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 survive, they climbed aboard the first boats sailing for the new world. A better world, where to start with they were called “marranos”.

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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.

CEN'TURIES 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 RIVALS 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:

FIFTH 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
I appreciate the structures and systems created by other intellectuals. But at some point one must also take responsibility for the things one creates in order to function in a political or institutional context, which must be negotiated in an environment of critical observation.

**RT:**
In your final speech at the Tate you said, “Every point I have done so far, let’s say it’s the quotation – the visual quotation – of an image I’ve seen on TV.” Is that something you saw using that same language a way for art to contribute actively to society?

**TR:**
I don’t believe that using the same language or the same formal structures is the way in which art is being experienced as art. It is precisely the moment when the doubt has entered their visual and operational capacity. These are consequences that imply fulfilling an ethical system and placing yourself within this.

When I began to study art in Cuba, I saw very clearly that we would be an ensemble of communities and that within this process of sublimation was an idea that, instead of having been the passports out of the building, donating 200 disposable microphones to the audience would have been more relevant (thus creating a new and instant potential audience). As well as other functioning in a symbolic level: Two pieces dressed in military uniforms who were there for those who would take the microphone, accompanied them to the podium, put on their shoulder (a reference to the first speech by Fidel Castro after his triumph in 1959) and, finally, stood at both ends of the podium while their minutes lasted.

The dimension of these elements is based, with the other pieces in this series, Tatlin’s Whisper in a collective political memory inhabited and formed by the accumulation of images provided by the mass media. Images that, at the same time, are alien because they are the product of a different moment and/or place and, on the other hand, have been anesthetized because of their great exposure. They suggest 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 theoretical and what is spontaneous in historical matters (in their political dimension). Therefore any articulation or “political” is presumably “effective,” what is considered proved in its specificity and ability to control, as a part of a generously shared sensitivity, a call to memory, semiotic space as a sense of what one cannot accept as predetermined. What I try to do is decide which spaces I am going to pre-define and which I am leaving un-pre-define. But the stage? I bring a stage, I open a situation. But something that is very clear to me and that I want people to realize that the elements I choose for my works are not based in symbolic value, but in their practical operational capacity, in their political dimension. If it is political, it should come later, with the consequences of the perception of its operational capacity. These are consequences that imply fulfilling an ethical system and placing yourself within this.

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I believe that for a long time now it has been determined the choice of material. In 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 concerns now, and the situation is different. My literary and almost exclusively of existing images, is a procedure, which is sort of divided from that of mechanical production. Among the representations of art as history being sarcastic, and in terms of genre and tradition, are themes 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 concerns now, and the situation is different.

RT: You have stated that your method of selecting and collecting something from the past, copying them into ink drawings and presenting them as a series, is a "semantic 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 I thought that of. I feel I needed to describe what was I was doing: copying or translating the documents I found and selected, in ink drawings. I'm using the documents for their specific materiality or their being part of an order within a archive, rather as images and as ideological and cultural representations. Appropriation. This is something that the "Belle Époque," and the drawing makes the images more homogenous as they become detached from their original context. It's about this equality of images in the new order of drawing, and how the series, or the whole of the original in a way disappears. It's a form of secondhand 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 getting closer to objects with irrelevant actions, you are building a non-linear story of the past. Your work is also seen with bitter irony in the way it prerenders certain stereotypes of history — such as colonization and racism 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: A while ago I described the Museo de la Nación as being more than a real or virtual museum, it's an idea that creates a sort of trace or space in which the work and reflection appear together. I mean, among a variety of ideas of what is usually seen as separated although it has always been dependent on each other. And the idea of approaching the world of representation and cultural production as if one were proposing to reclassify them as art to tell a joke. Reverting the exotic gaze on something that involves us all in the construction of the stereotypes of the certainty of not trying out new canvases, but employing different, symbolic and real interrelations.

I studied the "real" Museo Hawai in the 80's with my friend, the poet Rodrigo Quijano. It was a sort of museum of carvings that were part of certain famous dictators, apparent reducers of material from the school of investigative police in Peru, and representatives of the political and social diversities. The way the paradise of colonialism was evoked and associated to the US was interesting to me. It's a strange mixture of representing the history of a cultural institution in a complex way of reactivating documents and situations from the past.

FB: My interest in history is related to war, terrorism, and the state of art. 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.

VI. אמריקנו רוח
Lima, Peru, 1969, Lima and Wits and Lima and Berlin, Germany

Selected Group Exhibitions
- Museo De La Nación, Lima, Peru, 2009
- Escola da SESC, São Paulo, Brazil, 2009
- Indian Art Triennial, Kochi, India, 2009
- Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico, 2009
- ACP Biennial, Mexico City, 2009
- International Triennial, São Paulo, Brazil, 2007
- Contemporary Art Biennial, Lima, Peru, 2005
- Tate Modern, London, UK, 2004
- "Lima Prision", Lima, Peru, 2004
- "The Brumby Collection", Auckland, New Zealand, 2003
- La Biennale de Venise, Venice, Italy, 2001
- "Museo de la Nación",
**Chiara Agnello:** Your video outputs from TV and video footage, as well as images found in historical archives and private albums. You’re a mosaic of found control and found emptiness, where the missing parts are more significant than those that are present. What do you give to the “documents” to which you are using? I am using private, found images in family albums, and it is often unclear who made them and exactly what they refer to. So to what actually show can be disputed. Yet this ambiguity is exactly what I need. I use them as triggers, catalyzing my research into the reactions for the areas 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 in the situation in front of the camera lens. Given that one of my main topics is the relationship between images and people, and images as a tool to which they refer, this direct relationship is a suitable ground for my works.

**JC:** Do you take photographs? **CA:** I am not interested in the act of photographing, but in the result of the way that the images are processed, the whole notion of controlling the content of the scene through the image. It questions the issue of historical time, reality, and identity. On the other hand, it is always a reflection on the meaning that the image makes in the first place. I can capture traces of these emotions: desires, fears, greed, aggression, joy. They can be referred to the people photographed, but also those who took the picture. These images, once repeated with master copies, can become a kind of public space, an open area in the city of images that is not controlled by the reality to which it refers. This sad fact has been said and shown many times. On the other hand, an image is hardly thinkable without a presence or a consequence to something else. A person in such an insecure conflict would be like a leaf blown by a wind. Conflict emerges only when one needs to bring these contrary tendencies into one homogeneous structure. In art, in politics, or in our daily lives, many of our works are inadequate as ways to use images that are foreign to me, to move towards the origin of that image to which I am related.

**MD:** Do you think your work has a “documentary” approach, but untruthful in the historical sense of the word? **CA:** It is a question of creating a legacy where the identity of the idea of the emotional fields that were present. Yet these emotions were not used in the image because of the kind of image that was taken in the first place. I can capture traces of these emotions: desires, fears, greed, aggression, joy. They can be referred to the people photographed, but also those who took the picture. These images, once repeated with master copies, can become a kind of public space, an open area in the city of images that is not controlled by the reality to which it refers. This sad fact has been said and shown many times. On the other hand, an image is hardly thinkable without a presence or a consequence to something else. A person in such an insecure conflict would be like a leaf blown by a wind. Conflict emerges only when one needs to bring these contrary tendencies into one homogeneous structure. In art, in politics, or in our daily lives, many of our works are inadequate as ways to use images that are foreign to me, to move towards the origin of that image to which I am related.

**CA:** The feeling I have is that you’re not as someone, but as something. In the image you choose have something alienating about them. We know the particular kind of conflict that I’m talking about. Even if the soldiers’ actions are totally decontextualized in a certain way, almost unavoidable: unable to confront the reality of the situation from the perspective of a soldier, which is what you are referring to. As if when I speak of a body, I’m referring to a body that is a reference to a social and political vision. Where is your work located? What is your identity about?

**MD:** Difficult. It’s a complex reaction to an actual situation, thus shadowing light and darkness at the same time, and it’s not clear whether the context surrounding the original photos does matter for my artwork, yet it’s also not clear that it does. The Army describes a certain group of people in a certain situation, it also shows basic feelings that can be felt and shared by anyone at any time. Yet drawing comparisons with our own experiences usually led to misunderstanding of the similarity of approaches is not valid. But on the other hand, at the same time that such savings are reawakened, people from the first world turn to our problematic contexts and the everyday, which is very contradictory.

**CA:** You perform radical actions that sometimes go beyond common moral boundaries. You have always been very much connected to reality and presented by a political vision. They aim to highlight the paradoxes of a world that is contradictory and rich in which power often has devastating effects on individuals. You said that “art cannot save the world”, but this statement seems somewhat removed from the visible political engagement in your work. To offer two examples: your protest against the removal of the original military and espiritual José Ferris bust in Mexico; and your more recent activity in Gales (2005), where each of the 279 photos corresponds to a woman murdered in Guatemala in 2004. Could we say that there is a desire to socially engage or at least socially inform the audience in your work?

**MD:** What is most important for me is to allow a specific artistic experience, that’s what I am, and what I do, although it’s perfectly true that I am obsessed by reality and the power relationships driving out the situation in the society. I know, and I’m sure of this, that no kind of artwork changes or finds any kind of success in society. At the most, and yes this I aspire to, it can act as a detonator, a starting point for discussion and clarification on certain events.

**CA:** I often interview you said that the Guatemalan authorities do not take/care seriously, another time you said you want to create an atmosphere often perceived as exotic by European audiences. Where is your work located ideally? What is your identity about?

**MD:** Art should, on principle, be universal. This is why I don’t like to locate it here or there, but rather just anywhere. Human beings are the same, they’re born where they’ve born, this is the human language. In any case, I always use plastic surgeon marks your body with a specific sociopolitical context you want to deal with that doesn’t exist? If your art is a form of resistance?

**CA:** Regina José Galindo is central to my world, with its reality marked by political, social and cultural contradictions. My identity is that I am, and what I do, although it’s perfectly true that I am obsessed by reality and the power relationships driving out the situation in the society. I know, and I’m sure of this, that no kind of artwork changes or finds any kind of success in society. At the most, and yes this I aspire to, it can act as a detonator, a starting point for discussion and clarification on certain events.

**MD:** It’s easy not to think about it, and it’s got nothing to do with my success. I’ve thought about leaving many times, but they have always been under the influence of finding myself, I do realize that it actually happened, and that then I lost myself again...

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under permanent influence, in an age of advertising, subliminal and not-so-subtle manipulations, and seductions and lobbying; hence, the need for distancing, critical observation and disruptive interventions is paramount. Basically, I consider everybody a potential intellectual and think we all have a bit to look 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 language, 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, initiating 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 these 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, just to 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 readings – 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 unencumbered 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 never one needs to enter the spectator 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 often 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 machinations could break down in a way, tossing sand into everyone's eyes. For example, I want every art dealer to read Peter Fend’s book “The Art World” so artists and collectors will know what they are dealing with.

CA: At the Istanbul Biennial in 2007 you presented Silentized Voices – Bicycling Istanbul’s Topography of 21 Murdered Journalists, a work that fits into the city’s intention. 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 victim’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 Istanbul police into 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: while in Shanghai working on a group show, I forwarded by email the work explanation of artist Peter Fried, 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 had 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 Silentized 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 aftercelebratory and emotive nature "sprints" on 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 Paul Wilkins 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 something?

RG: One reason I do is what I do is that I am trying to see things in perspective. At Ambassauer, the "future will come long a time" and the longer we wait, the more certain things – taken from daily life, the quotidian – are gone. For Silentized Voices it was, of course, necessary to take on the gesture of the memorial but evade the danger 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 run me over. Nonetheless, this memorial bike ride left some strong remaining markers that survive: the video, the poster, the
a) Tania Bruguera
- Trust Workshop, 2007, use of psychology techniques, Ex-KGB agent, street photographers, eagles, monkey, photographic paper, printer, photo of Felix Dzerzhinsky, 4 x 3 x 2 mt. Courtesy the artist and 2nd Moscow Biennial. Photo: 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 artists and Galleria Lia Rumma, Milan

e) Jesús Martínez Oliva
- Cuadriculas y vallas, 2009, collage, 59 x 42 cm. Courtesy the artist

f) Anna-Sofi Sidén
- Same Unknown (Strain I), 2009, 9 channel synced video installation, HD, 9 monitors, speakers, metal pole. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

g) Hans Haacke

h) Rainer Ganahl
- I love NY / Credit Crunch, 2009, paint on T-shirt; - I love NY / Bernard Madoff, 2009, paint on T-shirt. Courtesy the artist, Fruit and Flower Deli, New York and Elaine Lévy, Brussels

i) Goldichilli
- Genealogia di Damnatio Memoriae, 2009, carved magnolia. Courtesy the artists

j) Martin Dammann
- Soldier Studies / Dance, 2007, jet print on aluminium, 52,6 x 75 cm; - 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, Hong Kong / Switzerland and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

k) Jesús Segura
- Transported, 2007, 2 channel video installation. Courtesy the artist

l) Regina José Galindo
- Confesion, 2007, performance, Caja Blanca, Palma de Mallorca, Photo: Julian Stallabrass. Courtesy prometeogallery, Milan / Lucca
title, the piece as a combination of de-facto video / image and imagination by those who didn’t experience it. All these propositions live in our heads as a万能需要 for heavy metal or marble stones.

CA: The work you are presenting in this project owned by Jota Castro reminds me of one of your works for the Arsenale Pavilion in Venice. Billions. What has changed ten years down the road? What did that work say in 1999 and what is it 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 ten years ago (Grono/ Laden) or four years ago (Use a Bicycle) on the Canal Grande. The year 1999 was completely dominated by the bombings of Yugoslavia, and the religiously motivated genocides and slaughtering of Muslims and races in a mutual self-defence and mutual annihilations. In 2009 we have a similar situation, and definitely one that has to be understood as a historic even geopolitical continuum. The brutal slaughtering of Muslims in Yugoslavia helped radicalize many European and non-European societies and created a climate that facilitated the attacks on the Twin Towers and the three thousand killed in a 9/11 attack.

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 a greater portion of the country, Islamabah, 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, tone it down... 50 large shooting in countries that don’t have any Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. The T-shirts were distributed by the five television clips entitled: Basic Conflicts (justice, the nation, currencies, languages, god), in which I repeat the same sentence in all the many languages I had been studying: “I am always right.” “My country is the greatest.” “I only believe in the Italian anthem “Fratelli d’Italia”.” “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 2000 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 sociological: 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 two T-shirts are street wear, bought on Canal Street, with the standard “I love NY” imprint. Over that I paint financial terms and names of key players in the crisis and conflict, with underlying message: “Bernard Madoff,” “Lehmann Brothers,” “Foreclosures,” “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 profitting from the current crisis and have seen their sales volume increase by 30% as people move among containing tools and self-indulgence, and are spending more time on intimacy.

CA: Language is a constant in your work. Your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy. What have you often said that your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy. What have you often said that your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy. What have you often said that your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy. What have you often said that your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy. What have you often said that your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy. What have you often said that your tongue is Vorarlbergian, your works on intimacy.

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because they are part of the history of a nation. What kind of Conradian imagery could be applicable?

museichronik: A book that gave us a lot of inspiration for the audio installation shown at "Group Therapy" was Bernard Anderson’s Angstgefühl Fromm (1983). Anderson wrote, “In an anthropological spirit, this volume was an attempt to define the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both constitutional and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, most of them will never even meet them in the minds of all lives the image of their community”. What interested us in Anderson’s theory, however, is the tradition that the imagining of the nation is from this perspective the historical nature, the transcendence and the lack of naturalism of these concepts. In Qu’est-ce qu’une nation? From 1882, Ernst Renan describes this in terms of a “fresh idea” and the “essence of nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun qui les unissent contre les autres et les autres contre eux de biais des choses” (The essence of a nation is that all the individuals have many things in common, and also that they all forget the others). Confine immaginato is a metaphor for the national border. The Museum museum’s door is rendered an imaginary threshold on which a manipulation of a paranoid ochlos – the fear of the excessive State itself (with enormous financial gain and enormous financial gain has a paradoxical effect on the attitudes of many!). Worldwide economic meltdown put an unexpected end also to the art world in 2008. Artworks proved to be a vulnerable yet not by the newly "supervised" speculators.

Throughout this giddy time it is hard to tell if all those who stayed with the reasons that originally motivated them to become artists instead of opting for professions, which, traditionally, would have made them rich. I like to believe a good many others share the 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.

And yet another added this. "It was already left to the people to make the sensible corrections to the master of rigid dogmatism and to settle into smugness, whereas a trailblazing mind creatively entertains doubts.”

A funny thing happened to the Museum museum’s door it embedded itself in the street on the Babylon film theatre on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. When I passed through it a year later, I discovered that it had been moved away to the steps of the Volkshalle where only theatrical events have been held. The stated reason for this displacement was that, during wet weather, cars could slip on it.
In 1982 he moved to New York. His extensive interventions were reactions against situations linked with conflicts, war, violence, and social segregation. The themes of Pasolini’s work are the lack of freedom, political oppression, and human rights. Jaar also underlines the violence that is often explosive and disappearing as values, and that we are driven to extinguish critical resources; but against which no other action remains.”  

In his work there is an attempt to respond to the fundamental needs of culture, through their possibility of filter and transmit information. The Ashes of Pasolini has in Antonio Gramsci. The strength and necessity for a vision and to tenaciously bear witness to the truth or even attempting a critical analysis. In the project for the Miró Foundation that you mentioned, I was dealing with the fear of cold and mechanized sexuality appeared as a reaction to AIDS, which was, of course, from the beginning, enormously influential in modifying sexual behavior. In another project, in Santiago de Compostela, the fear of disease was also at the heart of the installation, which consisted of a labyrinth of single bed mattresses. Fears, based on the fear of contagion, were built, were converted into a labyrinthine prison, a dangerous and inhospitable place.

IT: In your series Miedo y Fechas (1979/1980), to address the fear that was being introduced into the model of international law, which could be seen as the embodiment of reinforcing masculinity. It is obvious that there is a desire to control and not to accept them without controlling assumptions in the form of dramatic descriptions, horrific truths, in many cases uncertain, but too often we try to accept without them their truth or even attempting a critical analysis.

IT: “post-politics sustains that it has left the need for any action against which no other action remains.”  

For your project at Sala Verónicas you once again brought up the question of fear, in this case in relation to the masculine body, and specifically the fear of penetration. As you know, it is built in relation to masculinity. But for me, it has always been clear that it was because of fear. Fear of his voice, fear of his face, fear of his ideas, fear of his actions, fear of his work. Fear that he was too strong a political subject, too many public officials too implicated in situations linked with specific interests. In recent years, in a climate such as this, the fear of a few, of the fear of a few, has been used in an attempt to extinguish critical resources; but also as the last resource of mobilization can be to be against masculinity. In this void of vision and awareness, is able to be channelled and used.

IT: Whether in the form of norms, conventions, and social ceremonies such as parties, socialization is crucial in modifying sexual behavior. In another project, for your project at Sala Verónicas, you once again brought up the question of fear, in this case in relation to the masculine body, and specifically the fear of penetration. You have analyzed such questions as: the domination of masculinist stereotypes, the existence of gazelle, social and differential formulas of intersection within the homosocial community. AIDS being seen as a social taboo (1 remember that your project for the Miro Foundation in Barcelona, in 1994, was based on this) or the construction of masculinity and creation of behaviour originating in inherited structures of domination.  

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It could be called...
small isolated communities into which the other is denied entrance. The piece of work, the image of a womanable is brought to the fore, populated by a constant flow of individuals moving with each other, losing their autonomy and melting into an unindividualized magma. How does such a vision contrast with the fear of today's individual? What do you fear nowadays?

Kathrin Rombach: Your recent video installation (strain 1, 2 and 3) is one of the exhibitions "The Fear Society," which I agree with Baumann in his program, which you referred. One of the direct consequences is the design of public spaces and their relationship with the individual. But there are others. 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. In this respect, Transpoitl, 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 I’m proposing 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 degradation in communication in the society that produces us as organized individuals. In this sense, the maqam fluid is absolutely constructed and standardized. Its organization and classification respond here to a hypervisibility, connecting movements in distinct areas of the given space, which provide the visitors of the work with a visual atrophy, and as such, theadel talk attempt at total visual control. This generates the visitor in the contemplation of areas, layers, strains which is what I call a "Technical Observer". It is how art pieces work involved in answering the observer in a process of monitoring the actual piece itself. Converting the observer visitor into a watchman or woman. It may seem a little unnecessary but seems to me to be an extremely effective way of providing the visitor with the 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.

ANN-SOFI SIDÉN
Interview between
Kathrin Rombach and Ann-Sofi Sidén
May 2009

ANN-SOFI SIDÉN
Systematic indifference on all levels, political, personal. And the 14-minute slide show is 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.

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

Ann-Sofi Sidén: What interest me are the subjects and the structures as a generative producing the choreography of the children’s use of the space. It’s just not through a visual atrophy. What is the desired to real social, economic and political realities affect your work?

Kathrin Rombach: I think the participants in the exhibition are the young generation 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 More reflex, which refers to the revolver's first startled reaction. All lens-based media technically record everything you point them at. This indifferent evening is both problematic and virtuous. My intentions and how I use the camera differ from piece to piece. For instance, look at Warte Merlie (1999), a thirteen-channel video installation on the subject of prostitution in the Czech Republic, which you showed, at Kölnischer Kunstverein in 2007. This piece is informed by two films at opposite ends of the cinematic spectrum: Helen Levitt’s filmreunited, while little else, from the green fruit basket in Spanish Harlem last year in the late 1940s, depicting the inherent choreography of the children in the street, and Lamanna’s S&K, a nine-hour documentary showing the testimony of Holocaust survivors, bystanders and perpetrators.

Kathrin Rombach: Why is your work often discussed in terms of documentary theories? How would you relate your artistic practice to the prevalent documentary adage?

Ann-Sofi Sidén: I can be you, CENART y Centro Cultural de Arte Contemporáneo de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain, 2006

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

PUBLICATION
© Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo
www.museumsymposium.org

This publication project has been released by Museus

Published by The authors for the hosts

www.thefearsociety.eu
ONE
MORE
DAY
WITHOUT
FEAR
PLEASE

Jota Castro

The Fear Society - Pabellón de la Urgencia