanisms of the way power functions to create political situations, which must be negotiated in an environment of critical observation.

RT:

In an interview at the Tate you said: “Every piece I have done so far, let's say it's the quotation – the visual quotation – of an image I've seen on TV, in the news, on TV.” Is using that same language a way for art to contribute actively to society?

TB:

I don't believe that using the same language or the same formal resources of something that is not art is a way in which art (and I am not only speaking of visual arts) actively contributes to society. I rather see it as mnemonic resources to enter into a conversation where the subject and/or the strategies to use are clear. Although I admire some works done with this technology, I am more interested in the contribution of art to society by the creation of an Arte Útil (useful art). An art aiming at practical applications for art in society, a function for, and generated by, art not limited to a visualization or signalization of a problem, but a proposal to solve it. Art could actively contribute in society, not as much as a laboratory where *in vitro* interactions can be seen, but as the potential “applications” of this knowledge, as “field work.” I am not talking about art as a replacement for social entities in charge of implementing and watching the long-term development of structurally functional social structures, but as a way to regulate these structures suggesting, in practice, other locations for their potential utopias. To that end, we must appropriate not the language but the dynamics of/in the structures of power addressed. The idea is not to make references, but to create them; to go from being a proposal to be a working temporary reality.

RT:

In 2003 you founded an art school project in Havana, the Cátedra Arte de Conducta (Behavior Art Studies): the first course for performance art in Cuba. After six years the school closed. Why have you decided to end this experience of “silent revolution”? Do you have the feeling a change has taken place in the younger generation of Cuban artists and, more generally, in the local educational system?

TB:

The Cátedra Arte de Conducta emerged under the idea of being a space to study performance and time art, but it could also be said that this is the first study center for political art I know of. We directly discussed in it the way in which ethics, ideology and history intertwine with memory, sociology, the history of art. It is a space where behavior and rumor were seen as two resources of social art, but above all, where there was the attempt at bringing forth some statements on Arte Útil.

It was a project under the umbrella of the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, without which it could not have existed. I was fortunate to be given by them a large independence to act. Although I was interested in its existence to be known, I did not want it to have a too well-defined presence. I wanted it to be rather a mobile space where the relationship between art and politics would be discussed, aware of the tradition in which art was defined in relation with its service to the revolution, to ideology and to “the people.” It was an open space to all those who wanted to come, whoever they were or the training they had. The only way you could see the project was participating in it. I wanted those who saw the project to focus in the works made as a result of the debate sessions and the young artists attending them and not as a project by me.

I believe in art as a way to present moments that are socially possible, models to gain access to those moments. In this case the model simultaneously included doing something that everyone believed impossible and dissolving it at a given moment. In this case, I did not want my use of the institutional structure be confused with the self-institutionalization of the project. Artists must be vehicles for things to happen, but must not be the purpose of things. Those who work in social art must dissolve with the end of the project or with the transition of the project's authorship.

It took me long to think how to end the project, because this gesture was as important as opening and continuing it. It took me two years from the moment I thought I had to leave the project to the moment I finally ended it. Socialist societies had five-year plans to achieve their economic and social goals. I thought this timed system could be interesting for the project. I did not stop after five years

because those participating in it asked me not to and I saw myself in an ethical situation created by the fact of it being a project for them and by them.

I continued thinking in several potential models for the “dissolution” of the project, because I saw the danger of its continuation. I thought that “handing down” the project to another person (something I considered problematic since I as the first author would be an unavoidable reference as “the original”). Then I thought in a contest to see what new models might emerge from people interested in this project, but I considered it unfair to perpetuate a name, as if it were a brand, if it would be based on a different idea.

Then, when the institution itself, the real one, asked me not to close the project, and since the project was precisely to infiltrate the institution to question it from within, this was a sign that the moment to end it had arrived and could not be delayed any further. I chose the Havana Biennial exhibition for it, because I would be able to leave the participants in a privileged position and, I hope, at a good point of entry to their professional lives. I believed that nostalgia, that creating a space in which you feel something is missing, was as important now as filling this space was was before, when I created the project. That is, for me, the best way to continue the project: by liberating its participants from its past.

RT:

You live between Havana, Chicago, Paris and Venice, always working on very different types of projects. Can you tell me something about the editorial project Memoria de la Postguerra? Are you still working on similar editorial projects?

TB:

For me the difference is: Why am I in these places? What challenges do they bring me? How do they make me grow? At times I say that Havana is (and contains) my past, Chicago is my job and Paris is the chance to build my utopia. I like to be able to go from one place to another and see how the political and social behavior models change. I like to see where and how political spaces are formed. I am fascinated by trying to see a place through another one (or while I am in another one).

As to the editorial project *Memoria de la Postguerra*, this was something that functioned at a given

moment and, although I would like to have an editorial project someday, it was conceived as art. What I still have from that experience and to what I have precisely returned is to the appropriation of power structures that I tried for the first time in that work.

RT:

Though the concepts you deal with – like freedom and self-determination – take a very physical form in your work, many of your artworks also have an ephemeral aspect, since they are living actions or use minimum material. Do you feel your practice is close to conceptual art experiences?

TB:

I grew up studying conceptual art in the Instituto Superior de Arte in Cuba: Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs*, Magritte's games with written and visual images and Duchamp's immensely incomprehensible seduction under the aura of a McEvilley's article. Years later, a professor who thought I needed feminine models showed me Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman, but instead I arrived at Ana Mendieta's ideas of territory and at Hans Haacke's political strategies. What was happening in the Cuban art world in the 1980s was more intense, more interesting and more attractive than any work I could see in a magazine or a slide. It was living art, political art in action. Although one wants to find commonplaces and to think there is a mainstream we may share, my mainstream was not the production in New York but the immediate discussion around paradigms for political art production happening in Havana. If I believe it is conceptual, it is in the sense that I try to enter into a system while I am questioning it. I am interested in objects as a generator of behaviors not as a mean in themselves. I am interested in their power to trigger a reaction.

I have been researching forms in which art can be applied to everyday political life. The concept of the ephemeral is one that presents itself in the form of the political and its effectiveness. The ephemeral is the transitory condition of what is political.

Tania Bruguera
Havana, Cuba, 1968. Lives and works in Havana, Cuba; Chicago, USA and Paris, France.

Selected Solo Exhibitions
Object of desire (selling Cuba), Le Plateau, Paris, France, 2008

Delayed Patriotism, Bronx Museum / Performa 07, New York, USA, 2007
Tatlin's whisper, Kunsthalle Zu Kiel, Kiel, Germany, 2006
Portraits, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria, 2006
Autobiografía, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba, 2003

Selected Group Exhibitions
Arte no es Vida: Actions by artists of the Americas, 1960-2000, El Museo del Barrio, New York, USA, 2008
Live living currency, Tate Modern, London, 2008
The living museum, Museum für Modern Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany, 2003
Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany, 2002
A little bit of history repeated, KunstWerke, Berlin, Germany, 2001

Awards
Prince Claus Prize, Rotterdam, 2008
European Commission for Decentralized Cooperation, European Union, 2007
Prince Claus Grant, Rotterdam, 2000
The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, New York, 1998



FERNANDO BRYCE

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Interview between

Roberta Tenconi and Fernando Bryce

May 2009

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Roberta Tenconi:

Your works are hand reproductions of a massive archive of texts and images from tabloid magazines, broadsheets, leaflets, photo albums, newspapers or official government papers. The considerable collection of pictures, headlines and quotations you have selected constitutes your own record of world history. What criteria have you used for the selection of this source material?

Fernando Bryce:

The criteria I use to select the material, which I then use to do the drawings and produce a series, are initially related to the specific theme I have in mind on a determined series. There are certain, very general, themes, which form cycles of work, upon which I base and organize the series. Some start with a given subject, which I've selected from the pictures I find interesting or which seem relevant. Other series, mostly the larger ones, have a general theme and the images come from different sources. The accumulation of images from distinct series conforms with a sort of iconographic body and a network of references and commentaries. I'm interested in combining images of a distinct nature, comparing them and then putting them in a new context.

In the *Die Welt* series, for example, I tried to reconstruct a sort

of visual panorama in the geopolitical sense of the “Belle Epoque”, in other words in chronological terms, covering the period from the end of the 19th Century to the beginning of the 20th: from the era of classical imperialism, European colonialism, the development of modern communication systems etc., until World War 1 and the Russian Revolution; from when the world-wide revolutionary wave first started, -or the period of international civil war, as the historian Domenico Losurdo calls it. In other words, starting with the anti-colonial wars, the end of the old Empires and the reordering of the “modern/colonial” world system, to use terms coined by Immanuel Wallerstein and Anibal Quijano.

This is, if you like, the ideological aspect and historiographical guideline in my work. As such, and to start with, the personal motivation for my work is based more on what the images “tell us”, already inserted as they are in a story or a discussion, more than the actual implications of what I’m doing in an aesthetic sense.

When seen in such a way, the choice of images has to do with the ideological content and so my work is sometimes more that of a tightrope walker. Not in the liberal sense that this may suggest, whereby being positioned in the middle means one’s closer to the truth, but rather because it implies that, in the work, the heterogeneous aspect of every story has to be part of a whole. The subjective implication, if you like, in the work process, also determines the choice of material. In this way the work should be seen as an interpretation.

RT:
You have stated that your method of selecting and collecting documents from the past, copying them into ink drawings and presenting them as a series, is a “mimetic analysis”. Could you comment on this assertion, and specify what your aim is when you put existing material into a new context?

FB:
“Mimetic analysis” is a term that I thought of when I felt I needed to describe what it was I was doing, copying or translating the documents I found and selected, in ink drawings. I’m not interested in the documents for their specific materiality or their being part of an order within an archive, but rather as images and as ideological and

cultural representations. Appropriation is a way of getting closer to objects and the drawing makes the images more homogenous as they become detached from their quality as originals. It’s about this equality of images in the new order of the drawing, and how the certainty of the original in a way disappears. It’s a form of second-hand working, if you like, of mediated images.

RT:
Though you spend hours and days in archives and public libraries, your approach is nevertheless totally nonacademic. By making your own selection of key events in contemporary history and mixing them with irrelevant actions, you are building a non-linear story of the past. Your work is also woven with bitter irony in the way it presents certain stereotypes of history – such as colonialism and exoticism in relation to the history of South America. What’s the balance in your work between individual human stories and universal history? Do you feel that you are deconstructing stereotypes through your work?

FB:
My own academic education was very uneven but I am grateful for it in that it led to my combined interest in art, history and politics. One could say that the subject of the representation of history as being historiographical, and of art in terms of genre and tradition, are questions that I consider through my art. What’s happening is that art is no longer interested in tackling historical themes in the way it did in the past. There are other requirements now, and the situation is different. My literally manual approximation, almost a traditional artifice, of existing images, is a procedure, which is sort of inverted from that of mechanical production. At the same time, photography is an important part of my work, as I generally work with a photographic camera in the archives. As for the American question, and from this I mean all of “America”, from Alaska to Patagonia, I think it has already been explained by several theoreticians of “Decolonial Thought”, such as Anibal Quijano and Walter D. Mignolo, who have relegated the very term “America” and the concept of “Coloniality of Power” to the colonial matrix. The series that I did on this theme were only a partial memory of an era that is today arriving at its terminal phase. As for linear history, I believe that for a long time now it

Phobia Paper

is something that only apostles of a certain idea of progress can believe in, as a negation of difference, the affirmation of inequalities and domination over others. However, it would seem impossible that we might be able to withdraw from the state of the world today without introducing a new idea of the universal in politics that is removed from market ideology.

RT:
In 2003 you represented your country at the Venice Biennale with a project entitled Visión de la Pintura Occidental. The piece documented the collection of copies from western masterpieces at the Museum of Pictorial Reproductions in Lima, an institution dating from the ‘50s and still operating in the ‘80s. Could you tell me more about the project?

FB:
The piece *Visión de la Pintura Occidental* is based on the history of a cultural institution, in this case the Museum of Pictorial Reproductions at the University of San Marcos in Lima. I was interested in recreating the history of the museum and investigating its sense in the context in which it was created. The installation consists of 39 photographs of a selection of the hundreds of offset reproductions of famous paintings, which made up the museum’s collections, and 96 drawings that were transcriptions of cards and administrative documents from the institution. The museum was created in the ‘50s and its very existence goes along with the same decadence of the idea that brought it into being -“taking” Art with capital letters to the people through itinerant shows of a didactic character with reproductions acting as originals and reproducing the solemnity of the museum and its references. The idea came from the UNESCO of the ‘50s, and was considered to be so useful in terms of its educative impact that on its reception in Peru, local elites, western and subordinate, gave an unexpected turn to history. The copies were taken more or less as if they were the originals according to the character of the epistolary documents found. The general aura of the originals is restituted in offset copies, a gesture that has colonial connotations in its reverential and unreflective respect of everything that is western for the mere sake of being so, even though certainly attenuated by a certain general

like a defining moment. Parodying the Maoism of the time, by extension, the “Pensamiento Hawai” (Hawai Thought) humbly surfaced as a guiding thought in the construction of the Museo Hawai. Then I discovered that in Quechuan, the word “Hawai” alludes to the gaze and to sight.

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culture which was very much of the time. The museum disappeared in the ‘80s, like a sort of cultural UFO, not only at the time the country was in the midst of a civil war, but also in a world in which cultural canons were entering into a crisis and massive and mediated images were acquiring determining dimensions.

RT:
How do you escape the fear of becoming fetishistic towards the documents, and manage to keep looking at the past with a fresh and political eye?

FB:
My interest in history is related to worry about the present and the future. I’m relatively indifferent to the added value of time as a value in itself and in general I like to see today’s objects, including works of art, on the same plane as those of the past, like the human products of a material culture that concerns us all.

<div>Fernando Bryce</div> Lima, Peru, 1965. Lives and works in Lima and Berlin, Germany.
<div>Selected Solo Exhibitions</div> Museum Het Domein, Sittard, The Netherlands, 2009 Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, Germany, 2008 Tapiés Foundation, Barcelona, Spain, 2005 Konstmuseet Malmöe, Malmöe, Sweden, 2005 Raum for Aktuelle Kunst, Luzern, Switzerland, 2003
<div>Selected Group Exhibitions</div> The end of the line: attitudes in drawing, Hayward Touring, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, UK; The Bluecoat, Liverpool, UK, in partnership with The Drawing Room, London, UK, 2009 Die Tropen, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany, 2008-2009 28th São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil, 2008 Brave New Worlds, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA; Jumex Collection, Mexico City, Mexico, 2007-2008 Drawing from the Modern, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA, 2005
<div>Awards</div> Scholarship at the Deutsche Akademie, Villa Mas-simo, Rome, Italy, 2009 Prize of the Bienal Nacional de Lima, Lima, Peru, 2000

<div>JOTA CASTRO</div> – Psalms: 119:120
<i>“My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws.”</i>
– Interview between Fermin Viacava and Jota Castro.
May 2009
–

Fermin Viacava:
What is Jota Castro afraid of?

Jota Castro:
I am afraid of not having enough time to do everything I want to do and not being able to see my daughter grow up.

FV: *Quite normal then...*

JC: Don’t tell me you think artists are different.

FV: *Yes. I do.*

JC: Can we talk about fear in a general way?

FV: *Yes, of course.*

JC: I wanted to organize this exhibition “The Fear Society” because I think more should be said about the general state of fear in which we have been living since the beginning of this century. Furthermore many of the exhibitions we have seen recently were so nice and gentle that I have decided instead of complaining, I would present an exhibition on the subject and this without a hint of Obamaism.

FV: *Obamaism?*

JC: What I mean is that since Obama’s election everybody seems to want to sort everything with words.

FV: *So you don’t like Obama!*

JC: Look, I never thought I would live to see a black president in USA or in any European country. I cried on Election Day and woke my daughter up to see the results, just as they woke me up to see the first man on the moon. It is the same to me: unreal.

FV: *I never thought about it that way.*

JC: Of course, you are white.

FV: *So you’re saying that everything is too positive.*

JC: In Manhattan perhaps, but definitely not in the rest of the world. Let me tell you something funny. A well-known gallery owner in New York did not want her artists to take part in the project because she did not want to alarm her collectors and because the project wasn’t called “the hope society! I laughed out loud when I heard that. I

Pabellón de la Urgencia

thought it was best to laugh; the world is in trouble and there are people who think that Obama can do anything/ everything. If only! I don’t believe it. I’m afraid of the backlash from these elections. We have to wait and see.

FV: *Tell me something positive*

JC: I think we should talk more about our times and stop thinking that people don’t want art to be serious.

FV: *I really want to be positive. Do you really think we should talk about fear? Shouldn’t we organize positive, gentle and nice exhibitions?*

JC: Please; give me a break! There is so much positive stuff in art that I can’t stand it any longer. Why not use the same methods as those who sell us fear? Why not use art to reflect the violence of our times? I’m not saying that we should only deal with serious things. I just think that we need more people to interpret our times and not just through aesthetics.

FV: *Time goes on and we are getting older...*

JC: Yes, and time isn’t reflected the same way as in the past. Getting older doesn’t frighten me, illness does. I want to live for a long time but if I can’t have quality of life until the end then euthanasia might be an option.

FV: *And unemployment*

JC: I am an artist so difficult times are a very real possibility. Being unemployed hurts.

FV: *What about migration?*

JC: It doesn’t scare me, I know what it is and I may be part of the problem for some people. We need to change our view of migration and we need to accept that migratory pressure from the Third World is unstoppable. I have a dream of setting up a bank for migrants and a political party for migrants for the European Elections in 2014.

FV: *That is not art any more*

JC: Do you think I am only interested in art?

FV: *What about security?*

JC: It is at the heart of Sarkozy’s

politics, it is a pathetic defence mechanism that we see in Europe today and it is the only industry still growing.

FV: *And AIDS?*

JC: I always think of Haiti when I think about aids and how difficult it was to convince them to use condoms.

FV: *Human rights?*

JC: Many of them are disappearing. Here in Europe people don’t realize how many rights are being openly flouted in legislation in many fields. I am worried about people trying to control the Web and pressure by all religions to convince us that even our spirit should be controlled.

FV: *Do you like being a curator?*

JC: I like to organize my own exhibitions. I think more artists should organize exhibitions. Michelangelo Pistoletto told me a while ago that the best exhibitions he had seen recently were organized by artists. I agree with him. Those exhibitions mean more risks, fewer means, fewer possibilities but many are more powerful as a result.

FV: *The market*

JC: It is a necessary evil. At the moment I am probably taking more risks than the institutions. Strange.

FV: *What is the art world afraid of?*

JC: Ridicule

FV: *Don’t be so hard on yourself.*

JC:
I am not. Recently in Faenza, I said that nobody wants to be controversial in the art world because they are afraid of looking ridiculous. I love fellow artists who are able to laugh at themselves.

FV: *In this exhibition you had fun mixing different generations of artists.*

JC: Yes, and it is a pleasure to be able to work with these artists. Many of them are an inspiration to me.

FV: *Aren’t you afraid of acknowledging that?*

JC: Should I be?

CA: I don't know.

FV: *Shall we get back to fear in general?*

JC: Yes, it is the theme of the moment. I really do believe that fear defines our times.

It is a terrible thought but I see proof of it everywhere.

CA: *Give me some examples.*

JC: Airport security. Let me explain. I've got long hair, a thick beard and what I would call a Mediterranean beauty. I always get stopped at airport. They comb my hair in New York, they remove my shoes in London, they body-search me in Paris and in Madrid they ask me if I have terrorist intentions. Do you really think that a terrorist would place a bomb dressed like me...

As I said security is the only industry that continues to grow.

CA: *Give me more examples.*

FV: *OK, I get the message. Could you end on a positive note?*

JC: Yes, OK. What I have just said doesn't stop me travelling

CA: *Give me more examples.*

JC: Yes, OK. What I have just said doesn't stop me travelling

CA: *Give me more examples.*

Chiara Agnello:

Your works often originate from TV and video footage, as well images found in historical archives and private albums. You create a mosaic of fulfillment and emptiness, where the missing parts are more significant than those that are present. What value do you give to the “document”?

Martin Dammann:

The photos (not the film footage) I am using are private, found in family albums, and it is often uncertain who made them and what exactly they refer to. So what they actually show can be disputed. Yet this ambiguity is exactly what I need. I use them as triggers, catalysts for reactions: first of all, for the reactions they arouse in me. I examine those reactions, rather than the “documents.” On the other hand, photography and analog film have a direct connection to what they depict. Each grain refers to a light beam that has been reflected by the situation in front of the camera lens. Given that one of my main topics is the relationship between images and the world to which they refer, this direct relationship is a suitable ground for my works.

CA: *Give me more examples.*

whether they can speak of anything other than me, is exactly the kind of question I want to bring out. There is no handbook for the viewer: He has to go through the same conflicts in front of my images as I have myself. My part is to be aware of these conflicts and bring them into a balance that will hopefully allow both me and the viewers to follow their every individual aspect.

CA: *Give me more examples.*

MD:

First of all, because they surprised me. When I realized that there was a pattern in several photo albums, I began to search for them actively. Suddenly these images were flying to me from every direction. They contain something I had never seen before. There are young males, said to be soldiers, but all I could see were boys in sensitive, lonely, longing and troubled conditions. Something that is distant from all the clichés one can have about soldiers becomes visible.

Then I realized that this pattern was limited almost exclusively to private German albums from World War II (one in about every thirty albums has one or two such photos, but there are hardly any in U.S. albums from World War II, for example, or even in German albums from World War I). This made them even more surprising, as I would have expected such images to appear in the private albums of all soldiers exposed to similar conditions. The last place I would have expected to find them was in German World War II albums, as a good number of them appear to contain homosexual desires, under a regime that put homosexuals into concentration camps.

CA: *Give me more examples.*

consider to be the core of this work. So

if there is a message, I think it is the display of this conflict itself.

CA: *Give me more examples.*

Into Me, Out of Me, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, USA; Kunstwerke, Berlin, Germany, 2006
51st Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 2005
49th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 2001

Awards
Golden Lion, Young Artist, 51st Venice Biennale, Venice, 2005



RAINER GANAHL

–

Interview between

Chiara Agnello and Rainer Ganahl

May 2009

–

Chiara Agnello:

Your work moves in the direction of creating space for debate and participation, concentrating on learning processes. Through numerous readings, you work on figures such as Karl Marx, Pierpaolo Pasolini and Antonio Gramsci. Since 1995 you have continued to work on your Seminars/Lectures series, in which you photograph intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky, Cornel West, Jacques Derrida and Jacques Rancière speaking at conferences and the people in the audience. In your opinion, what is the role of the intellectual in the contemporary world? How do you contextualize your work within our society?

Rainer Ganahl:

Before we can speculate on the role of the intellectual we ought to clarify what we call an intellectual. The very creation and definition of an intellectual class has been part of an ongoing crucial division of labor and power that comes with roles and responsibilities, with sense and non-sense, with justice and injustice and abuse. I myself identify with a Gramscian notion of an intellectual who doesn't just limit himself to graduates from elite schools and people who escaped manual labor. Gramsci locates so-called organic intellectuals everywhere, in any profession, amidst any kind of group bound by common interests – independent of the nature of their work. What all these intellectuals might share in common is a certain critical distance from what goes on within and beyond their fields and practices. Thus, the role of intellectuals is to stay focused, to stay critical with respect to even their own functioning and expectations. It is needless to underscore that we live

under permanent influence, in an age of advertising, sublime and not-so-sublime manipulations, and seductions and lobbying; hence, the need for distancing, critical observation and discursive interventions is paramount. Basically, I consider everybody a potential intellectual and think we all have a lot to look out for and of which we ought to be careful.

I'd like my work to function in society like sand works in machines. I would like people to slow down a bit, to get disturbed and even frustrated; I would like to invite them to see the world in a different way. Even when it comes to languages, people think that I'm talented. I know the opposite is the case and can prove that even after studying 1000 hours of basic Chinese I still sound very basic. As far as the art market goes, my sand dreams are reality.

CA:

Your works, which are often far removed from more commercial mechanisms, instead become acts of cultural, social and political criticism, and instruments of education. Do you try to shape public opinion through your work?

RG:

Again, in most works I'm content just to show and record things, inviting questions and offering spaces to respond to them. Even in some of my politically most explicit works, I focus only on the languages and interfaces used by those in control and power. Whether it is Bush's terminology of "war on terror" and "axis of evil" or the technological poetry of our financial markets (Collateralized Debt Obligations – CDOs), I don't offer opinions; I don't even need to demonstrate my opposition. For me it is enough to repeat them, to record them, to just reflect them back or layer them onto other things. And even when it comes to teachers and students (the *Seminar/Lecture* series), I simply try to show how it looks, who goes there, who is allowed to go there and in what context everybody finds him/herself. Even when it comes to my own reading seminars – and there is a big urge on my part to teach and share the benefits of knowledge, if they exist – I try to provide a platform of exchange, and not necessarily one of unchallenged master-voices. But, again, there is always my ideal of having an impact with my work, of having at least a

similar impact on some individuals the way certain works of art and literature have had and still can have on me. But these are all things that cannot be measured, evaluated or even expressed properly.

CA:

Do you believe that exhibitions such as "The Fear Society" can effectively transform artistic space into space devoted to political debate?

RG:

Yes, but in order for that happen one needs to enter the specter of politics and media oneself. So I'm not so sure whether an open discussion and a public event will bring about the desired results as such. Consequently, I again tend to hope instead for individuals who come through and take something away with them. Again, it might be helpful if such a show could "slow down" debates and if our artistic machines could break down in a way, tossing sand into everyone's eyes. For example, I want every art dealer to wear one of my "Bad Bank" T-shirts so artists and collectors will know what they are dealing with.

CA:

At the Istanbul Biennial in 2007 you presented Silenced Voices – Bicycling Istanbul's Topography of 21 Murdered Journalists, a work that fit into the city's interstices. You crossed Istanbul on a bike, stopping at the different places where 21 journalists were killed over the past century. At each site, you used white chalk to write down the person's name and the date of the murder. In a society in which violence, insecurity and uncertainty seem to dominate, is there still room for freedom?

RG:

Well, at one point in Istanbul, while writing the name of an assassinated journalist on the street with chalk (not even spray paint) I was halted and taken away by a police officer, and only negotiations with the Biennial people on the phone cleared up the situation. I got a firsthand idea of what a repressive society is capable of doing. I think there is always room for freedom, but sometimes it might be tight. I just got another nice and sophisticated example of reduced freedom: Recently, while in Shanghai working on a group show, I forwarded by email the work explanation of artist Peter Fend, peppered with sensitive

content that was caught by automatic search machines. As a result, two hours later my phone line and Internet access were cut off, and it became almost impossible to reconnect. Internet access was only possible via a router that hid my computer ID. The nice aspect about freedom is that it functions as a horizon everywhere; in fact, the more you squeeze it the better it shines.

CA:

Again with reference to Silenced Voices (but also your readings), it seems to me that what emerges is an interesting reflection on the concept of memorial and, more generally, of memory. By writing with chalk, which will shortly vanish, you call into question the "memorial" in the most classic sense of self-celebratory sculpture that lifts a "weight" off the community to transfer it to an object. Your action – dynamic and dialectical – instead brings the tragic event into the everyday lives of those who experience that place.

With readings of the works of Pasolini and Rosa Luxemburg, perhaps you are doing something similar, concentrating your attention on meaning, elaboration and internalization. You seem to set aside celebrations to concentrate on the contents that can be gleaned from the specific past, which enters into the observer's awareness. Is that true? Can history teach us something?

RG:

One reason I do what I do is that I am trying to see things in perspective. As Althusser says, the "future lasts a long time" and the longer we wait, the more certain things – taken from daily life, the quotidian – makes sense. For *Silenced Voices* it was, of course, necessary to take on the gesture of the memorial but evade any materiality of classical de facto public-space memorials. Not only would they not have fit on my bicycle – while riding for days between these sites of vicious and murderous crimes – but they also wouldn't have made sense. I placed all emphasis on the performance aspect of my work, which was unannounced to and unnoticed by the Biennial public, but was of course noticeable to everyone else in the streets, though without a proper context. I was definitely noticed by those who tried to chase me or even lock me up. Nonetheless, this memorial bike ride left some strong remaining markers that survive: the video, the poster, the

VARIOUS FORMS OF PHOBIA

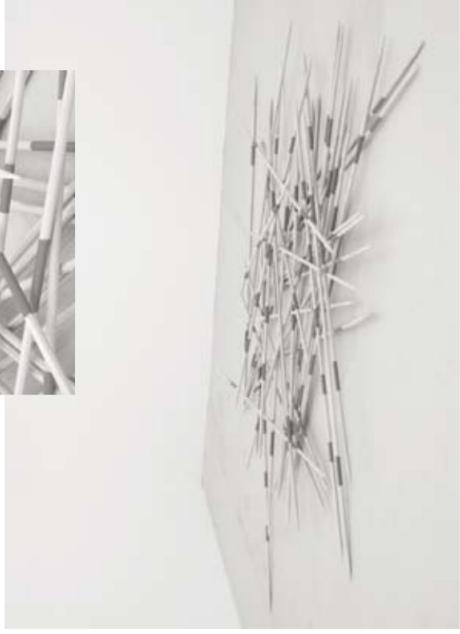
(1) Ablutophobia – fear of bathing, washing, or cleaning. (2) Acrophobia, Altophobia – fear of heights. (3) Agoraphobia, without Panic Disorder – fear of places or events where escape is impossible or when help is unavailable. (4) Agraphobia – fear of sexual abuse. (5) Aichmophobia – fear of sharp or pointed objects (as a needle or a pointing finger). (6) Algophobia – fear of pain. (7) Amaxophobia – fear of riding in a car. (8) Anglophobia – fear of the English or English culture. (9) Androphobia – fear of men. (10) Anthropophobia – fear of people or being in a company, a form of social phobia. (11) Anthophobia – fear of flowers. (12) Aquapho-

A phobic (from the Greek φόβος, phobos, "fear") or morbid fear, is an irrational, intense, persistent fear of certain situations, activities, things, or people. The main symptom of this disorder is the excessive, unreasonable desire to avoid the feared subject.

When the fear is beyond one's control, or if the fear is interfering with daily life, then a diagnosis under one of the anxiety disorders can be made.



A



B



C



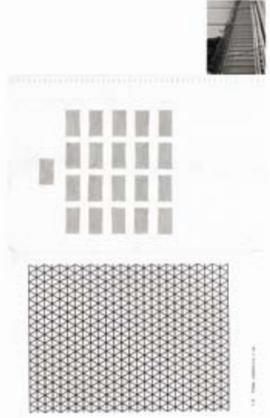
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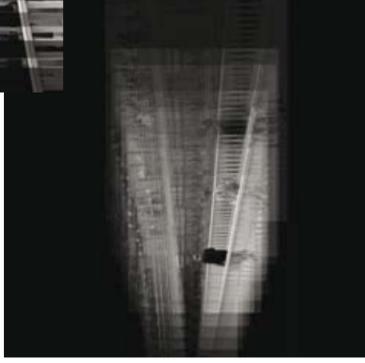
I



J



K



L

A) **Tania Bruguera** - Trust Workshop, 2007, use of psychology techniques, Ex-KGB agent, street photographers, eagles, monks, photographic paper, primer, ink, photo of Felix Dzerzhinsky, 4 x 3 x 2 m; Courtesy the artist and 2nd Moscow Biennial **B) Jota Castro** - Shanghai 2, 2009, installation, 40 mikado sticks, each 480 cm long. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin **C) Fernando Bryce** - Die Welt, 2008, series of 195 drawings, ink on paper, variable dimensions. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin **D) Alfredo Jaar** - Le Ceneri di Pasolini, 2009, still from video. Courtesy the artist and Galleria Lia Rumma, Milano **E) Jesús Martínez Ojeda** - Cuadrículas y valas, 2009, collage, 59 x 42 cm. Courtesy the artist **F) Am-Sof Siden** - Some Unknown (Strain II), 2009, 9 channel synced video installation, HD, 9 monitors, speakers, metal pole. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin **G) Hans Haacke** - West Bank 1994 - 27th Year of Occupation, 2007/2009, 2 text panels, 1 photo panel. Courtesy the artist **H) Hans Haacke/VG BildKunst/HJ Rainer Ganahl** - I love NY / Credit Crunch, 2009, print on t-shirt; 1 love NY / Bernard Madoff, 2009, print on t-shirt. Courtesy the artist and Elaine Lévy, New York and Elaine Lévy, Brussels **I) goldfischer** - Genealogia di Dannatio Memoratae, 2009, carved magnolia. Courtesy the artist **J) Martin Dammann** - Soldier Studies / Plank Wall 3, 2007, jet print on aluminium, 75 x 54 cm; Soldier Studies / Little Skirts 2, 2007, jet print on aluminium, 52 x 75 cm. Courtesy the artist, Burger Collection, Honk Hong / Switzerland and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin **K) Jesús Segura** - Transported, 2007, 2 channel video installation. Courtesy the artist **L) Regina José Galindo** - Confession, 2007, performance, Caña Blanca, Palma de Mallorca, Photo: Julian Stallabrass. Courtesy prometeogallery, Milan/Lucca

title, the piece as a combination of de facto video / images and imaginations by those who didn't experience it. All these are propositions that live in our heads and our archives without a need for heavy metal or marble stones.

CA:

The work you are presenting in this project curated by Jota Castro reminds me of one of your works for the Austrian Pavilion at the 1999 Venice Biennale. What has changed ten years down the road? What did that work say in 1999 and what is this one saying in 2009?

RG:

It is very interesting for me to return to Venice with a work so similar to the one ten years ago and so unlike the ones I did two years ago (*Seminar/Lectures*) or four years ago (*Use a bicycle*) on the Canal Grande. The year 1999 was completely dominated by the bombardments of Yugoslavia, and the religiously motivated genocides and slaughtering of Muslims and races in a multicultural and multiethnic society. In 2009 we have a similar situation, and definitely one that has to be understood on a historical and even geopolitical continuum. The brutal slaughtering of Muslims in Yugoslavia helped radicalize many European and non-European Muslims, and promoted a climate that facilitated the attacks on the Twin Towers and the three thousand people in it eight years ago. The consequences of that are at least two wars we are still in – and that, in fact, are even getting worse as I am writing, because the theater has opened up far into Pakistan. Taliban and other radical Islamist forces now control territories up to 50 miles from the capital, Islamabad, and their nuclear arms.

Well, in both years I showed mainly T-shirts. In 1999, for the Austrian Pavilion, it was a piece called *Please, teach me ... 50 languages spoken in countries that don't have any Pavilion at the Venice Biennial*. The T-shirts were accompanied by five short video clips entitled, *Basic Conflicts (justice, the nation, currencies, languages, gods)*, in which I repeat the same sentence in all the many languages I had been studying (“I’m always right,” “My country is the greatest,” “I only believe in Dollars,” “You only need to know English,” “My god is the greatest”). At the time, I had just started studying Chinese, but I hadn’t yet engaged with

basic Arabic, something that changed in 2003 after the attack on Iraq. These days, the U.S. military pays quite a bit of money for people studying Pashto and other languages spoken in war theaters.

For “The Fear Society” I address another nomenclature: that of our current financial crisis. Our economic systems are as much belief systems as religions are – and this global economic crisis has shaken them to the ground. Hence, I do stuff on ground level. My twenty T-shirts are street wear, bought on Canal Street, with the standard “I love NY” imprint. Over that I paint financial terms and the names of key players in the crisis and conflict, with the underlying message: “Bernard Madoff,” “Lehmann Brothers,” “Foreclosure,” “Credit swaps,” “Bad Banks,” “Toxic Assets” and so on. On the floor I spread out red candies, lipsticks and condoms in the form of a heart mimicking the “I love NY” logo. These products are profiting from the current crisis and have seen their sales volume increase by 30% as people enjoy mood-enhancing comfort foods and self-indulgence, and are spending more time on intimacy.

CA:

Language is a constant in your work. Your tongue is Vorarlbergian, an Austro-German dialect, but you also speak eleven other languages – from Russian to Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Italian – that, in constant performance exercises, form the basis of many of your works. The use of language returns in the phrases you embroider and paint on T-shirts, and the ones you bring into the readings you organize.

You have often said that your interest in language is tied to its ability to reflect cultural, social, economic, racial, religious and other differences ... Is it also way to rethink the role of language and communication? Can you tell me something more about this?

What is the next language that you plan to study?

RG:

At this point I’m mostly studying Chinese and will try to get better at it. I just spent one month in Shanghai studying and working on a video that will also play in Venice. In this video, entitled *Wo jiao Rainer* (My name is Rainer), I introduce myself in Chinese dressed in an “I love NY, AIG bonuses” T-shirt, while explaining what I’m doing and working on. I pretend that I have worked for AIG – the biggest

American insurance and financial service company in the world, which received billions in bailout money from the government – and have received part of the 65 million dollars in bonuses distributed to the bosses as soon as the bailout money was received. I explain that Obama has forced me to repay it and that now I’m compelled to be an artist again. Having no idea what to do as an artist, I just started studying Chinese. Thus, the relationship to my 1999 installation in Venice becomes even more apparent, since I also included a *Ni hao* introduction video at the time. Currently I don’t envision learning more languages, but would prefer to improve the ones I have engaged with already.

CA:

What is your educational background? What are your sources of inspiration?

RG:

I studied philosophy and history, and then continued in fine arts with Peter Weibel in Vienna before finishing with Nam June Paik in Düsseldorf. I also attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York, which made me relocate to the United States, where I have been living for nearly twenty years. I also had the chance to attend seminars by Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak at Columbia University in the early 1990s, and they were quite important for me. My entire *Seminar/Lecture* series is not only an artistic program but also some kind of “ongoing education program,” just as my “language studies” might serve as Alzheimer’s prevention. I could joke, “I don’t sell much, but I learn something.” My “sources of inspiration” are simply my interest in the world, in society – “what goes on around me” – but also my being alive, my curiosity towards people and (other) cultures and various pleasure principles. I myself don’t need a financial crisis to enjoy food, life and people.

Rainer Ganahl
Bludenz, Austria 1966. Lives and works in New York, USA.

Selected Solo Exhibitions
Dadalenin, MAK, Wien, Austria, 2009 (upcoming)
Elaine Levy Project, Brussels, Belgium, 2009 (upcoming)
Fruit and Flower Deli, New York, USA, 2008
The Apprentice in the Sun, Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart, Germany, 2007
From Vatican to Piazza della Repubblica with no return, RAM - Radioartemobile, Rome, Italy, 2006
The Politics of Learning, The Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University Museum, New York, USA, 2005
Road To War, MUMOK - Museum of Modern Art,

Wien, Austria, 2005

Selected Group Exhibitions
Performa 09, New York, USA, 2009
Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai, China, 2008
States of Mind, Queens Museum, New York, USA, 2008
52nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 2007
10th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey, 2007
2nd Moscow Biennial, Moscow, Russia, 2007



GOLDIECHIARI

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Interview between
Bartolomeo Pietromarchi and goldiechiari
May 2009
–

Bartolomeo Pietromarchi:

goldiechiari explores the boundaries of our individual and societal preconceptions, adopting a provocative approach that lives on the thin line separating irony and parody, unsettling works and visual and semantic “détournement”. Through a process of sublimation, their work revolves around basic assumptions and spurs us to reflect on the hypocrisies that often lie beneath shared, socially accepted values. Examples include: the sex toys in *Cosmic Love* (2008), where the devices of pleasure are made so abstract that they become organic shapes floating in cosmic space in an idyllic vision in which these objects, normally concealed out of public decency are freed from the meaning of what they represent in society, in a timeless and spaceless aesthetic sublimation; *Ninfee* [Water Lilies] (2003), evoking Monet’s famous paintings, though here the flowers are made with colored plastic bags floating on the putrid bank of a polluted river; and a performer and *Dump Queen* (2008) doing a 1940s song in the setting of a vast city dump.

Their piece *Confine immaginato* [Imagined Boundary] (2006) is an audio installation that turns on when visitors enter the museum, recreating the Italian anthem “Fratelli d’Italia” with gushes of water and toilet flushes. It was here that the artistic duo began to explore the symbols of a collective identity that determine belonging to a nation, widely considered absolute, untouchable: the flag, the national anthem, the founding fathers and the like...

BP:

To question the acquired values that we have accepted non-critically

bia, Hydrophobia – fear of water. (13) Astraphobia, Astropophobia, Brontophobia, Kerunophobia – fear of thunder, lightning and storms. (14) Autophobia – fear of being alone. (15) Aviophobia, Aviatophobia – fear of flying. (16) Bacillophobia, Bacteriophobia, Microbiophobia – fear of microbes and bacteria. (17) Blood-injection-injury type phobia – a DSM-IV subtype of specific phobias. (18) Cibophobia, Stophobia – aversion to food. (19) Claustrophobia – fear of confined spaces. (20) Coulrophobia – fear of clowns (not restricted to evil clowns). (21) Decidophobia – fear of making decisions. (22) Dental phobia, Dentophobia, Odontophobia – fear of dentists. (23) Dymorphophobia, or body dysmorphic disorder – a phobic obsession with a real or imaginary body defect. (24) Emetophobia – fear of vomiting. (25) Epehepophobia – fear of teenagers. (26) Ergasiophobia, Ergophobia – fear of work or functioning, or a surgeon’s fear of operating. (27) Ergophobia – fear of work or functioning. (28) Erotophobia – fear of sexual love or sexual questions. (29) Erythrophobia – pathological blushing. (30) Gephyrophobia – fear of bridges. (31) Genophobia – fear of sexual intercourse. (32) Gerascophobia – fear of growing old or ageing. (33) Gerontophobia – fear of growing old, or a hatred or fear of the elderly. (34) Glossophobia – fear of speaking in public or of trying to speak. (35) Gymnophobia – fear of nudity. (36) Gynophobia – fear of women. (37) Haptophobia – fear of being touched. (38) Heliphobia – fear of sunlight. (39) Hemophobia, Haemophobia – fear of blood. (40) Hexakosiohexekontahexaphobia – fear of the number 666. (41) Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia – fear of long words. (42) Homophobia – fear of homosexuals. (43) Hoplophobia – fear of weapons, specifically firearms (Generally a political term but the clinical phobia is also documented). (44) Ligyrophobia – fear of loud noises. (45) Lipophobia – fear/avoidance of fats in food. (46) Mysophobia – fear of germs, contamination or dirt. (47) Necrophobia – fear of death, the dead. (48) Neophobia, Cainophobia, Cainotophobia, Cenophobia, Centophobia, Kainolophobia, Kainophobia – fear of newness. (49) Nomophobia – fear of being out of mobile phone contact. (50) Nosophobia – fear of contracting a disease. (51) Nyctophobia, Achluophobia, Lygophobia, Scotophobia – fear of darkness. (52) Osmophobia, Olfactophobia – fear of smells. (53) Paraskavedekatriaphobia – fear of Friday the 13th. (54) Panphobia – fear of everything or constantly afraid without knowing what is causing it. (55) Phagophobia – fear of swallowing. (56) Phobophobia – fear of having a phobia. (57) Phonophobia – fear of loud sounds. (58) Pyrophobia – fear of fire. (59) Radiophobia – fear of radioactivity or X-rays. (60) Sociophobia – fear of people or social situations. (61) Scopophobia – fear of being looked at or stared at. (62) Somniphobia – fear of sleep. (63) Spectrophobia – fear of mirrors and one’s own reflections. (64) Taphophobia – fear of the grave, or fear of being placed in a grave while still alive. (65) Technophobia – fear of technology. (66) Tetrachobia – fear of the number 4. (67) Tokophobia – fear of childbirth. (68) Tomophobia – fear or anxiety of surgeries/surgical operations. (69) Traumatophobia – a synonym for injury phobia, a fear of having an injury. (70) Trichophobia – fear caused of loose hairs on clothing or elsewhere. (71) Triskaidakaphobia, Terdekaphobia – fear of the number 13. (72) Trypanophobia, Belonephobia, Enetophobia – fear of needles or injections. (73) Workplace phobia – fear of the work place. (74) Xenophobia – fear of strangers, foreigners or aliens

because they are part of the history of a nation. How did Confine immaginato come to be?

goldiechiari:

A book that gave us a lot of inspiration for the audio installation shown at “Group Therapy” in Bolzano was Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* from 1983. Anderson wrote, “In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”. What interested us about Anderson’s theory and the school that studies nationalism and the concept of nation from this perspective is the historical nature, the transience and the lack of naturalism of these concepts. In *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?* From 1882, Ernest Renan describes this “imagining ourselves” as: “Or l’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses” (The essence of a nation is that all the individuals have many things in common, and also that they have all forgotten many things).

Confine immaginato is a noisy metaphor for the national border. The Museion museum’s door is rendered an imaginary threshold on which a nationality device is triggered. We thought of the toilet flush and the gush of water because it is something of the home that we all have and we hear again and again all day. The work’s playful, humorous aspect underscores the constructed, bureaucratic aspect of nationality.

The piece was envisioned for Bolzano because it is a border area where national identity has always been a cause of conflict. The same reasons that led us to exhibit the piece in Bolzano caused the State Attorney’s Office to ban the work. *Confine immaginato* caused an uproar in defense of the symbols of nationality. It seems that this issue can’t be questioned and has to stay stuck in its apparent ahistoricism, untouchably sacred.

BP: *You fittingly quoted Ernest Renan and his idea that the symbols of a nation are based on collective memory as well*

as what the social body removes from this memory, on what a community would rather forget but that acts as a collective trauma that resurfaces at certain times like a wound that hasn’t healed. In an inverse process from imagined community, it has been called “a negative community” that works by subtraction (Esposito, 2002). *What are you preparing for the show in Venice?*

gc: The installation for the “The Fear Society” reflects this aspect of collective forgetting. For the piece, we created a partial genealogy of violent historic events from 1969 to 1980 that were part of Italy’s “strategy of tension”, to be cut into the bark of a tree. There were two basic principles that guided our selection: the period of time between the Piazza Fontana attack and the Bologna Station attack in 1980 and the violence of the State and the military based on the self-preservation of the status quo and power through terror. The dates and places of the events are cut into the trunk and branches, using the characters of dynastic genealogies. These incisions are the wounds that could affect the tree’s very survival.

The piece’s title is *Genealogia di damnatio memoriae* [Genealogy of damnatio memoriae]. The Latin phrase describes a type of sentence used in ancient Rome in which the condemned person was punished by erasing all the remembrances and mementos of the person. This partial genealogy does not intend to be a historic reconstruction. Using a familiar device like a genealogical tree lets us represent the attacks and murders as a common bloodline in that it brings us together in the memory and oblivion of these events.

BP: *The concept of the show revolves around the idea of the “society of fear”, a strategy, which increases the perception of danger in a society, adopted by the powers that be and the media to justify actions and laws restricting personal freedom with tools, such as control or overreaching into the private sphere. This is a global phenomenon of contemporary advanced societies. Here in Italy, as your work shows us, this is something that we have been cultivating for years, that has already planted its roots and even has a genealogy...*

gc: The work we are presenting

concentrates on the fear of change and social transformation as a result of the tool of creating terror and violence. We find it interesting how this political practice repeats throughout history. We concentrate on Italy’s past, which from the 1950s to 1989 was an important strategic site, making it a political laboratory of the national and supranational maneuvers of the American military and the Mediterranean area. This gives us a privileged point of observation over the present.

The proliferation of the state of emergency and widespread fear in Western societies allows the restriction of personal freedoms and the justification of repressive laws, such as the “Special Laws” in Italy of 1978 and 1979 and the “Patriot Act” in 2001 in the United States. Slavoj Zizek describes modern society as dominated by a paranoid fear, a politics “... which renounces the very constitutive dimension of the political, since it resorts to fear as its ultimate mobilizing principle: fear of immigrants, fear of crime, fear of godless sexual depravity, fear of the excessive State itself (with too high taxation), fear of ecological catastrophes (which is why Political Correctness is the exemplary liberal form of the politics of fear) – such a (post) politics always relies on the manipulation of a paranoid ochlos – the frightening rallying of frightened men”.

goldiechiari Sara Goldschmied, Arzignano, Italy 1975; Eleonora Chiari, Rome, Italy 1971. Live and work in Rome, Italy.

Selected Solo Exhibitions Dump Queen, Centro Arti Visive Pescheria, Pesaro, Italy, 2008 Dump Queen, Elaine Levy Project, Brussels, Belgium, 2008 Welcome, Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, USA, 2006 Enjoy, Elaine Levy Project, Brussels, Belgium, 2006 Blind Date, Viafarini, Milan, Italy, 2002

Selected Group Exhibitions Leftovers, Micamoca, Berlin, Germany, 2008 De leur temps, art contemporaine et collection privée en France, Musée de Grenoble, France, 2007 Group Therapy, Museion, Bozen, Italy, 2006 Homework, 4th Berlin Biennial, Gagosian Gallery, Berlin, Germany, 2006 Exit, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy, 2002

	
HANS HAACKE	
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Interview between	
Roberta Tenconi and Hans Haacke	
May 2009	
–	

Some questions about location:

Roberta Tenconi:

Given your recent engagement with Germany (in the Rosa Luxemburg Memorial and Der Bevölkerung) and the Berlin-Hamburg exhibition “wirklich”, do you ever think of returning there to live?

Hans Haacke:

Since my youth, when I hitchhiked to Paris and London, I wanted to live in a cosmopolitan city. New York is such a city. Even though, since then, a number of German cities, Berlin among them, have become considerably more cosmopolitan, there is still no comparison to New York. And I now have roots in the Big Apple: 35 years of teaching at Cooper Union – and a family with children and grandchildren.

As many works I produced in Germany would demonstrate, I have not cut my ties to the country where I was born. I care about what’s happening there. For decades I have been there at least twice a year.

RT: *And how about coming back to Venice – for the first time since your work at the German Pavilion in 1993?*

HH: If I make it to Venice this year, it will be a somewhat nostalgic return. I am sure it has changed a lot since then.

RT: *Given your astute ability for critically interrogating the sites on which your artworks are situated, is there any site in particular where you would like to work next?*

HH: I react to opportunities and challenges. I usually don’t search for or dream of particular sites.

Some questions about the present:

RT: *What – if anything – does the current political situation in America mean for your work? And equally, can you comment on the current aesthetic situation? (To avoid inadvertently labeling your artwork one-dimensionally as solely “political”.)*

HH: The election of Barack Obama constitutes a sea of change! A

nightmare has lifted. I agree with those who say that things will probably get worse before they get better. But, finally, there is a chance for that proverbial silver lining on the horizon. It is worth noting as well that the religious belief in the wisdom of the “invisible hand of the market,” i.e. the supposedly rational pursuit of self-interest by the wizards of Wall Street, has been totally shattered. They could only think as far as their year-end bonus.

In 2006, when I looked through the writings of Rosa Luxemburg in order to select quotes for her memorial in Berlin, I was startled by one of her comments on the American-Philippine War in 1898: “Not only the military, but also the internal political and economic life of the American people is very deeply affected by the consequences of the war.” Her assessment of the fallout of that imperial foray more than 100 years ago is applicable – verbatim – to the military adventurism of the know-nothing Bush years. Of course, Rosa Luxemburg also had a lot to say about the capitalism of her day.

It is too early to tell how all this might be reflected in my future work.

RT: *What are you working on now?*

HH: I don’t like to talk about unlaidd eggs.

RT: *You wrote in Artforum about your relationship with Willoughby Sharp, of having the feeling in the 1960s that your works were “contributing to a more humane and egalitarian world, accessible to audiences outside the gated communities of traditional art reception.” While this mood may quickly have “sourred,” as you put it, do you see any new permutations into the present, in art or beyond?*

HH: In the early 1960s, after the trauma of World War II was behind them, many young people looked to the future with some optimism for a better world. The Vietnam War and sharpening social conflicts changed that, and by 1968 this generation was in revolt against “the establishment,” which it held responsible for the war and continuing social injustice.

The word “career,” and what it implies, was not part of the vocabulary

of the artists of that generation. Disrupting business as usual at the Museum of Modern Art and other such citadels of the financial/political complex was not seen as endangering their future. Generally speaking, the political leanings of the public and of the galleries for contemporary art were liberal. And most were opposed to the war and Nixon administration.

RT: *What about younger artists? Do you see them contributing to the same dialogue?*

HH: In spite of a surprisingly brief interruption, caused by the attack on the World Trade Center, the last decade experienced an expansion of the art world, totally obsessed by the market – with connections to offshore banking, hedge funds and investment consortia. The promise of seemingly unstoppable and enormous financial gain had a pernicious effect on the attitudes of many. Last year, the worldwide economic meltdown put an unexpected end also to the art world’s get-rich-quick scheme. Artworks proved to be as vulnerable as other investments. And taxpayers are not ready to bail out the newly “impoverished” speculators.

Throughout this giddy time there were younger artists who stayed with the reasons that originally motivated them to become artists instead of opting for professions, which, traditionally, would have guaranteed making them rich. I like to believe a good number of them share the old dream of “contributing to a more humane and egalitarian world, accessible to audiences outside the gated communities of traditional art reception.” I have seen evidence to support this belief.

They did not command the limelight, as did the trophy artists. The tide has changed though and they may have the last laugh. As we saw in the early 1990s, after the Wall Street crash of 1987, socially engaged works may now receive new attention.

RT: *How do you avoid this dialogue remaining firmly within “the gated communities of traditional art reception”?*

HH: For better or worse, compared to the 1960s, art has become almost a spectator sport. The general readership

press covers more than ever what’s happening. It is grist for the tourist and entertainment industry. And, at least until recently, there was bling. As superficial as much of that reception may be, I believe it does leave a trace in the *Zeitgeist*. It contributes to shaping the social consensus – and thus has social consequences. It is not a lost cause!

Rosa Luxemburg:

RT: *With your Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz memorial, did you see a danger of being co-opted (as has arguably happened to Luxemburg) by a German Left whose political allegiance lies far away from the rigid socialism of “Rote Rosa”? If so, what avoidance strategies have you developed?*

HH: *Die Rote Rosa* had in the past and has today many different constituencies. The so-called Left, in Germany and elsewhere, is a mixed bunch, many of them often at each others’ throats. Two quotes I selected give me the sense that she had a critical insight into the dynamics of her own and her comrades’ weaknesses. In 1915 she said: “Like the worldview of Marx, his main treatise is not a bible with authoritative and ultimate truths, but an inexhaustible source of challenges for further work, research and the struggle for truth.”

And a year later, she added this warning: “It was always left to the imitators to turn seminal hypotheses of the master into rigid dogma and to settle into smugness, whereas a trailblazing mind creatively entertains doubts.”

A funny thing happened to the block with this quote. I had embedded it in the street in front of the Babylon film theatre on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. When I passed there, about a year later, I discovered that it had been moved away to the steps of the Volksbühne where only theatergoers would notice it. The stated reason for this displacement was that, during wet weather, cars could slip on it.

RT: *One of the Rosa Luxemburg quotes you used in your memorial is “Freedom is always the freedom of dissenters”: Do you see yourself as a dissenter?*

HH: It depends on what is at issue.

RT: Can a dissenter ever fully be a participant?

HH: Dissent is participation in the public discourse. A precondition is, of course, that an unfettered public discourse does, in fact, exist. In 1918, Rosa Luxemburg quite specifically attacked the Bolsheviks’ suppression of dissent in Russia. Her full comment reads: “Freedom only for the supporters of the government and only for the members of a party – no matter how many – that isn’t freedom. Freedom is always the freedom of the dissenters.” The volume of her collected writings that included her extensive critique of Lenin was not easily available in the GDR (former East Germany); either it was sold out or kept from bookstore shelves. It inspired the dissenters who succeeded in 1989 to tear down The Wall.

And finally

RT: *What question would you ask yourself?*

HH: And now what?

Hans Haacke Cologne, Germany 1936. Lives and works in New York, USA.
Selected Solo Exhibitions Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany, 2006 German Pavilion at Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 1993 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, 1989 New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA, 1986 Tate Gallery, London, UK, 1984
Selected Group Exhibitions 7th Gwangju Biennial, Gwangju, Korea, 2008 Open Systems: Rethinking Art, Tate Modern, London, UK, 2005 Skulptur-Projekte, Münster, Germany, 1997 Documenta 5, 6, 7, 9, Kassel, Germany, 1972, 1982, 1987, 1997 Information, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA, 1970
Awards Honorary Doctorates: Oberlin College, 1991; Universität Weimar, 1998; San Francisco Institute of Art, 2008 Peter Weiss Preis, Bochum, 2004 Golden Lion, 45th Venice Biennale (with Nam June Paik), 1993

as part of the festive ritual, as can be seen in the video.

I include other rites of passage, such as drug consumption, which appears in a tangential form in one of the video channels, and is an important gender component, as demonstrated by certain studies showing how such ritual experiences affect girls and boys...

IT:
Although it wasn't at the center of your preoccupations in the project, in a collateral form, there seemed to be a reflection on the adoption of feminine roles within this same system of values, including formulas for the construction of its gendered imaginary state. How did this incursion into the adolescent feminine imaginary state arise?

JMO:
It came about when I asked the adolescents of an educational center to make a self-portrait using an image of themselves, or some kind of object or activity they could identify with. I was surprised that at their age they were reproducing the most rigidly binary stereotypes of gender. Almost like a caricature. They recognize, in a synthetic and straightforward way, the messages and standards projected by adult society. Although the project focused on masculinity, it was interesting to introduce this element since it relayed the strict binary system and how not only the processes of identification are important, but also those of negation or separation of the other in order to generate an affirmative identity. Which is one of the characteristics of a way of profiling masculinity, defining it in its negative form, from everything that it is not or should not be (weak, sensitive, voluble...).

IT:
On one occasion, you told me that you were interested in how anti-Bologna students use school furniture, altering its use, position and, with it, the representation of authority that has ruled the standard structure of the classroom.

JMO:
It's a project that I've outlined. When I was working with desks and other school furniture I became very interested in the anti-Bologna movement, especially in France, and the way in which they've used tables and chairs as a particularly creative

form of protest. During the “Le Printemps des Chaises” event, as a protest against university reform, they gathered chairs and arranged them in the form of barricades or sculptural compositions, which rendered them dysfunctional and broke away from the characteristic order of the classrooms. It was a way of protesting against a process aiming to absorb universities into the productive logic of capitalism. There's a fear here that such a process will mean the substitution of universities founded on the basis of critical thought by those based on profitability and productivity, as well as the difficulty those from the most socially disadvantaged sections of society encounter when accessing high-level education. If universities are financed in part through private business then how do we know if they will be able to continue focalizing on such concerns as inculturalism, diversity and philosophy.

IT:
In Venice, with your Tornos de acceso (2009), you work on the notion of identity in relation to another group of problematics: the consequences of emigration. In fact, here the metaphor is even clearer. You've mentioned before how the existence of visible borders, of fences like those in the African cities of Ceuta and Melilla, and of other invisible ones built for reasons of geographical or cultural origin, when interwoven with other cases of difference, reiterate structures of domination.

JMO:
In the project at Sala Verónicas, there was a series of drawings and photographs in which I worked on the idea of the grid as an emblem of modernity, and so was already indicating the relationship between those rational reticular forms and fences and walls.

In this project what interested me most was to point out some of the contradictions between the utopian ideals of equality and social justice that Western democracies develop in theory and political discussion, but which don't actually materialize in real practice. One thing is society telling us what it is, and the other is what we really are and what we put into practice. The educational system, converted into a lucky turnstile system of access, quite common in some frontier posts such as Melilla, sows the grains of fear of the other, such as the element enunciating

our social identity, and, as such, creates the schizophrenia from which European societies suffer today.

The sociologist Ulrich Beck reveals, with great clarity, the cynical contradictions taking place in the new globalized context: on the one hand rich democracies spread their ideals of equality and human rights but, on the other, governments fortify their frontiers to ensure the conditions of equality secured in their own countries, thus assuring themselves a portion of votes. The armored borders are a response to the law created in frameworks such as the European Union but undermine the legitimacy of equal rights and freedom.

IT:
Indeed, you say that school “doesn't serve as a sorting mechanism but rather accentuates differences”. Your turnstiles have something claustrophobic about them like those one finds in old zoos or some pools. They make it difficult to pass through while at the same time translating people into countable formulas... Walls, devices making access difficult... Is there no chance of salvation?

JMO:
This is an idea that sociologists, educators and thinkers of the stature of Foucault, Bourdieu or Rancière work on. The idea of the school as a system of social reproduction comes from the sixties. The state and the school continue reproducing the established order that guarantees the pacific integration of the masses guided by an instructed elite. One of the convincing tests of such an assertion is the fact that the conclusions of all the information on scholastic failure show that there is a direct tie between results attained and the social extraction of those examined (although there are some exceptions). In every case, school provides a unique message with which fixed social sectors and backgrounds cannot identify. One of the mechanisms of primary resistance consists of the rejection of the contents of the values symbolized by it. The academic “fiasco” is the logical result of this situation of concealed domination. The most obvious example of this would be the banlieue revolts in Paris of 2005.

In Venice the desks become “rational” machinery, which is a device for the restraint, identification and expulsion of “illegal” human beings. Education with democratic values but,

at the same time, legislation for the return, reinforcement and monitoring of borders, the construction of a media image of invading hordes of immigrants... These turnstiles could be a metaphor for the society that we might succeed in building, based on fear of the other, to all that is outside and that is elevated into becoming a threat to the established order, or perhaps a representation of what we have already created.

Jesús Martínez Oliva
Murcia, Spain 1969. Lives and works in Murcia, Spain.

Selected **Solo Exhibitions**
Jesús Martínez Oliva, Sala Verónicas, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, Murcia, Spain, 2005
El secreto de tener un secreto, Espacio Mínimo Gallery, Murcia, Spain, 1998
Jesús Martínez Oliva. Sujeciones, La Gallera, Dirección General de Promoción Cultural, Museos y Bellas Artes y Generalitat Valenciana, Valencia, Spain, 1998
Fluidos discontinuos, Espai 13, Fundación Joan Miró, Barcelona, Spain, 1994

Selected **Group Exhibitions**
Pheripheries of the Body, White Box, New York, USA; Museo de Bellas Artes, Murcia, Spain, 2006
Radicais libres, Auditorio de Galicia, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2005
The Gendered City. Urban Space and Gender Construction, Unit 2 Gallery, London Metropolitan University, London, UK; Palacio Aguirre de Cuenca, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, 2004
Lineas de fuga, 1st Valencia Biennial, Valencia, Spain, 2001
Transgenéric@s, Koldo Mitxelena Kulturnea, San Sebastián, Spain, 1998
Los 90 en los 80. Propuesta de escultura valenciana, IVAM- Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, Spain, 1995



JESÚS SEGURA
–
Interview between **Miguel Ángel Hernández Navarro** and **Jesús Segura**
May 2009
–
Miguel Ángel Hernández Navarro:

Throughout your work, you seem to be particularly preoccupied by the mechanization processes affecting your subjects. Through prosthetics and orthopedics, but also with automated and repetitive images, you have presented bodies that are closer to Cyborgs or machine men. In what sense does your work reveal fear of a kind of dehumanization of the modern experience?

Jesús Segura:
Well, one could say that the

dehumanization imposed by neoliberal globalization and catalyzed by the use and abuse of technological systems and production of the contemporary subject is a starting point for my work. But it also attempts to penetrate the cause-effect of such a chaotic process by means of visualization and representation strategies. For example, if we look at *Transportted* (2007), the piece that will be installed at the Venice Biennale, we can see that the architecture that is constructed does not fully define the statute of reality. On the contrary, it introduces the duality of cybernet reality-space, making obvious and direct references to the construction of a network of somatized interferences in the transit of individuals. Positioning the city like instruments. In the same way the space-times represented in the different areas of the urban context are modulated asynchronously by the sound of the machines of capital production that regulate the movement and displacement of the subjects represented. This brings about the dispersion of the visitor's visual apprehension, making it impossible to take in the whole piece at one glance. Obviously it's a deliberate response on my part to the visibility demanded by the spectacular society derived to control and monitor parameters. The key here is the homogenization and alienation of the subjects submitted to processes of ethnic and aesthetic rationalization.

One should remember that the piece was actually filmed in Tokyo, in the Shinjuku district, in which three million Japanese clerks (all wearing an aesthetic uniform) travel back and forth every day. If we take this into account, then we can note that there is not only a critical desire for dehumanization in which ties between humans have become provisional, and in which the degradation of affections is cast aside once benefit has been taken from them. But there is also a kind of vigilant maneuvering, which attempts to generate an analogous effect in the spectator's view; in other words, a loss of control and predictability of the image, the ultimate aim of which is to establish a form of communication in terms of frustration.

Nevertheless, this forced de-centering of the spectator's glance by the piece articulates a metaphor for the subject-producer as the true artifice of global space. We can identify areas of speed, of silence, of congestion, collapse and slowing down in the

work... which are obvious references to the demands of the flows of capital in globalization and form a cosmology of the subject in its metaphorical effect. Your allusions to the processes of mechanization in the work are pertinent here. But it should be noted that these processes of mechanization, formulated and represented without human respect, are interpretations of the contemporary incarnation of difference and multiplicity surreptitiously present in neoliberal globalization. And that dominant ethnic and aesthetic homogenization to which I was referring before is a direct allusion to the ultimate aim of neoliberal pretensions for a global state conceived and dictated by its own interests.

MAHN:
One of the fears of our contemporary society is linked to the erosion of memory. Reflection on archives and the hypertrophy of memory systems reveals an almost pathological obsession with memory and the dangers of amnesia. Throughout your work, you have also examined the questions of memory and amnesia. For example, you have presented the process of a trace's erasure and, sometimes, resistance to disappearance. What is your relationship to the process of memory's erosion in contemporary society and with this fear of a generalized amnesia to which today's saturated archive system is leading?

JS:
Well the “trace's erasure” to which you refer has, in my case, more to do with a performative action than with a process of phenomenological analysis, such as in works which use the “remake” to explore frequency. Almost all the works in which, in one way or another, the activation of memory is submerged have resulted in direct actions and gestures for me. Often with an absolute loss of control upon execution, and the incorporation of chance as the determining element. In such a way, my relationship with memory is built upon strong affective and emotional grounds, and has needed action and impulse for me to relate to it.

I have never had a lot of faith in history's rigidity and the scientific-ethnological systems of classification. If one looks at *Slave* (2003), *Expired* (2002), *I Can Be You* (2004), *Archiperformance in Times*

The Fear Society

Square (2004) or *Stereo* (2007), this resistance to disappearance has more to do with a process of “liberalized variations” of illusionary dialogues on the same thing than with a desire for permanence and its consequent debate on appearance-disappearance. There is something implicit in memory that is experiential and that remains like an identity modulator. At the same time, it generates an emotional site plan, which I'm interested in exploring and which is like an identity substrata. In this sense, entropy injects the germ directly to confront memory from an “organic” position.

In this respect, the state of “amnesia” is subsidiary to the experience and is directly related to affection, or rather the control of affection. This is the basis of the interest in classification as an instrument of domination, which is why the only viable and effective medium that I can find which confronts memory is implicit action. For example, in *Slave*, the formulation of situations and meetings so that a “processual action” (experience) can be generated is provided and the “final result” (memory) is random, or, I would even go so far as to say irrelevant. On the other hand, in *Archiperformance in Times Square*, the confrontation between text and context is what articulates the production of the subject. The incorporation of spatial categories in the public space of sociopolitical order and its confrontation with the internal, sanguineous space of the subject is where the debate begins to unfold. Here, resistance is not the subject's endurance in the face of capital's machinery, or the insignificance of a demand before the spectacular bombing of the capitalist space. Here, an excluding matrix structure and thought as protective refuge begin to appear.

But the piece I'd like to comment on with regard to your question is *I Can Be You*. It is structured like an art piece in which the breach of camouflage generates a dialogue with the alienated subject and questions itself on the individual “I” and the “I's” conforming the collectivity, the community identity, by means of a symbolic-allegorical deployment maneuver located in the public space of discourse. In this sense, the architectural referents used in the piece (with its transparent architectural construction) are connected to the works of Frank Gehry and Mies Van

der Rohe in that they propose the visual alteration of the surroundings by fixing the regard (film) onto the architectural structure, introducing a path for dialogue in the public space. The actual showcase itself has the retro feel of the fetishism of Benjaminian merchandise. But here the merchandise on display is identity itself, the subject itself, the individual as such, which has been submitted by means of “reflection”, in its expanded representation, to a permanent questioning, incorporating a maneuver that circumscribes the subject in a symbolic-allegorical order, unfailingly opening the way to a plurality of subjectivities, and maintaining it in an interminable process of conversion. This is what I'm referring to when I talk about memory.

In *I Can Be You*, we find a system of reflection, in the literal sense, on the image applied to an action, which I define as fluid rather than transitory. The film has been slowed down and adapted to a time-space in which intensities are directly adjusted to the rhythms of visual reflection that the interplay of the glass layout presents us, and through which the action is captured. In turn, the forms are subjected to a refractory system and begin to reveal the real representation and its reflections fused and inserted onto different representational planes of the same subject as its real one, in its reflection and its counter-reflection, which form a super-figure. Yet this procedure also inverts its program depending on the transit vectorization of the subjects themselves. What I mean is that an extraction of the representation itself works to articulate an imagery in which the final (real) representation itself is transgressed into the impossible “fixed state” of a unitary body. In this sense, the forms articulating memory are determined by entropic confrontations implicit in the processual action, and, as such, the assumption and apparition of a super-figure forms what is memory.

MAHN:
Zygmunt Baumann suggests that fear of others close by is growing day by day in contemporary cities. If traditional cities were places where one could be sure to find security (almost an Oedipal paradise), then the modern city has become the unstable place by definition. And this has hypertrophied to a point where, gradually, the city is suffering today from a process of bunkerization due to the creation of protected areas,



THE FEAR SOCIETY

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4 JUNE - 4 OCTOBER 2009
open from 10 am to 6 pm - closed on Tuesdays

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Assistant curator: Chiara Agnello, Roberta Tenconi
Coordination: Marta Ferretti, Rosa Miñano Pintor, María Nicolás Orenes
Press: Carlo Simula
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spectrum: Helen Lewitt's fifteen-minute short film shot from a hidden fruit basket in Spanish Harlem in the late 1940s, depicting the inherent choreography of the children's use of the street, and Lanzmann's *Shoa*, a nine-hour documentary showing the testimony of Holocaust survivors, bystanders and perpetrators.

KR:

Your work is often discussed in terms of documentary theories. How would you relate your artistic practice to the prevalent documentary ideas?

ASS:

What interest me are the subjects and the form they take or choose, not really their genre or classification. To bring up the word “documentary” is to open up a can of worms biting their tails. In our image-driven world, “documentary” is used as a political weapon, as a tool for personal justice. By definition, the word is supposed to represent the truth. As an alternative to, let's say, “Hollywood.” But all good “fiction” has its context based in reality and might hit you harder than a documentary on the same subject would. And “reality” is often more complex and contradictory, and thus results in worse drama than any fiction writer can come up with.

I'm fascinated by some recent reenactments, but in many ways I still prefer fiction, since all artistic action is a secondary comment on what actually is going on. At its best, from an unexpected angle.

Ann-Sofi Sidén

Stockholm, Sweden 1962. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Stockholm, Sweden.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

In Passing, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden, 2008
 3 MPH, Horse to Rocket, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 2005
 InBetween the Best of Worlds, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, 2004-2005
 Warte Mall: Prostitution After the Velvet Revolution, Hayward Gallery, London, UK, 2002
 QM, I think I call her QM, Hirschhorn Museum, Washington, USA, 2000

Selected Group Exhibitions

Fluid Street - Alone, Together, Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA, Helsinki, Finland, 2008
 Speed II, IVAM - Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia, Spain, 2007
 Into Me / Out of Me, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, USA; Kunstwerke, Berlin, Germany, 2006-2007
 Locuras contemporaneas, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, 2006
 Melancholie. Genie und Wahnsinn in der Kunst, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany, 2006

Awards

Atelier Augarten, Wien, Austria 2003
 ArtPace International Artist-in-Residence Program, San Antonio, USA, 2002
 DAAD, Berlin, Germany, 2001-2002
 P.S.1 International Studio Program, New York, USA, 1993-1994

KR:

You often use the video camera to look at peoples' behavior, their vulnerability and self-control, as you did with your recent work Same Unknown (strain 1, 2 and 3). But this time – and in contradiction with many of your previous works – you seem to have avoided any closer interaction and conversation with them. Why?

ASS:

I don't agree that I'm not close to these people. It's just not through a verbal narrative.

The work came about last year in Reggio Emilia, a small Italian town that hosts an event called “Fotografia Europea.” I took the opportunity to try to create a portrait of this town's inhabitants. We asked over 200 people to say their name and where they were born into a microphone, and then slide down a 4.5-meter-high metal pole. Most people had never done this before. Confronted with this seemingly easy task, many struggled with fear of heights and just tried to figure out how to come down safely; others truly enjoyed the slide. This is the moment we captured, a point in time in which self-consciousness is put aside.

Jonathan Bepler added a reduced sound score that emphasizes the musicality of the piece and takes it to a level beyond what can be seen.

KR:

What role does your camera play with respect to the people you are showing? In terms of the work you are showing in Venice.

ASS:

I think the participants in Reggio Emilia, independent of age or occupation, understood why they were doing it. The simple act of holding on while sliding down has survival connotations and reaches the unconscious in one way or another. Like the so-called Moro reflex, which refers to the newborn's first startled reaction. All lens-based media technically record everything you point them at. This indifferent registering is both problematic and virtuous.

My intentions and how I use the camera differ from piece to piece. For instance, look at *Warte Mal!* (1999), a thirteen-channel video installation on the subject of prostitution in the Czech Republic, which you, Kathrin, showed at Kölnischer Kunstverein in 2005. This piece is informed by two films at opposite ends of the cinematic

I can be you, CENART y Centro Cultural de España en México, Mexico City, Mexico, 2005
 Arquiperformance, ISCP (International Studio Curatorial Program), New York, USA, 2004
 El Yo diverso (Tránsitos), Sala Montcada, Fundación La Caixa, Barcelona, Spain, 1998

Selected Group Exhibitions

Mixed Emotions. Apuntes para una colección del siglo XXI, DA2, Salamanca, Spain, 2008
 4th Biennial Valencia, Valencia, Spain, 2007
 Peripheries of the Body. New Art from Spain, White Box, New York, USA; Museo de Bellas Artes de Murcia, Murcia, Spain, 2006
 No lo llames Performance, El Museo del Barrio, New York, USA, 2004
 I can be you, ISCP (International Studio Curatorial Program), New York, USA, 2003



ANN-SOFI SIDÉN

–

Interview between
Kathrin Romberg and Ann-Sofi Sidén.
 May 2009
 –

Kathrin Romberg:

Your recent work Same Unknown (strain 1, 2 and 3) [2009] is part of the exhibition “The Fear Society,” which according to its concept claims to mirror the frightening times we are living in. What do you fear nowadays?

Ann-Sofi Sidén:

Systematic indifference on all levels, political, personal. And the t-i-m-e factor, the entropy. Where the advances of one generation are often discarded in the next. It is said that horses react to voice, weight and pressure. I think we are the same.

KR:

To what extent do recent social, economic and political realities affect your work?

ASS:

I guess more than I want them to...For instance, the phenomenon of the Babyklappe. Back in 2004, while I was pregnant, I first caught a glimpse of one in Berlin: the hole in the hospital wall, an object so charged that I felt guilty by association, just passing it on the street. This experience persisted and kept bothering me, until finally I turned it into the video installation *In Passing* (2007), which depicts a young mother dropping her newborn into a Babyklappe early one morning. The work also shows the baby's journey into the hospital's rational handling and care, and as a parallel action you see the young mother's walk through Berlin at dawn, after the fact.

the circularity of the visitor who feels surrounded, while revealing, through its confrontational manner, multi-focal and intersecting positions, which come from the interchanging movements and transits of double meaning.

It is in this turning, this crossing, that tensions and ambivalent transactions are generated, putting under siege the concept of multicultural identity and therefore of transnational identity.

If we take a closer look at the formation and configuration of today's economies of ultimate capitalism, we can see that they are structured and organized precisely around an identity production, generating a power structure as a generatrix producing the “I” through the traffic and circulations of the imaginary.

MAHN:

At times, your work has been read as a criticism of the panoptic devices of monitoring that the modern individual “is subject to” and which makes him or her into an object of vision...

How does your work reveal these processes of monitoring, which nullify a person's freedom?

JS:

In a representational sense, I use “panoptic arguments” in my artworks in that I digitally construct spaces for which visibility is totally given. However, I do use a strategy of hypervisibility, connecting movements in distinct areas of the given space, which provide the visitors of the work with a visual atrophy, and as such, the failed attempt at total visual control. This generates in the visitor the contemplation of areas, layers, strata... which makes him or her what I call a “Technical Observer”.

This is how my art pieces work... involving the observing visitor in a process of monitoring the actual piece itself. Converting the observing visitor into a watchman or woman. It may seem a little underhand but it seems to me to be an extremely effective way of providing the visitor with adequate conditions so that he or she can be aware that what can be seen is “subject” to the dominion and control of a structure... and we are all participating...

Jesús Segura

Cuenca, Spain 1967. Lives and works in Murcia, Spain.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

Stereo, Sala San Esteban, Murcia, Spain, 2007
 Concert's bubble, Fundación Miró, Mallorca, Spain, 2006

small isolated communities into which the other is denied entrance. In your work, the image of a movable city is brought to the fore, populated by a constant flow of individuals merging with each other, losing their autonomy and melting into an undifferentiated magma. How does such a vision contrast with the fear of the other of which Baumann speaks, or on the contrary, is it precisely this undifferentiation, this loss of identity, which is the principal fear of today's individual?

JS:

I agree with Baumann in his affirmation that all cities are today's capitals of fear, but also with the notion that we all contribute today to the normalization of a state of emergency. I believe there is a conscious urban exclusion, which is latent and implicit in the division and habitability of contemporary cities.

And that this is assumed with too much normalcy.

Nevertheless, my work is closer to the notion of a loss of identity to which you referred. One of the direct consequences is the design of public spaces and their relationship with the individual. But there are others.

In this respect, *Transportted*, the piece that will be seen in Venice, constructs an urban space which doesn't exist, but which could be real, as I said earlier... In fact, in its structural sense of lending itself to communication, it is real, which is what is proposed with this construction of a stratified and hierarchical space. Labyrinthine and automatic, it configures a system of real relationships being treated within an illusory space. An illusory space that brings us close to the forms of degraded communication in the society that produces us as organized individuals. In this sense, the magmatic fluid is absolutely controlled and standardized. Its organization and classification respond here to a state of control and dominion, which verbalizes everything in the center. Everything is directed towards it and consequently everything comes out of it. I was referring to this matrix when answering your previous question. It is what belittles the individual and sheds it of its singularity.

In this sense the transit, the fluid represented in *Transportted*, subverts its own directional concept when incorporating the two screens confronting each other and regulated in their times and spaces. This accentuates this idea of an echo, of

ONE
MORE
DAY
WITHOUT
FEAR
PLEASE

Jota Castro

The Fear Society - Pabellón de la Urgencia