

# bootprint



a publication dedicated to contemporary art

Volume 2 Issue 2

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& Gothenburg University  
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James Elkins &  
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& Bruce La Bruce  
& much more...



# Contributors

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**Andries Botha** lives and works in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is from this place of familiarity that he finds it possible to be creative. Graduating from the University of Natal in the 1970's, he won several awards including the Volkskas Atelier Merit Award in 1987, the Cape Town Triennial Merit Award (1988) and the Standard Bank Young Artist Award (1990) and the National Vita Art Award (1992). He has exhibited widely internationally and most recently was commissioned for the Beaufort Triennale in 2006, also exhibiting in Brittany and in the Canary Islands during 2008. Lecturing at the Durban University of Technology since 1982, he has consistently championed the visual arts in the community with the founding and chairing of the Community Arts Workshop (1984-6), His continued commitment to this process is now evident in his NGO Create Africa South Trust (since 2002) and the Amazwi Abesifazane Trust (registered in 2008).

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**Laura Fried** currently serves as the Assistant Curator at Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. As a co-curator of the The Front Room and Main Galleries exhibitions, Laura Fried is also responsible for overseeing a number of ongoing programs at the Contemporary, including Great Rivers Biennial, Flat Files, and the Emerson Visiting Critics and Curator series. Fried joins the Contemporary from MASS MoCA as a two-year curatorial fellow. Prior to her graduate work and tenure at MASS MoCA, Fried managed an art gallery in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York. Fried received her Bachelor's degree in English and Art History with Distinction from Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, and she holds a Master of Arts in the History of Art from Williams College and the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts. She is currently working on a solo exhibition by British-based artist Carey Young, forthcoming in May 2009.

**Will F. Garrett-Petts** is a critic, curator, and writer who has published widely on inter-arts practices, seeking an interplay between the critical and the creative. His books and catalogues

include *Artists' Statements and the Nature of Artistic Inquiry* (Open Letter, 2007); *The Small Cities Book: On the Cultural Future of Small Cities* (New Star, 2005), *Proximities: Artists' Statements and Their Works* (Kamloops Art Gallery, 2005), *Relocating the Homeless Mind: Memory, Landscape, the Small City and Rural Community* (Comox Valley Art Gallery, 2004), *The Homeless Mind: An Exploration Through Memory Mapping* (Bookworks Press, 2003), *PhotoGraphic Encounters: The Edges and Edginess of Reading Prose Pictures and Visual Fictions* (U of Alberta Press, 2000), and *Integrating Visual and Verbal Literacies* (Inkshed Publications, U of Manitoba, 1996). With Rachel Nash, he organized and directed an international workshop on *Artistic Inquiry and the Role of the Artist in Academe* (SSHRC Workshop, 2005), held in conjunction with two exhibitions, *Proximities* and *The Courthouse Project*; his critical/creative work has led more recently to his own role as a contributing artist to *Witness Marks: Exploring the Exotic Close to Home* (2006) at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

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**Asma Kazmi** is a performance artist and a sculptor. Her most recent work includes a performance/textual comparison called *Translation of a Conversation with My Mother*, 2007 and a three-channel video installation called *In Common*, 2007. Asma Kazmi received a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In May 2007 Asma Kazmi received the *At the Edge: Innovative Art in Chicago Award*, given by the University of Illinois in Chicago. Kazmi has performed and exhibited in Boston, New York, Chicago, and Puerto Rico. She has been a part of the Boston Underground Film Festival, *Balagan Film and Video Series*, *Women in Film & Video/New England* and the *MassArt Film Society*. She has taught at the Dorchester Community Center for the Visual Arts in Boston and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Asma Kazmi was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan.

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**Adelheid Mers** is a visual artist living in Chicago. Born in Düsseldorf, Germany, she graduated with an MFA from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. She moved to Chicago with a stipend from the German Academic Exchange Service to attend the University of Chicago, has exhibited and lectured widely, curated and co-organized exhibitions, and received grants from the DAAD, the British Council, the NEA, the IAC, the SAIC and the City of Chicago. She is an Associate Professor in the Arts Administration and Policy program of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she also teaches in the Art History and Criticism, Visual and Critical Studies, and Sculpture Departments. She serves on the editorial board of *WhiteWalls* and on the curatorial board for *ThreeWalls Solo*.

**Machi Pesmatzoglou** is an architect, running TinT contemporary art gallery in the centre of Thessaloniki, Greece. For five years she studied philosophy at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and then completed her architecture studies at the Technische Universität München. Besides directing TinT gallery, she has curated and organized cultural events and exhibitions, successfully cooperating with local cultural agencies, the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki, the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum, the Thessaloniki Museum of Photography, the International Thessaloniki Film Festival, etc. She is a member of the board of directors of the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art in Thessaloniki.

## Boot Print

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# Note from Georgia Kotretsos

editor-in-chief

In Boot Print Volume 2, Issue 2, I strategically chose to step aside from interviewing to focus on boosting our roster of contributors by reestablishing a bond of communication with art professionals from the past, and by forming new allies, which sustain the diversity of the publication and level of conversation. I thus entrusted this entire issue to the desktops of people I appreciate. Boot Print entirely relies on a coffer of contacts and trustworthy relationships I have formed over the years. I say this to thank everybody who answers when I knock on their door. To mention just a few: Ms. MacKenny (as I've always addressed her) and Andries Botha, my advisors back at Natal Technikon in Durban, South Africa, when I was still a BFA student. I have learned a lot from these two artists, and I am thrilled to have them with us in this Boot Print, as they are very dear to me. Also, many thanks to Will F. Garrett-Petts, Adelheid Mers, Elpida Karaba, Danyel M. Ferrari, Sotirios Bahtsetzis, Laura Fried, Asma Kazmi, Tim Ridlen and Juan William Chávez all of whom have always been great to work with.

Before I go into the flesh of this issue, I need to acknowledge a series of events that have shaken us here at Boots on a professional or personal level.

a) I will begin by sharing with you the loss of a loved one, Mr. Juan S. Chávez. Having felt this gentleman's love, generosity and unconditional support as the silent partner of Boots, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to his family for their loss. Mr. Chávez knew how to offer himself, his time, and the fruits of his labor from his heart without the slightest sign of hesitation or doubt. He was sure he would not be let down, and I will always treasure the trust he has shown me. It was rare. b) Then, recession slapped us in the face. Here in the States, we felt it first. We have tightened our belts, straightened our backs, and continue to pave our path with whatever life throws our way. c) This issue is coming out significantly late. I extend my sincere apologies to our interviewees and contributors for this delay. I felt, and still do, that it was worth waiting until a member of our Boot Print team could join us again to complete this issue after overcoming a personal struggle. d) And finally, this past U.S. election has drawn a comforting picture of hope for an entire nation that has bled its borders and has touched individuals across the globe.

Having gone through all that and much more, let's get back to business.

This issue's study section focuses on "High-end Art Pedagogy," meaning PhD studio programs, career-making residencies, and idealistic educational methods. The subject was circling in my head for over a year, and finally it all came into perspective over dinner. Last year, a good friend invited me to a dinner party in downtown Athens, where an amazing sum of people gathered to break bread. The hosts were charismatic and warm. Among the guests was the architect Christos Papoulias who kept the conversation alive until the early hours of the morning discussing the project he has been involved with for the last couple of years, which was none other than Future Academy. He made a great impression on me and I was literally taking mental notes as he spoke throughout the evening. Afterwards I extensively researched the program, and was delighted to find out how modest Papoulias was about his involvement and the philosophy of the program. I got to work right away by framing the study section on a pedagogical basis as "high," whether in ideology, idealism, prestige, credibility, or expectations. The very notion of idealism, stretched by some of the programs to creative degrees and directions, makes them unique. Thus the selected following institutions, whose directors agreed to enlighten us on their programs: The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, United States; Gothenburg University, Sweden; Akademie Schloss Solitude, Germany; Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Finland; Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, The Netherlands; Malmö Art Academy, Sweden and last but not least Future Academy, Scotland. I wish Ron Clark, director of the Whitney Independent Study Program, had also accepted my invitation; his contribution would have been of great value.

Boot Print Volume 2, Issue 2 starts off with Isil Egrikavuk's *The Interview* solo show; the *Shoebox: Boots Substation* at the Contemporary Museum of Art St. Louis, where Deva Everland's enduring performance and Silverio's dazzling performance took place; and finally our debut exhibition as Boots Contemporary Art Space at the TinT gallery in Thessaloniki, Greece, which took the crowds by storm.

Next, Sotirios Bahtsetzis looks closely at current queer identity issues and their manifestations in performance. He talks to Bruce LaBruce, Tim Stutgen, Susanne M. Winterling and Jorgen Callesen who genuinely offer their thoughts for discussion. Tim Ridlen follows with a review of Cory Arcangel's book entitled *A Couple Thousand Short Films About Glenn Gould*. Their instant messaging conversation echoes the format and spirit of the book. Boot Print Volume 2, Issue 2 closes with Asma Kazmi, who offers Saadat Hasan Manto's first English translation from Urdu of *Mootni*, as well as an excerpt of *Khushai*.

The image you are feasting your eyes on at the bottom of the page takes us back to March 22, 2008 when Boots was invited to participate in the Alternative Art Space Symposium at the Contemporary Museum of Art St. Louis. Both Boots' director Juan William Chavez and I presented our perspectives on our experiences with the space. The museum's director Paul Ha welcomed the attendees and speakers, then Chief Curator Anthony Huberman, who also served as the moderator of the panel, gave some opening remarks, followed by the panelists. We were in great company: Ben Haywood, Executive Director of The Soap Factory (Minneapolis, MN); Shannon Stratton, Director and Chief Curator of Three Walls (Chicago, IL), and Matt Strauss, Director of White Flag Projects (St. Louis, MO).

Boot Print is an absolute joy for me and because there is more coming please pace your readings. Until next time, Boot Print will be here to ask artists' questions and share them with you.

**BP**

# Note from Tim Ridlen

senior editor

The question of the PhD has been raised since the beginning of my education in Fine Art. To me, it seems inevitable that this will be a sought after, if not absolutely necessary, qualification in the over-crowded field that Fine Art is becoming. My prediction is that this will not be an inhibiting force for a generation or so; in the meantime, and much for the better, there are a number of compelling alternatives to extend one's tenure as a student of art practice in the form of artist residencies, independent studio programs, or whatever else you might call the time, space, and interactions for learning. These alternatives could come to shape, at least in relief, the practice-based PhD. This is an exciting time to be a student! So, I'm happy to say I still am one.

This past summer I began a program at Bard College to pursue my MFA degree. The low-residency requirement and the emphasis on independent studio practice allow me to shape my own education, but the most inspiring factor is the students and community that gather there. I can see that in a lot of cases the school doesn't make the students, the students make the school. I'd like to thank everyone I met there because they helped indirectly to shape some of the questions and decisions made for my articles in this issue, and not least because this issue directly addresses the changing nature of education and pedagogy in art practice.

The study section of this issue more specifically looks at art education beyond the Master's degree. To us, that meant looking not just at the practice-based PhD programs in fine art that are starting to crop up around the world, but also the alternatives. Education isn't always about receiving a degree, and some alternatives have richer rewards. Programs like the Whitney Independent Study Program or the Rijksakademie have gained notoriety because many of their participants have gone on to be successful and challenging figures, but we wanted to hear from the programs leaders themselves. We've done our best to get at the nature and ethos of some of these programs. Hopefully we've taken a step in that direction, but this is one conversation that would never be lacking in participants.

I was also really interested in this issue to read on queer theory in art. This is another huge topic, but in the interest of engaging in a first-hand conversation internationally, it is nice to crack it open even a bit. Being able to select voices for print in itself speaks volumes, for to make a choice is to make a statement. Thank you to all who contributed in this issue.

**BP**

Alternative Art Space Symposium March 22, 2008  
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis.  
Moderated by Anthony Huberman

From left to right:

**Anthony Huberman**, Chief Curator,  
Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis

**Juan William Chávez**, Director,  
Boots Contemporary Art Space, St. Louis

**Ben Heywood**, Executive Director,  
The Soap Factory, Minneapolis

**Georgia Kotretsos**, Artist/Founder/Editor-and-Chief, Boot Print

**Shannon Stratton**, Director and Chief Curator,  
Three Walls, Chicago

**Matt Strauss**, Director, White Flag Projects, St. Louis

Photo courtesy: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis



# Note from Juan William Chávez

director of Boots Contemporary Art Space

For every Boot Print I have enjoyed writing my director's notes. My notes describe the current state of Boots Contemporary Art Space. I announce our recent accomplishments and then state future plans and goals. It is also a time where I get to give special thanks to our supporters and volunteers. In past notes I usually gave a special thanks to the Boots' silent partners, which are my parents.

My parents, Kiki and Juan, have been on the sidelines supporting and helping to create Boots Contemporary Art Space. If you have been to any of the openings you would always see them working the event; my mother sitting in the office making sure people feel welcomed and my father hanging out on the patio people watching and enjoying the crowd. Together they loved viewing the art and talking to the artists. Their energy never faded and their support through tough times never failed. They understood the important role that artists have in society and knew that a Boots Contemporary Art Space would help the St. Louis art community grow and add new life to a forgotten, rundown Cherokee street.

On September 17, 2008 my father died after a long battle with cancer. We have decided to dedicate the International Artist in Residency Program in his memory. This program shares the very same spirit of my father: always interested in conversation and the exchanging of ideas with others. It is always painful to lose a key member of the band but as artist we understand that the show must go on. My father would not have it any other way.

On a brighter note Boots Contemporary Art Space and been approved for its' nonprofit 501(c) (3) status. I would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work and long lasting enthusiasm. Building a contemporary art space in St. Louis is not an easy task. Now, it is more important then ever to become a Boots member or make a donation to Boot Print or International Artist in Residency Program. We have been running for 3 years, so let us continue together by deepening programs that help create a dialogue between the Saint Louis art community and the contemporary art world. For further details on how to support Boots Contemporary Art Space and our programs, please visit the back page of this issue.

Special thanks go out to Goivanna Adams, Carol and Patrick Berger, Kerry and Michael Borawski, Agatha and Thomas Brockland, Kathleen and James Brunsman, Vera and Vlad Dafcik, Valerie and Andrew Hahn, Mary and Daniel McGovern, Mannisi Jewelers, Sam Mannisi and Diane Wiesler, Sister Jeanne Meurer, Elizabeth and Robert Newsham, Kitty Noland, Mary and Sam Pearson, William C. Schiller, Karen and Thomas Villa for funding the program in Juan S. Chavez' memory.



Above: Juan S. Chávez delivering editions of the first issue of Boot Print.

# The Interview

by Tim Ridlen



Above: *The Interview* exhibition announcement (detail)

An Iraqi doctor and researcher has come to the United States at the request of the United States Government to work on a cure for the H5N1 virus, commonly known as the Bird Flu, which has spread to North America through migrating birds. A medical student has fled the post-war country in hopes of continuing his career and sustaining life as normal for his family. An actor plays the part of a doctor and medical researcher interviewing with a local news anchor regarding his research on the Avian Influenza, the war in Iraq, and his recent relocation to the United States. The microphones are on and the interview begins.

*The Interview*, a video and installation by Isil Egrikavuk, begins in fact with a controlled detour through the familiar lines of an airport entrance or government office. What one is waiting for is a line of questioning from the news anchor-cum-immigration officer regarding recent travel, handling of livestock, familiarity with the Avian Influenza, and any other suspicious illnesses that might require quarantine. Beyond the threshold one encounters the story of Anmar Abdul Nabi, a story written and shaped by Isil Egrikavuk as well as the real life circumstances that brought the two together: the U.S. war in Iraq, a visa interview, an exhibition in Istanbul, a family reunion, followed by brief residence in St. Louis for both.

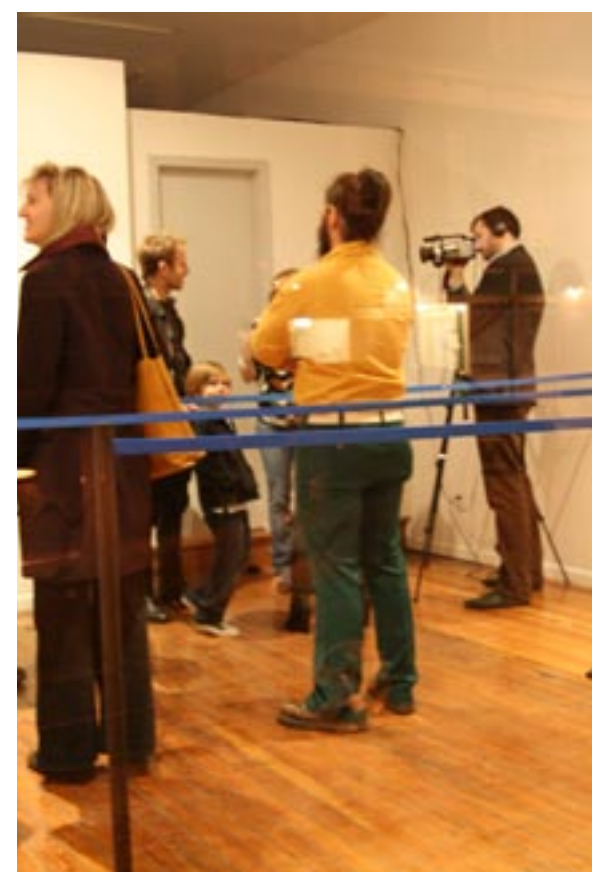
The video at the heart of the project shows Anne Marie Berger, a local news anchor in St. Louis, interviewing Mr. Abdul Nabi cut with the artist preparing Abdul Nabi for the interview. The questions are revealed to be a scripted narrative, with some adlibbing thrown in from the strikingly similar true story of Abdul Nabi's immigration to the US. For the interview, Abdul Nabi plays a doctor from Iraq with expertise on the H1N5 virus that causes Avian Influenza, or Bird Flu, which has ostensibly spread to Western Europe and North America from Asia and the Near East. Cases of Bird Flu transmitted from birds to humans have occurred for the first time in the West causing alarm and prompting the US to bring Abdul Nabi to St. Louis to search for a cure.

Where fact and fiction overlap begins to get a bit blurry. Cases of Bird Flu have been discovered in Western Europe and North America, but not transmitted to humans, (Turkey, Egrikavuk's country of residence, was in fact the most western case of human infection at the time). Abdul Nabi has come to St. Louis to work in the medical field, but not as a researcher for Avian Influenza, and certainly not at the specific invitation of the US Government. The mélange of these details emphasizes the comparison Egrikavuk makes between fear of global migration from poor to rich countries and the fear of a global epidemic; however, the overwhelming poignancy of the story begins with Abdul Nabi's country of origin and the US war there.

The interview turns to this topic without skipping a beat. "I can explain myself here," Abdul Nabi says in preparation with the artist. Well, one would hope. The artist has set us up to question what Abdul Nabi reports, even if he does claim to speak his mind. It would not be the first time the facts were not accurately reported. One finds out there is still violence in the country. Many people who have skills or an education have left, doctors and journalists notably. The violence and the brain-drain emigration is no surprise, but for the first time I found myself thinking about a life and a time after the Iraq war, as if that time were here and now.

For Abdul Nabi, the Iraq war is in the past, if not for his family who still remains in the country. His life now is in St. Louis, a city that despite having one of the highest crime rates in the nation and the fastest decline in population has considerably favorable economic conditions. Due to these conditions, the very same conditions that led many Vietnamese immigrants to settle in the city after the Vietnam War, the city has experienced a large influx of Bosnian immigrants after the upheaval in the Balkans. Coincidentally in 2006, three years after the Iraq war began, the city's population decline began to reverse itself.

*The Interview* video still



*The Interview* installation and performance

Mr. Abdul Nabi is in St. Louis where he has begun his residency at Barnes-Jewish Hospital because of its world-class research in medicine and biotechnology, one more true detail that makes his alter ego seem believable. Likewise, St. Louis has experienced an epidemic related to migrating birds, West Nile virus, but it was not deadly and not transmitted directly from birds to humans. As members of the St. Louis community wandered into the gallery at Boots, they carried some misinformation with them. When questioned by Anne Marie Berger, bits of knowledge and personal stories mixed with fact regarding the current state of the much more deadly Bird Flu virus. At its best, Egrikavuk's mixture of fact and fiction can have the subtle effect of challenging existing structures of knowledge — namely journalistic representation — but of course, much relies on what the audience walks in with.

As Boots' third international artist in residence, Egrikavuk brought with her the climate of her home country. A free press and the right to free speech are valued, but not taken for granted. As a result, journalists in Turkey have an important responsibility, while often targeted for their words. Furthermore, with an opaque state bureaucracy, conspiracy theories run rampant and more often than not turn out to have some truth to them.

Egrikavuk knows this well as a journalist herself in the country. Her work as an artist has always drawn striking parallels between the two fields. The local journalist hired to perform in the video and in the gallery is presented almost as a stand in for the artist, but it's not quite clear if the relationship is one of verisimilitude or nemesis. Like much else in the show, there is little hope of ever finding an answer, but rather an unending line of questions. The search for the truth, the desire to find it and its desire not to be found, is an answer in itself. **BP**

# Shoebox: Boots Substation at the Front Room

by Juan William Chávez



Paul Ha, Director of Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis and Boot Print Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Georgia Kotretsos at the DADA Ball.

Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis describes their relatively new program Front Room:

As a newly established exhibition space. Running alongside the large-scale and long-term projects in the Main Galleries, The Front Room operates at a different rhythm, with exhibitions lasting anywhere from a day to a few weeks. Designed for more reactive, nimble, and experimental exhibitions—and devoted to lesser-established and younger artists who work internationally, nationally, and locally—this ongoing exhibition series tests the boundaries of conventional programming and echoes the elasticity and simultaneity of contemporary culture. While each Front Room project operates by loose associations from one to the next, the program remains independent from the Main Galleries. The Front Room allows the museum to reflect the immediacy and urgency of art-making in our contemporary moment and serves as an always-active curatorial sketch-book.

Kicking off the Front Room CAMSTL invited local nonprofits, artist run spaces, independent curators and others to break in the program. White Flag Projects' *P.G.S. (Provincial Gallery Simulator)*, Snowflake/Citystock's four-day-long fitness training center; Maps Contemporary Art Space *Character Study*, independent curator Dana Turkovic's exhibition *Homegrown*, APOP Records' temporary merchandise booth and Evil Prints' *Outlaw Printmakers '08*.

Over a three-month period the St. Louis public was confronted with a slap in the face, a town hall meeting, a sweaty work out, a collection of domestic objects, Zines and cassette tapes, a screaming Mexican, and a Printmakers convention. It was one big STL load.

Boots Contemporary Art Space presented *Shoebox: Boots Substation* (March 4 - 16, 2008). Creating a satellite gallery and workspace for two weeks, Boot Print Founder/Editor-in-chief Georgia Kotretsos and your humble director clocked in for two weeks in the Front Room, Laptops and all. Functioning as information center, the space greeted visitors with a Boot Print reading station containing new and back issues of Boot Print. An exact interior replica of Boots Contemporary Art Space (maybe it was slightly off), and a series of video screenings. Tim Ridlen curated a short program called *At Home and at Work* featuring Scott Wolniak, Chelsea Knight, Andy Roche and Alexander Stewart. Also, Boot Print initiated a three day screening by inviting a few of the curators we met in Boot Print Volume 1/Issue 2 to curate the event. Cecilia Caniani curated an all day screening of video and sound art including Wolfgang Berkowski, Mariana Ferratto and Sara Basta; Elpida Karaba curated a screening with Kostis Stafylakis, Vana Kostayola, Mary Zygouri, and Niki Bisylia; and Jan Van Woensel participated with works by Lee Rinaldo, Guns 'N Roses, and Caroline Polachek. The space also functioned as a temporary promotional headquarters for Silverio and ended with a special event which included a *Candy Shop* at Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis - Dada Ball (March 8, 2008) entitled: WHO'S YOUR SUGAR DADA!

Following the notion that everything becomes important once you put it in the shoebox. We treaded the space just like that and filled it with Boots' shwag and ephemera. We read, did paperwork, watched videos, set up a performance and a rock concert, passed out cotton candy and introduced new friends to Boots' mission. It was an action packed two weeks, a curatorial triathlon. **BP**



Installation shots from the Boots Substation at The FRONT ROOM project at Contemporary Art Museum Saint Louis

# Deva Eveland's St Louis Ceremonial (with shwag)

by Laura Fried



In March of this year, The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis gave over its fledgling Front Room to Boots Contemporary Art Space, whose two-week, multi-part project spread through the spaces of the museum. Creating a satellite gallery and work-space hub in The Front Room, Boots founders Juan William Chávez and Georgia Kotretsos, presented what they called the “visual presence of contemporary art”: a reading room with the newest Boot Print, continuous video screenings, a Boots information center, and a curated performance program to boot.

In addition to a disco nuevo performance by Nuevos Ricos Mexican artist/musician Silverio, Boots also invited young Chicago artist Deva Eveland to occupy the Contemporary on a quiet Saturday afternoon. In line with their continued effort to introduce emerging and experimental artists (often with a Chicago flavor) to St. Louis, Boots invited Eveland to create a new site-situational piece for the museum space.

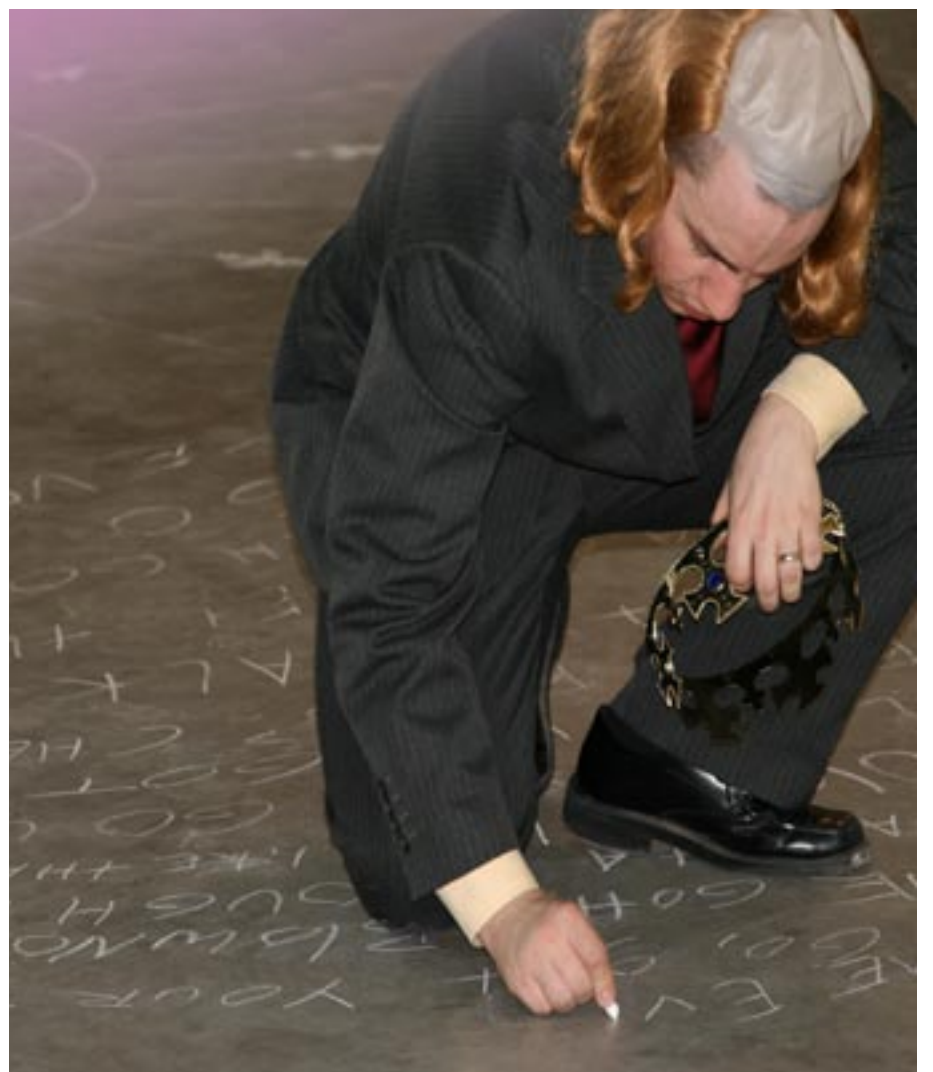
Eveland, whose practice often seems to game on ritual, the absurd, and the (failed) suspension of disbelief, chose as his subject the plagued thirteenth-century crusader Louis IX — canonized St. Louis — for whom our Gateway city is named. In a day-long performance that evolved from quiet meditation to eerie incantation to a clever eight-ball-esque séance and a final ceremonial lift-off, Eveland offered himself up as spiritual medium to the old French Christian king.

The performance began with Eveland alone in the space — for several hours of what he called a quiet “channeling of the great king.” From the museum’s lobby, one could hear the Kingsmens’ throaty anthem, *Louis Louis*. Entering the performance space, the viewer would find a wigged Eveland alone, hunched over and scribbling furiously with chalk on the concrete floor. As the song continued and looped, Eveland transcribed (as much as he could, with various omissions, misspellings, and messy scrawls) the band’s famously unintelligible lyrics.

What followed, after a slow, meditative and introspective beginning, was a series of absurdist gestures, vaudeville showmanship, and even borderline abject actions (the long, mucousy scroll pulled from his throat was gagging) — that suddenly drew in and controlled the wandering museum crowd. Recalling Herman Nitsch’s extended rituals of the sixties — half-way through which the Austrian artist would announce his (often grotesque) actionist “main event” — Eveland, too, relied on ritual, endurance, (self-inflicted) violence, and active participation from his audience.

And yet, much of the event seemed to teeter on the edge between the earnest and ironic. Around him were a miniature boom box; a display case housing a small plastic skull you might find in the seasonal Halloween aisle at the supermarket; a tank of helium; and a letter from the “National Cultural Department of France.” According to Eveland, the ritual and its props — from the plastic skull and cheap wig, to the helium balloons and the sixties Billboard single — appear as such an overwhelming sham that his audience “wouldn’t have to waste time with disproving the supernatural.” Instead, he proposed that his public would be freed from their suspicion, yielding to the ridiculous reasoning of the performance, “wherever it lead.”

Indeed, Eveland relied on the delight found in the absurd. King Louis’s “spirit ether” came in the form of pure helium; Eveland as spiritual medium came in a hilarious, high-pitched squeak. And in a kind of charades-spirited game, Eveland-as-Saint-Louis took questions on paper scraps from his audience: “Are you seeing anyone right now?” “Hell yes!” Finally, the end of the ceremony came with a gift bag — in lieu of a Nitschean bloody-goat sacrifice, Eveland offered up shwag to his dead monarch. Replete with pens, museum pamphlets, a cigarette, dollar bills, gum wrappers, and old receipts — all collected from the audience circled around him — the gift bag, tied to a cluster of helium filled balloons, was let loose with resplendence outside the museum’s entrance... followed quickly by its inelegant and awkward tumble back to the concrete sidewalk.



Above images: Deva Eveland’s performances at Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

Despite the gags, however, Eveland’s slapstick ritual registered an undercurrent of cynicism, and a more pointed reflection on our current political climate. On the eve of the Presidential elections, and with the fanfare that comes with both brash and embellished campaigns — and

a national audience ever hungry for entertainment — Eveland touched on the ludicrous extremes to which power and the pursuit of legitimacy are often represented... with clumsy, risible, unconvincing, and occasionally disastrous results. **BP**



# SILVERIO

by Juan William Chávez



## The show began with deep howling sirens

vibrating in and out with waves of echoing bass. The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis brimmed with sound. All the usual track lighting was switched off and the exhibition sat peacefully in the background. Now the focus was on a stage, no larger than twelve feet square. A female robotic voice skipped and repeated "Silverio...Sil, Sil, Sil...Silverio" over the sound system. Cheesy dance lights sprinkled the dance floor and ceiling. The atmosphere was tense with sci-fi-style anticipation of a landing spaceship or of one about to perceive a vision from the other side. The stage was equipped with two big plasma screens to show the live-feed recording of the performance. All eyes from the crowd were on center stage, which had a silver backdrop emblazoned with an iconic rabbit with long ears and a red lusty tongue, a bizarre Bugs Bunny/Playboy combo. In the front of the stage sat a metal table covered with a brown tarp.

Off to the side a curtain opens. A roughly 5 foot 5, long black haired Mexican with a sweet mustache emerges. His face has a pre-performance look, he is in the zone; he wears a suit and Italian half boots. He makes his way to the stage and jumps upon it. Facing the crowd, he rips off the tarp, exposing his set-up of club/electronic hardware. All of a sudden, an internal switch gets flipped, and the artist becomes Silverio. Grabbing the microphone and fusing it with lips and moustache, he lets out a primordial scream. Collectively the audience takes one step back.

Several months before, after doing an interview with artist Carlos Amoraes about his

renegade record label *Neuvos Ricos*, there was talk about putting together an exhibition at *Boots*. The initial idea was to create a temporary satellite listening post of all the artists on the *Nuevos Ricos* label with visual materials, ephemera, shwag, propaganda, etc.. But after a prolonged email conversation, we came to the conclusion that a live performance would be the ideal, main-lined musical experience.

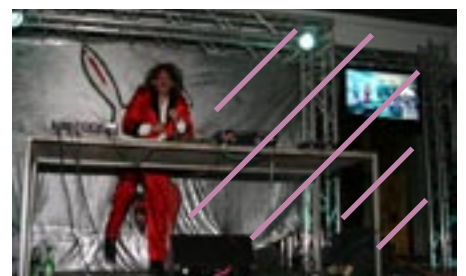
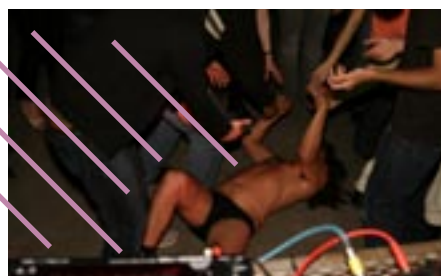
Collaboration with Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis gave the project more of a concert environment, having more space than *Boots'* intimate back patio. Also joining the project by providing generous support was *Javelin Inc.* who donated and helped set up the stage, sound, and lighting, which provided a profoundly unique experience. Working with *Javelin* and *CAMStL* was a great collaboration that, in the end, made possible the blue moon eclipse experience of having an artist that I have been following in Mexico City play in a location like St. Louis, far off the electronica-beaten path.

My first encounter with Silverio was in an exhibition text description on the internet. But it wasn't until I saw a YouTube video of him on a balcony in Spain, gyrating in his skivvies (but also sporting some Italian boots with dark socks), performing to a small crowd that I saw the potencies. I was immediately reminded of Gede the trickster in Maya Deren's film, *The Divine Horsemen*. Silverio's anti-show antics, such as hopping on the backs of audience members, rubbing sweaty body parts on people's faces, and trying to cop feels and make out with female audience members (all of this while getting extremely inebriated) was evocative of Gede's trickster nature of simultaneously entertaining and disrupting the ritual. I immediately

knew that this was an ideal art prescription for St. Louis, which has very limited contact with Latin American artists (outside of the numerous salsa and Cinco de Mayo-celebrating bands that pass through town). Conversations were had with *CAMStL* and *Javelin* about the logistics of making this performance happen, and three months later we were sound checking a wall of noise that came out of Silverio's vocal chords, a nice sneak peek at the evening's show.... the museum staff and myself were a nervous wreck.

My memory of the performance involves lots of yelling, head banging on drum machines, stripping down to underwear, lots of dancing, wiggling and spazzing out, pouncing on musical equipment, spitting beer, joking with the audience and then violently screaming at them, talking about his hatred of the Arch (based on his extreme fear of heights), and sexual harassment of the female audience members. Overall, the audience was divided into two categories: the converted, who danced in collective ecstasy; and the skeptical, who stood on the periphery with facial expressions switching from disgust to awe. After the concert (no encore), Silverio was borne on the shoulders of his adoring followers to a local nightclub. Exhausted from post-production breakdown, I had to call it quits for the night, but the story goes that Silverio visited a local nightclub, where he engaged in a shirtless dance-off while someone tried to make it rain dollar bills with twelve dollars. Afterwards, Silverio declared his undying love for St. Louis, and requested that he be brought chicken wings.

All in all, we would like to extend our gratitude to Silverio for providing a most memorable face melting performance, which has been chiseled into the bedrock of St. Louis art history. **BP**



# EET-EST-CST-PST at TinT Gallery, Thessaloniki, Greece

by Machi Pesmatzoglou



Above images detail from exhibition announcement

TinT gallery was founded in 1983 in Thessaloniki, Greece. Since then over 170 art events have taken place including exhibitions, performances, seminars, and lectures. In 1991 TinT became invested in collaborations with other art institutions in the city such as the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Cinematography in Thessaloniki, the Photography Museum of Thessaloniki and many others. These collaborations have resulted in twenty-three exhibitions and events in total between 1991 and 2008.

Specifically, the collaboration with the Museum of Photography in Thessaloniki involves the co-organization of exhibitions such as the Photo Biennale, an international festival which is organized by the Museum of Photography and has been realized in the city of Thessaloniki for the last 20 years. The Photo Biennale always has a central theme which is then applied to a series of exhibitions, events, awards, lectures, workshops and numerous parallel events. During the Photo Biennale all the main exhibition spaces and galleries in the city focus on photography.

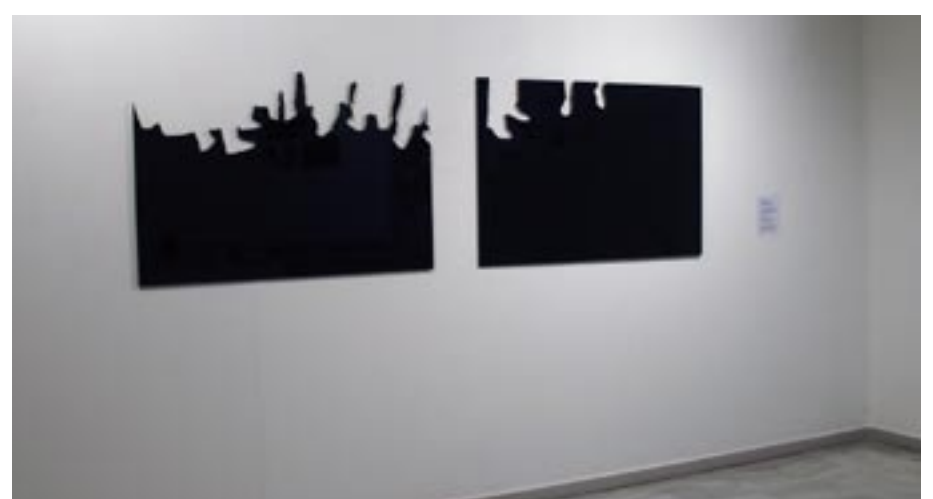
Within the spirit of the Photo Biennale, the TinT gallery in previous years initially presented solo exhibitions by artists Nikos Markou, Kosta Kolokithas, Alexandros Avramidis, Takis Zerdebass, and Eleni Lira, but then moved on to showcasing curated shows such as *The Mystery of the World is the Visible, Not the Invisible* by Iliana Fokianaki and then in recent years artist groups such as TRISTAR, which is based in Berlin, Germany.

The Photo Biennale in 2008 was entitled Chronos and for the occasion I invited the artist-run Boots Contemporary Art Space from St. Louis, MO, in the United States. The founding members and agents of Boots namely Juan William Chavez, Georgia Kotretsos, Bryan Reckamp and Jon Peck were invited to activate the TinT gallery within the parameters of the Biennale concept as curators and artists in their own right.

The element that unifies these four artists is Boots Contemporary Art Space. The truth is that their practices vary significantly and don't share any obvious aesthetic or conceptual links apart from the idea that they do not operate from a singular location. Despite the different principles that govern their work, for the exhibition EET-EST-CST-PST they have all dealt with parameters of photography formally, conceptually, literally or metaphorically.

Photography has come not only to represent the instantaneous moment of time, but also a series of connected and shared moments. The axis of the artists' collaboration is based on these shared moments across one another's chronos/time. Thematically EET-EST-CST-PST is a self-referential and self-reflective exhibition that realizes and gives precedence to the group and "real" time over standardized and imposed time zones.

Chronos is asserted and in the title of their exhibition itself, named EET-EST-CST-PST because of their exact locations starting with Georgia Kotretsos in Athens, Greece – EET or Eastern European Time; Jon Peck in Miami, FL, United States – EST Eastern Standard Time; Juan William Chavez in St. Louis, MO, United States – CST Central Standard Time; Bryan Reckamp in San Francisco, CA, United States – PST or Pacific Standard Time. The exhibition was curated by Boots Contemporary Art Space in collaboration with museologist Eleni Riga with TinT gallery and took place from April 8th to May 7th, 2008. **BP**



Images (clockwise from top): Juan William Chávez, group collaboration, John Peck, Georgia Kotretsos, Bryan Reckamp

# Who really needs Art PhDs?

James Elkins in conversation with Elpida Karaba

*Let's work to raise the bar, and make art education more difficult.* — James Elkins

The pendulum for the new PhD studio practice lingers between serious reservations for the type of “research” and “new knowledge” it can provide/offer and expectations that art and method can be connected with an innovative and constructive way. Criticality (or critical hermeneutics) and reflexivity seem to be the epitome of topical research's expectations, but it remains to be seen whether that is enough in order to create the much expected production of “interesting connections, accelerations and mutations,” and even at some point, as interesting as that might be, to “re-open the many half-finished conversations about the function of the university, the idea of the university, and the coherence of the university.” Or more, to see whether artistic research can go beyond raising questions on the university and academia per se, if it is really a chance to reconceive disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, open up and “push forward novel interpretations and points of view.”<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to understand the new developments in the field, this interview repeats from the interviewer's part, or rephrases, different arguments and positions on the subject\*. I would like to thank James Elkins, expert on the subject and person in charge for the new PhD program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, who kindly agreed to give this interview on the topic.

The PhD program at SAIC is being planned to start in fall 2010. It will be the first visual studies program that grants PhDs and also recommends, or requires, studio practice. It is presented as “not a normal studio-art PhD” as it is primarily a visual studies (visual culture) program. It will also be the first such program in an art school. James Elkins, points out: “We're attacking the problem from both sides: we're changing the way the academic (“research”) portion of the degree is taught, and we're changing the way that a studio-art PhD might look.”

**Elpida Karaba:** Mr. Elkins, the opening part in your book the *New PhD in Studio Art* is quite alarming. Phrasings such as to “land a secure teaching job” and “consider what happened in the United States after the Second World War: returning soldiers signed on for the new Master's in Fine Arts degrees, and by the 1960s those degrees had become standard across the country,” or even “now, at the start of the twenty-first century, MFAs are ubiquitous and effectively devalued,” sound indeed very factual, concrete and functional and still somehow quite distressed.

**Jim Elkins:** That's right! Well, I've been in the “meat market”: when I got my MFA I went to the College Art Association meeting, the big job market in the US, and I waited along with a hundred other people with MFAs, in a special room where they announced when schools checked in to the conference hotel. Every 15 minutes or so they would hand out a sheet, saying things like “Rhode Island School of Design has checked into room 302 and is accepting vitas.” We would all go to the elevator, and by the time I got upstairs, there would often be a long line, going all the way down the hall, of people waiting to give their resumes to the people in the hotel room. Later that day, or the next day, some of us might get called back, and then we would go into another long line for a preliminary interview. Those interviews were horrible: a person behind a desk would hold our sheet of slides up to the light, ask us

one or two questions, and then we'd go wait to be told if we made it to the second round of interviews.

That was around 1983 or 1984. Now it's better organized — interviews are decided in advance, mostly — but there are even more people applying for jobs. That's why the PhD is going to be important: it will be a way that employers can distinguish between applicants.

**EK:** Sarat Maharaj says: “Artistic research as it has been handed down to us is made to thaw and dissolve into a dew.” What is artistic research's “object of study,” how can one identify it, and how can the proposed/chosen methodology be described?

**JE:** This is a big question. It takes my entire book to describe it. (Can I plug the book? It's coming out on print-on-demand from New Academia Press. Watch for it! The title will be something like “The New PhDs in Studio Art,” but it may change. It is the first North American book on the subject, and the largest book anywhere.) Basically I would say three things:

1. “Research” as a term was adopted in the UK to describe the new programs. The reason it was adopted is because in the UK, any time you start a new degree-granting field, whether it's food science or physics, you have to demonstrate that it involves systematic research.
2. Then, from the 1970s to the present, “research” has been theorized as something artists do. Some people really deeply believe that their work is research, but most artists don't think of their work as research. The result is a very convoluted, contorted body of literature that tries to justify art as research, principally so it fits in with the UK model.
3. Sarat is a really lovely person—very gentle, very collegial—but you would have to ask him what he means by that. I hope he is right: I hope research melts away. But what I see happening in the US and elsewhere is that the “art as research” model is being adopted in each new program.

**EK:** Indeed, as Santiago Eraso observes, in *Artistic Research* (in L & B series), living in an increasingly less well-defined professional sphere, people (artists amongst them) are subjected to a continual transformation process resulting from a constant interaction with other professional and economic spheres, so one shouldn't forget that the art world itself is part of a society based on economic networks. How can the artistic discourse work out the “complicity” with economic, technological and political interests eluding the danger of becoming instrumental and mere intellectualism?

**JE:** May I please defer the question a little bit? We had a conference last year, first of the Stone Summer Theory Institutes, on the question of Art and Globalization. We had Fredric Jameson, Susan Buck-Morss, and about thirty others debating this kind of question. The book will be out in 2010. Briefly, I would give two answers:

1. There is no easy solution. As Debord knew, it is very difficult to disentangle yourself from the spectacle.
2. It is important to realize not all artists try. It's a reflex in the contemporary international art world to think of yourself as someone who resists, but outside the international art world — which is to say, in the majority of art production around the world — resistance is not an issue. It is a local, intellectual attitude.

**EK:** It seems that for some free studio-based systems, the so called free activities, are implicitly a subjection to the star system and the art market. They seem to consider particular programs of artistic research as a kind of mediating force, a thinking-doing space for the artist and artistic research within academia, as a possibility and opportunity to suspend the trends and demands of the curators and star-seekers. Free studio-based systems in these terms are considered to be individualistic and neo-liberal thinking systems. I wonder, reversing the argument, couldn't that be the case for the educational system of artistic research, which can be a different kind of star system itself, being subjected to a credit system and to an intense pursuit of five star institutions?

**JE:** Yes, it can, but the objection you are raising applies to all research, throughout the university. It can be the greatest opportunity for freedom of thought and action, or it can be an opportunity for instrumentalized outcomes. It's up to the student as much as it is a responsibility of the institution.

**EK:** Regardless of whether it is a good or bad idea, research degrees in visual art departments constitute an irrevocable fact. And as you said for the small percentage of art students who really need to master some body of knowledge, the PhD is not only a good idea, but also an essential one. The specificity of knowledge that artists produce becomes emancipated as happened with other disciplines many years ago. In other words, a discourse will be established, it will become clear that there is a possibility and a necessity to discuss the produced work. So, and here allow me to paraphrase your words a little bit, how is it possible to create a body of scholarship, other, alternate or as an extension and (not only) a “commentary” to other discourses? What would this be? What is it that you counter-propose to research and new knowledge? And what would be the expected final assessment, can it be that, under certain circumstances, other disciplines become dependent on the artistic discourse instead of vice versa?

**JE:** I do not have a definitive solution. My book is intended to set out the problems with the existing PhD degrees, so that people in the US and elsewhere — wherever the new degrees are implemented — can think about these problems. One possibility is to use the word “understanding” in place of “knowledge,” and “work” in place of “research.” But please note: it is only the university setting that demands answers to these questions. Artists don't need to adhere to one term or another. It's the meeting of the university and the artist that makes these degrees so fascinating.

**EK:** One couldn't agree more that the art world is overflowing with badly digested theories, miscomprehended and sensual, idiosyncratic writings. In that sense it is quite necessary to produce graduates that really know theory, but how could this be related to Victor Burgin's idea of imported theory, a choice in practical work independent from its provoking idea, theory, text, where academic work plays a subordinate and “instrumental” role?

**JE:** Yes. I like that idea. I just think it is necessary to teach students both the primary texts, so they know them to the level of a professional in (for example) psychoanalysis and their reception in the art world, which is often a completely different matter. If you do not teach the second kind of discourse, then the artist can't function in the art world; if you do not teach the first kind of discourse, then the artist can't work with confidence: they will always be a little unsure of what they do. **BP**



<sup>1</sup> Artists with PhD Degrees: Debates About the New Studio Art Doctoral Degree (New York: New Academia Press)

# Gothenburg University: Practice-based PhD in visual arts

## An interview with Mika Hannula

by Will F. Garrett-Petts



Above: Gothenburg University

My thanks to Mika Hannula for agreeing to this interview, and for sharing his insights about both his program and about notions of artist research generally as they are developing in Nordic universities. Hannula currently directs the Ph.D. program for artists and designers at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, University of Gothenburg. He is working with 12 students; and the first to graduate from the program will be Otto von Busch, Mike Bode and Staffan Schmidt in October 2008. Students are expected to take 4 – 5 years to complete the program, which focuses primarily on practice and reflective writing. Half the program credits are studio based, centering on making new works of art; and the remaining credits are accumulated through reflective thinking and writing, where students are asked to contextualize their ideas and their works. As Hannula notes below, Gothenburg's PhD program in visual arts began in 2004—and it is, in Hannula's words, "a program that's heavy on reflection, on a practice that has to be open-ended, self-critical, evolving—and able to laugh at itself."

Gothenburg's website notes that "the area of artistic knowledge building . . . is new to the university and new to fine, applied and performing arts in Sweden." At Gothenburg, "artists document, reflect and exchange ideas about their own knowledge building at research level," and the "research attitude is a significant part of the actual art forms. Research is about taking that extra step and consciously establishing strategies, themes and skills within the framework of artistic procedures."

At the time of the interview (September 2008), Hannula was curating the exhibition *Talkin' loud and sayin' something! - Four Perspectives on Artistic Research*, which "seeks to combine artistic expression with research

means and methods, and which also aims at effecting a productive and thought-provoking collision." Like the doctoral program he directs, *Talkin' loud* "aims to open the way to a free and unbiased discussion of what art research can contribute to art and society."

**Will F. Garrett-Petts:** During the Art and Method workshop held almost five years ago in Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunste in Amsterdam, you characterized artistic research as both "a possibility and a risk." Now that you are offering Gothenburg's PhD program for artists and designers, would you give us an update? What are the possibilities, especially in terms of artistic research to art production? And what risks have you taken?

**Mika Hannula:** Yes, old words come back to haunt you, right? To be precise, I did not take part in the seminar, but I did contribute to the publication that arose from the seminar. Another detail is that we have had the program for practice-based PhDs in the faculty of fine, applied and performing arts at the University of Gothenburg since 2004—that is for fine art and photo. The program for music has existed since the 70s. From the program for art and design of which I am responsible, the first ones will graduate now in October — that's Otto von Busch, Mike Bode, and Staffan Schmidt.

The main possibility is to generate a site for production of knowledge that allows experimentation and risk taking, an atmosphere that cherishes a long-term commitment, a secure project for 4-5 years to focus on and to dig deeper, a chance to reflect on what it is that you do when you do what you do — and then to pass on that information to others to share with and relate with.

The main risk is not to trust the self-critical reflection on one's own ongoing practice. The risk is to produce 33<sup>rd</sup> rate interpretations of philosophers X, Y, and Z, and the chance is to produce knowledge in and through one's practice as a professional artist. Another risk is to produce a retrospective of one's works; and, logically, the chance is to experiment and open up, to do something different, something not exclusively informed by the logic of the museums and the market.

**WG-P:** At present, although the academic climate seems especially warm toward notions of creative research practice in general, it's my impression that we have no clear consensus about the definition, value, and impact of the modes and methods of artistic inquiry. Much has been said and written by non-artists about research on visual arts, for example, but there is relatively little understood about research for visual arts (the suite of practices that both inform and constitute artistic production) or about research through visual art (where artistic practice becomes a vehicle for producing, presenting, embodying and/or performing new knowledge). In your PhD program, how do you distinguish between research for and through visual art? How would you characterize the "new knowledge" that artistic research contributes?

**MH:** Yes, but this certain lack of clarity and openness is not itself a problem. It is — as it has to be — part of the process, and what's needed is a strong sense of an ability to tolerate uncertainty. The plurality of views is partly due to the newness of these programs, and partly due to the fact that there is not one answer to the question. In Gothenburg, the focus is on production of knowledge through the practice of an artist, and a practice that must be self-critical and reflexive. It is a program that

strongly relies on the more radical versions of participatory and engaged qualitative research. And yes, what's new in the new? Well, I suppose that is one of the main risks — the route that hysterically pretends to be inventing the wheel again. "New" is not what's done, but how it is done; it is the open-ended and as transparently-as-possible articulated practice-based knowledge that you produce and share with others. It's the ideology of copy left, not copyright.

**WG-P:** The motive for this interview is tied to the rise in doctoral programs in studio art — particularly in Europe and the United Kingdom (and more recently in Canada and the United States). "Practice-led research," "research creation," "arts-based research," "arts-based educational research," "art practice as research" "A/R/Tography," "art therapies research": these are some of the terms which help foreground, employ, involve, supplement, enact or, sometimes, question either (1) research as a key element of the creative practice or (2), more commonly, creative practice as a vehicle for research. Yet there is also the perception that artists themselves have not had enough to say — at least, directly — about the research potential of artistic practice. Artists are often depicted (and represent themselves) as working intuitively, reliant on unexamined inspiration and working without any traditionally-defined "research" objective. From Plato's *Ion* to the present day, the image of the inspired but unreflective artist persists. Within Gothenburg's program, do you encounter student (or faculty) resistance to speaking and writing about art? And how do you promote reflective practice?

**MH:** No, not at all. There is a tendency for some artists not to trust their own vocabulary, but that is not a problem since the focus is

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on artists' practice. It all comes down to (and comes back to) their work as artists — not as hermetic or mystical entities, but as agents seeking ways of dealing with who you are, where and how you are. It's about shaping and molding realities. It's not about theory as such, not about "theory light," either. The program's priority is the work of art — not as an autonomous entity, but in terms of how it is activated within its surroundings. Where does it come from? Where is it at right now? And where is it moving towards? Ours is a program that's heavy on reflection, on a practice that has to be open-ended, self-critical, evolving — and able to laugh at itself. These programs, then, are interesting and valid for some artists, but they are not for everyone. There will be always people with a romantic view of who we are and what we do. These programs do not fight against such people and such views. Rather, these programs help generate another type of discussion that we think is fruitful.

We are here dealing with artists with an extensive back catalogue; they do not come directly from the MFA courses. They have the proper kind of experience in the field, something to reflect upon and something to take further. The act of reflection becomes a fruitful approach when you are in a position to do it in a little bit more nuanced and even better informed way. And, yes, with professional people, you do not need to motivate them to do this.

**WG-P:** In your writing you repeatedly refer to artistic research as a kind of scruffy newcomer, as a young field of knowledge production seeking its place in the academy. I'm interested in how the advent of PhD programs in studio art might affect the methods and practices and assumptions of more established academic disciplines. What has been the response to your program among your colleagues in areas outside the visual and performing arts? What do you anticipate will be the long-term impact of your doctoral program on how research is defined and practiced in your university generally?

**MH:** Yes, well, it's a newcomer in the institutional sense, but the very act has been among us at least since the 1910s. We have just recently have started to call it artistic research. But the point of emphasizing the newness is to pay attention to the need for a long-term perspective. These programs are not gimmicks; they are not fast-forward theory light copy machines. We are talking about at least a 20-25 year perspective, an idea that seems so out of touch with parts of our thoroughly commodified life-worlds that it feels a bit giddy to promote the idea.

How have other disciplines reacted to us? Well, it depends what type of a sociologist we are talking with. Its very easy and pleasurable to discuss artistic research with any researcher who understands that no knowledge is innocent or neutral, but it is very difficult to get anywhere with researchers who still believe

that what they do is objective and scientifically rock solid neutral.

**WG-P:** Are there conditions and circumstances particular to the Nordic culture and university system that have allowed practice-based PhD programs to flourish?

**MH:** Yes, there are conditions and circumstances at both the financial and the mental level. In the Swedish system, you can't even start a PhD without having the full funding for it. This is mostly provided by the state. Thus, you get the basic financial back-up for those 4-5 years, which is simply fantastic.

Then again, on the mental side of the game, Nordic universities have the benefit of being rather flexible. One reason is that they are tuition free — and that's for everyone. Another important point is that even if there are sometimes fierce wars of words between different departments regarding a variety of positions, there is a very low hurdle when it comes to getting in touch with one another. People are accessible as themselves, not only through the 4<sup>th</sup> assistant of an assistant. Thus, the smallness of the universities makes collaborations and inter-disciplinary projects more possible. That however is not the same thing as saying that there are a lot of those projects. In other words, unfortunately, there is still a great deal of unactivated capacity for cross-fertile collaborations among our faculty, too.

**WG-P:** Does the PhD make person X a better artist?

**MH:** Well, sometimes yes, sometimes no. Students in our program become involved in very, very individual art projects — projects that, to become a research project, must have embedded in them the possibility of failure — but, we are hopeful, a productive failure.

**Questions for Doctoral Candidate Staffan Schmidt:**

**W.F. Garrett-Petts:** I began my interview with Mika Hannula by asking about the possibilities and risks that a PhD in artistic research might offer. Please comment on the possibilities and risks facing students entering such a program.

**Steffan Schmidt:** First of all it is important to note that the PhD program in Gothenburg only accepts applications from artists who left their master studies several years ago. To be qualified you will have to show that you have a professional practice, and that you have a project that you want to develop along with your own working methods, that would both benefit from being discussed in a seminar through its different stages of completion. By adding professional experience to the application list, artistic research differs from other academic fields with fully developed traditions of heroic examples, seminal literature and canons to revolt against. The artist is now constructing

his or her own discourse, and appears in the position previously held by critics, art historians and others, but changing the writing on art by adding the perspective of practice, by writing from art. In this respect one must see artistic research as an emergent discipline, in which today many individual practitioners have more to offer than its interpreters.

I guess that the risk that you mention perhaps has to do with the perception that it is somehow a mistake, or even dangerous to meddle with the identity of the artist, and then of the art. Art is to my understanding a construction, a construct that is then upheld by institutions. If the institutional context of art is changed, then the ways that art are practiced, discussed and understood will change too. That said, the concept of artistic research opens the possibility that it is not about the further professionalization of the artist, but that it in fact makes it possible leaving the PhD program with a completely different idea of what an artist is and what an artist is supposed to be doing. This is once again not the same thing as leaving art for something else; this is exerting artistic agency on a structural level. The future for an artistic researcher is dependent on the research support systems, if they are in place and if they are willing to accept this newcomer among them, basically that there are others inside and outside academia that are willing to elaborate on and further develop its identity.

This means in turn that the creativity once reduced to the single individual must be seen in broader terms including examples of collective creativity, such as for instance a neighborhood, a community or for that matter an art school. Technology has prepared the ground; anyone working on a computer and with software — for instance QuickTime — must know that he or she as an individual contributor is already standing on the shoulders of a collective. By receiving training as a researcher the artist-researcher will travel with double passports. But if there is a "risk" involved in artists entering into a disciplined research it will be reduced by the fact that such art has been around at least for the last 40 years, arguably for much longer. Conversely, the "risk" that research becomes artistic in a "subjective" sense also shoots beside the target, exemplified by disciplines such as auto-ethnography and quantum physics.

In artistic research there is neither a necessarily disciplining object nor a disciplinary tradition. This means that there are great creative possibilities in artistic research seen as a collective endeavor.

**WG-P:** What does your PhD do for you — as an artist — that an MFA does not?

**SS:** It took some time to slow down, just to leave behind the short notice, narrow-time-frame, no-resources-way that artists find themselves working for in the art world. The same goes for the educational apparatus, in which

the individual MA student sometimes feels lost, like someone in a fragmenting rat race. There is just not enough time. Entering the PhD program after spending years as a professional does change your expectations permanently. I think that in becoming an artistic researcher you have to move sideways, leaving the artistic zone as a product of the educational and exhibiting institutions, but not really entering into proper research either in the sense of becoming an expert. This is the marginality of an insider that needs to look at other practices on the outside of academia and of art. What a PhD program certainly may do is to deflate and subvert ideas of the romantic artist genius and art as a coherent and aprioric concept. But it also — and interestingly so — makes research seem more interested, personal and situated than before.

Once, when artists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century revolted against the art academies, they did so in the name of ART and the natural rights of the romantic individual. Today when practically all artists in the industrialized world receive university training and art gradually becomes normalized as one form of collective meaning production among others, the feeling of revolt and the frustrations are more similar to those inherent in academia as an organizational structure—that society at large takes too little notice of artistic research! Society does not pay attention to the changes that has occurred in art! The training as artistic researcher differs from the MA training, particularly because the focus is on practices than products. Artistic research could therefore perhaps cater to different groups and interests working together on issues in which — in one way or the other — art can reclaim a role as a catalyst, but also as a team player for social change, inside and outside of necessarily conventional setups. **BP**



Off the grid  
Mike Bode and Staffan Schmidt, 2008, still from the film

# Future Academy

by Danyel M. Ferrari



Photo: Clémentine Deliss

Future Academy in Laboratoire Agit'Art, Dakar, Senegal, 2003

Future Academy was initiated in 2002 as a voluntary international research experiment to investigate the global transformations taking place within art colleges, and consider the future of art production and artistic research within these environments. Future Academy offers no official MA or MFA diplomas and is essentially voluntary, informal and mobile. It has been supported by the Edinburgh College of Art since 2002. Between 2005-2007 it worked with the Schools of Informatics, Engineering, and Arts, Culture and Environment at the University of Edinburgh to investigate concepts of mobility and the relationship between art and science. Future Academy has been active across five continents. Institutional partners have included Chelsea College of Art & Design, Srishti School of Art, Design & Technology, Bangalore, KRVA Institute of Architecture in Mumbai, RMIT School of Art, Melbourne, and post-institutional organizations in Senegal, India, and Japan. Collaborative research and events have taken place in London, Edinburgh, Dakar, New Delhi, Bangalore, Melbourne, Mumbai, Portland Oregon, Ljubljana, Patras, Tokyo, Nagoya, Yamaguchi, and Kassel.

Clémentine Deliss is the initiator and director of Future Academy. She studied art in Vienna and holds a PhD in social anthropology. She works internationally as a researcher, curator and the director of the artists' and writers' organ, *Metronome*, published since 1996. Her essay, *Roaming, Prelusive, Permeable: Future Academy*, will be included in a forthcoming publication on 21<sup>st</sup> century art education edited by Steven Henry Madoff and published by MIT Press, 2009.

**Danyel Ferrari:** Can you begin by telling me how you came to develop Future Academy?

**Clémentine Deliss:** I started working in art schools as a curator in 1998 when Kaspar König invited me to be a guest professor at the Städelschule, in Frankfurt, Germany. By that time I had started a series of publications called *Metronome*. I had produced four: in Dakar, Senegal, in London, in Berlin, and in Basel. And on the strength of the *Metronome* No. 3, *Tempolabor*, Kaspar König asked me if I would do one year at the Städelschule. He gave me a studio, the old studio of Martin Kippenberger, and completely free rein. I went to see him once and said, "I'd really like to do a seminar with the students maybe on the relationship between 18<sup>th</sup> Century Libertine philosophy, espionage in the Cold War and reconnaissance strategies in art practice — what do you think?" And he looked at me and said, "you do whatever you want — make a film, make a book, whatever you like."

That was probably the formative moment for me that defined my work within art colleges. I managed to do a huge amount and created an alliance between artists and students in Bordeaux, Edinburgh, Vienna and the Städelschule. I worked immediately with four different art colleges and then I linked students from these to the Cittadellarte of Michelangelo Pistoletto during the early phase of the Unidee, his University of Ideas. And I realized I could do things in art schools, or art academies, that I could never do in a museum context and became interested in that specificity, the backstage environment of research and production.

The method was straightforward and I developed it over the years: I would be invited to an art college and according to the location and a sense of current ideas, would propose an unresolved question that interested me.

For example, in the case of the Scandinavian project, I was curious about the different uses of the voice in art practice. Not just the voice as a material for art works, which is obviously very challenging for a curator, but also what is happening with rhetoric. In each case I start the research by pitching it to students. And if students want to work with me then they too take it on as an unresolved investigation. It is not a course I teach on the voice; it's something we work on and develop together, so that they develop their own position, and I develop my own as well.

In 2001, I was asked by Chelsea College of Art and Design to work in a building that they had just bought on Millbank in London, next to Tate Britain. It was a former Royal Army Medical College, allocated on the site of a prison, the largest European prison of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I was given access to this building for nine months, before the architects began to change it. I pitched once more to students, this time fine art students from Chelsea College who had finished their post-graduate courses. The dean of the college was very open-minded and could see that what I was doing was creating a stepping-stone for them into a professional situation. We worked together, and it was extremely productive and led to *Metronomes* No. 8A and 8B. At the end of this process, I said to the dean, Colin Cina, "Look, let's flip this around; there are so many changes going on in art schools, let's set up an investigation on their future."

There are three areas where major transformations are taking place. One is obviously the student body in terms of the cartography of an art college — you bring in foreign students and expand to foreign countries. The second is the phenomenon of expansion, taking over exist-

ing buildings as in the case of Chelsea, or building from fresh as is happening with Central St. Martins in London. So part of Future Academy involved questioning what one needs a building for and what shape it should take. Do you need studios? The majority of art colleges, if they weren't built in the more recent Bauhaus tradition, were built based on a 19<sup>th</sup> century model of art production and education. For example, they were intended for the production of large sculptures and subsequently conformed to a particular idea of the studio. The third area dealt with epistemologies: what would the knowledge base be in the future? What kind of epistemological shifts could you imagine being possible given the global situation. You can't carry on forever teaching drawing and painting as if other art forms did not exist. Obviously you can keep the old classifications, but are there other areas that may infiltrate and determine art practice that perhaps are not expected within the art college context? We wondered what these might be. How permeable to informal aesthetic practices could the future art college be?

Edinburgh College of Art became the key host of Future Academy, and has been the lead in the whole project, forming alliances with several other institutions around the world. At the base of Future Academy was a conceit: to project fifty years ahead and ask with the students "what will the art college look like?" and do. I had to do that, otherwise it would have been reduced to a series of meetings between faculty talking about the problems that they were facing today and not actually handing over responsibility to students, which is what I wanted to do.

All phases within Future Academy have been motored by student input. We have had sev-

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eral think tanks in Edinburgh, India, and Japan. For example, the last major one was at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Japan and was a collaboration with Documenta 12. Here it was the students, not I, who represented Future Academy. Similarly when we organized the think tank on architecture in 2005, it was again fifty-percent students who presented their ideas. And with the very first think tank in Bangalore, India the whole debate was entirely student led. Plus, there have been key students like Steven Mykietyyn or Keith Winter and Guy Billings, who have been so heavily involved in Future Academy that they have elected to become its coordinators. Much of the pitching to the students has taken place through those coordinators.

**DF:** How did students and professionals from outside of the home institutions you were working with become involved?

**CD:** Well, I was interested in small organizations that were taking over the teaching of art or the teaching of new media because the old academies were just unable to be flexible and adjust to change, or were making it very hard for students to get in. For example in Japan, to get into the Tokyo Art Academy, some students spend seven years doing preparatory exams and then they don't get in. The alternative are the kinds of structures such as Arts Initiative Tokyo, that can provide evening classes and are being run by really top-level people. I found a similar situation in Senegal where you had the Forut Média Centre de Dakar, which was originally an NGO from Norway that had been appropriated by the Senegalese management, and they were teaching young people how to shoot documentary film and video and represent the urban situation around them. Some of the students that were at the Média Centre had already studied at the École Nationale des Arts in Dakar, which, as it happens, is not a colonial academy, but nevertheless is still forty-two years old and therefore suffering from a problem of generational renewal. So I pitched to students at the Média Centre and then to students at the École Nationale des Arts and built up a small group with them and then worked with a lot of people from outside as well, such as the artists' collective Laboratoire Agit'Art, in Dakar.

We would hold a seminar about the future art college in the courtyard of the Laboratoire Agit'Art, in the center of Dakar, and artists and philosophers who are not part of the academy would take part. So very often the faculty that was involved with Future Academy was made up of people who were really active in what they were doing and in different forms of research in art or social situations, but were not necessarily teachers. Christos Papoulias, a brilliantly conceptual architect from Athens, has been a key faculty member of Future Academy. Christos has worked with Future Academy in India at the "Synchronisations" think-tank, then in Japan, in Edinburgh, and more recently, at Documenta 12 when we presented Future Academy. He also organized his own Future Academy event in Patras, so he has been a very important figure for the development of ideas in Future Academy. Oscar Tuazon, the 33-year-old American artist has also played a big part. Tuazon got involved when we began working with science students in Edinburgh. With him we did fieldwork in Oregon where we investigated Dwelling Portably, a 'zine on the issue of mobility. Papoulias and Tuazon are people who have very thorough backgrounds in art production and are interested, at the same time, in other ways of working so are quite happy to get engaged in research projects like Future Academy because it provides

an alternative context for testing things out. In each location it has been really important to involve people who are local. In Senegal it was the Média Centre and the Laboratoire Agit'Art. There are always people who are active locally and there have been many productive relationships in Future Academy.

**DF:** Questions of space and mobility were often discussed as a part of Future Academy. What do you think about the place of architecture in the architecture of ideas, should there be walls?

**CD:** I might have a different perspective on that than, say, the students I have worked with in Future Academy. For the students I have worked with, this was actually one of the clearest issues and it came up very early on with regard to future buildings. The majority of students, whether they were based in Mumbai, Bangalore, Dakar or Edinburgh generally felt that they didn't need buildings in the first instance. They sought more face-to-face contact in the sense that they wanted field studies in locations and therefore a kind of plug-in system to enable contact to be played out. So they proposed the "shack academy," built on existing teashops, usually roadside venues where more discussions took place than within the walls of the academy buildings. They effectively wanted a more informal location for the production of ideas. The Bangalore group felt that it wouldn't be advantageous at this stage to invest in a large amount of technology, but safer to wait a while and test out the conditions that might develop over the next few years. So it wasn't just about buying computers and various elements of technology that would allow for this kind of plug-in mobility, it was something else. What they felt needed to be created was a quasi-business model where information, contacts and networks between these students could be developed into an economic set of relations as they became professionalized and entered into various careers. They wanted to build on the structures that they were already developing through Future Academy and create "roving colleges" that might provide a more equitable framework for them than the type of expansionism that we have known from the colonial period and that is in some cases, though not everywhere, being reformulated today.

Personally, I think one should be more careful and more sensitive to the fact that artists, if they work in the art college context, are actually moving into a back-stage condition. And this back-stage condition is enormously enriching for students. So sure there will always be teaching, but artists do not need to do courses as much as to be able to mediate what it is they are working on. In an art college, everybody is in a research context and for that purpose artists like students need space. So I would argue that if you invite an artist to work within the art college, as much as possible you need to provide a certain notion of "studio," rather than creating staff rooms where they all one can do is check emails and then go home. So I'm quite old fashioned in that I favor the artist's studio within the art school context. And that is something that is either being reduced or is, in some parts of the world, utterly nonexistent.

**DF:** And for students?

**CD:** I think it is probably good for an MFA student to have their own space and that it is also good for students to share space. I also think that the spatial issue can be thought of in terms of fieldwork. One of the most productive actions we did with Future Academy was to connect students with studio spaces that

are understood as the conditions of practice in other parts of the world, in India, or Japan; that kind of experience is a "studio space" as well.

**Question for Steve Mykietyyn, former participant in Future Academy:**

**DF:** Can you talk about your involvement with Future Academy? How you came to be involved, and what you think was unique to it?

**Steve Mykietyyn:** I think that my education at Edinburgh College of Art would have been a complete loss of money and time if it were not for Future Academy, something that was volunteer-based and cost nothing, so to speak.

I was a MFA painting/drawing student at Edinburgh College of art finishing in 2006. I was a participant of Future Academy in 2005-2006 and a coordinator in 2006-2007. I took part in organizing a game workshop and "Silent Symposium" in Akiyoshidai International Artist Village, Japan. I also shared responsibility for visiting artists (like Johannes Raether) coming to Edinburgh for mini-residencies/workshops and talks.

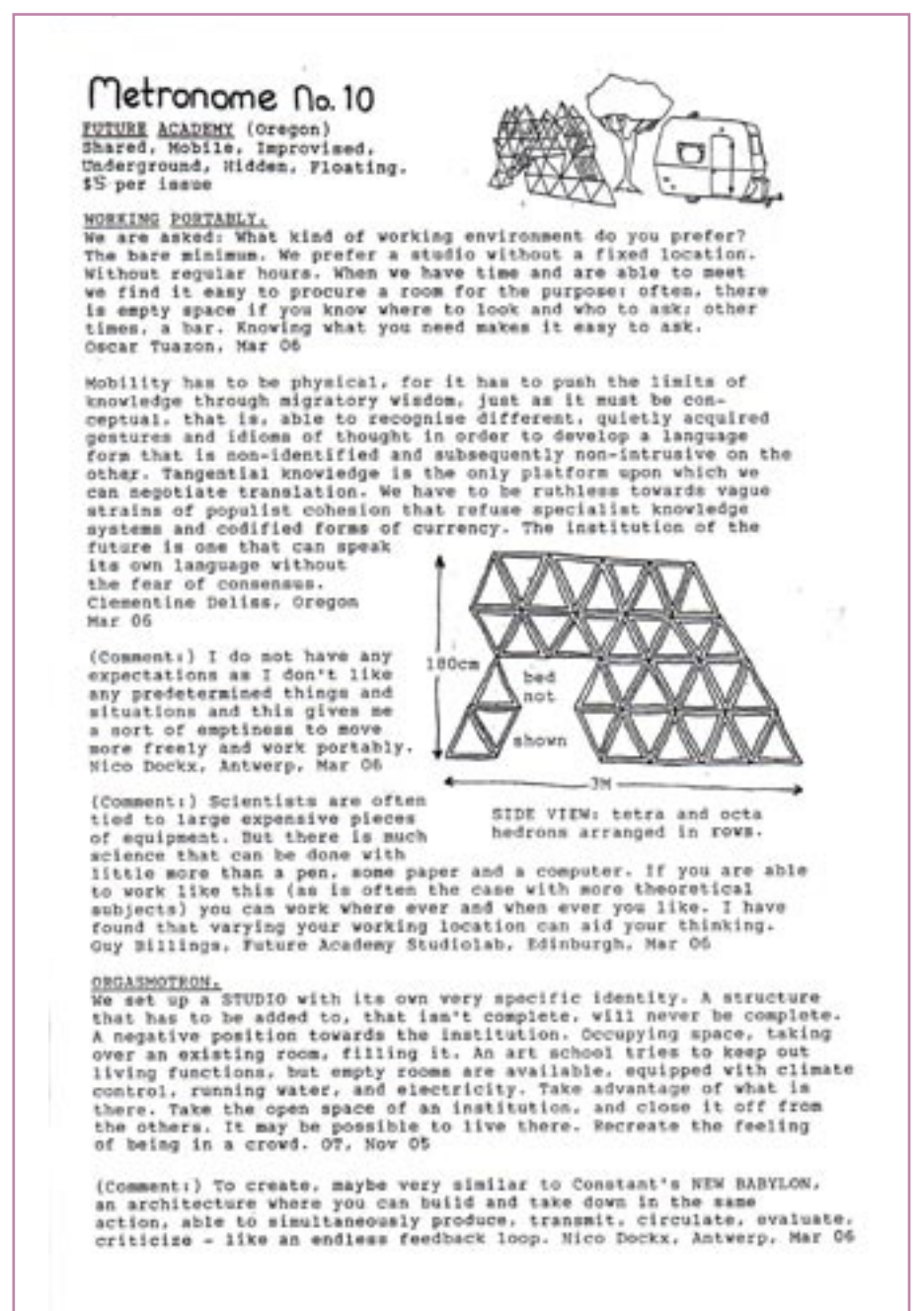
At Future Academy, I helped initiate a project called Cuboid ([www.cuboid.org](http://www.cuboid.org)), which is alive and well, with Keith Winter and Guy Billings; all ex-Future Academy participants. I was responsible for designing the [www.futureacademylab.net](http://www.futureacademylab.net) website and the [www.voiceforum.org](http://www.voiceforum.org) website. Voice Forum is the most recent "living" venture for Future Academy, which will approach questions of mobility, the transfer of knowledge and types of specializations we called "faculties," and it will embody the idea of Future Academy. **BP**



Polymathic Future Academy, Slovenia, 2006



Poster for Open Hustings Event, Future Academy Studioblab, Edinburgh Designed by Steven Mykietyyn



Metronome No.10, Future Academy, Oregon, 2006. Edited by Clémentine Deliss & Oscar Tuazon, Front Cover.

# Akademie Schloss Solitude

by Virginia MacKenny



Akademie Schloss Solitude is an international artists' residency situated in the countryside near Stuttgart. Catering for up to 330 monthly fellowships per year it hosts artists, architects, writers, performers, videographers, sound artists, musicians, economists, business people and scientists under the age of 35. Housed in what was once the summer residence, hunting lodge and retreat of Duke Carl Eugen built in 1763-64, Schloss Solitude has since been everything from a military hospital to a residence for racing car drivers. Opened in its current incarnation in 1990, it attempts to answer the needs of artists in as non-bureaucratic a way as possible with no demands as to outcome or program of intent. Utilizing what it terms "esprit solitude" or the practice of retreat it hopes to provide residents with a quality of time better than they would have in their daily lives and encourages an extensive network of alumni. Akademie Schloss Solitude is subsidized by the state of Baden-Württemberg. Further information can be found at [www.akademie-solitude.de](http://www.akademie-solitude.de). Application deadline for the next two-year cycle is October 31st, 2008. Schloss Solitude since 1989 is under the directorship of Jean-Baptiste Joly who founded the academy. Joly kindly participated in this interview.

**Virginia MacKenny:** Bureaucracy and its demands weigh heavily on contemporary artists — more so now that almost every institution or residency needs a project to be conceptualized and articulated in a proposal of intent before the artist will be granted the opportunity to manifest it. Clearly this is an attempt to avoid artists wasting time and funding while attempting to assure the greatest level of productivity. However many artists I have spoken to find this process enervating, discouraging and actually counterproductive to their practice. Schloss Solitude appears to have a different approach. Your apparent willingness to relinquish the need for immediate results sets your institution apart from almost every other art institution — and you openly acknowledge that the time at Schloss Solitude "may bear fruit later" — the emphasis on "may". Given

the current climate where universities are run on business models and pure research, even in the sciences, is deemed a "luxury" afforded by the few, how do you justify this to funders?

**Jean-Baptiste Joly:** This is an excellent question! First of all, through the particular selection process of the Academy we are absolutely sure about the high quality of the artists we select. Because the Solitude artists are of such a high quality they are totally aware of the unique opportunity their situation affords them during their fellowship. The fellowship, the travel costs, the free studio, the access to the facilities in the house are binding for the academy. Supporting the artistic projects of the artists is a free decision from both sides not an obligation and corresponds to our common interest: the artists want to have fruitful and successful fellowships, Solitude is interested in promoting good projects. For this reason 99.5% of the Solitude artists realize a project with our support. This project can take place during the fellowship or later.

This works also because Solitude is a very big residence with its 45 studios and 35 permanent fellows. When there is no program (if by chance new fellows are not immediately ready to present their work), we have no problem with this. We also support projects and presentations of projects realized by former fellows (thanks to an efficient alumni-policy) who are still in contact with us and like to come back. Regularly former fellows are guests in our residency program.

Finally, the legitimizing of the Solitude activities and the budgeting by our funders (the government and the parliament of Baden-Württemberg) is not focused on our activity program (though it plays an important role). The ultimate legitimization of our expenses is the success of former fellows and the fact that — years after having been in residency in Solitude — they are still in touch with the Academy and with other fellows. Taking a South African example: The Caine Prize 2008 for African writers was awarded to Henrietta

Rose-Innes, who was a fellow in Solitude last year. This is how we measure our success. Every trimester we inform our funders about the success of former fellows in our newsletter.

**VM:** I was keen to read the application form to see what was required of your applicants, but was stopped by the €20 fee attached to viewing it. However, I noted that jurors make their decisions according to portfolios that applicants submit, and given the lack of demand for a final product I presume this means that an artist does not have to submit a proposal of intent or program of production for scrutiny. Can you speak more about the selection process and explain the philosophy and benefits of "do what you like" which is the injunction given to artists at Schloss Solitude?

**J-BJ:** The 20 Euro fee exclusively concerns applicants from industrial and developed countries, according to the list given by the German Foreign Office. For this price we send the application file and the documents back. Applicants from countries with weak currency or from developing countries don't pay the fee; we send the application files back at our own cost. I think this is a very fair deal.

Every two years Solitude selects 60 to 70 artists among 1500 to 1800 applicants from all over the world. For each discipline (music, literature, fine arts, design, video/new medias, architecture, theatre, humanities, sciences, economy) there is only one juror deciding, alone and in full sovereignty, about the invited artists. The jurors participate only once in the selection process and are usually highly recognized artists and professionals. You will find the names of the jurors on our website. The jurors are chosen by a jury chairman (woman) who is elected by the board of the Foundation Akademie Schloss Solitude on my proposal. He/she is in charge of two jury-sessions and is not allowed to invite the same jurors twice — a subjective and transparent process which guarantees quality.

**VM:** Harold Singerman notes in his contribution *From My Institution to Yours* in *Public Offerings* (2001) that, to contemporary art students in America for instance, a completely open platform for production is sometimes experienced as "terror," with students exhibiting feelings of isolation and alienation and losing their bearings in their production. While the residents at Schloss Solitude are more established in their practice than the students Singerman mentions, do some of your residents battle with finding their way in the freedom you offer and how does your institution deal with the negative impact, if any, that such freedom sometimes generates?

**J-BJ:** Artists selected don't battle finding their way because of their quality — in general they already have two to five years of professional experience. But don't think that artists in Solitude are always alone. They share the space with other artists, meet a lot of guests, exchange experiences and knowledge with the other residents, develop their own project in close contact with other artists and with the staff supporting them.

The only negative impact I experienced concerned artists who were not at the level of the institution because they were too young or inexperienced or because this was clearly a mistake during the selection process (this has happened only a few times among the more than 750 fellows we have hosted since 1990).

**VM:** Open time, no demands for an end product and a reduction of the administrative burden allows artists a space of possibility akin to Debord's notion of a *dérive* where artists work more intuitively with what they come across, exploring the psychogeography of the terrain they find themselves in. Your open space, however, is not entirely unfocused. In the past artists have engaged with themes set by the Academy such as *Image and Visualisation* and *Oblivion and Memory*. The central topic for the years 2007 to 2009 is *Dealing with Fear*, a theme that your site describes as engaging the "concepts of the (in)human... the question of humanism" and

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the tensions generated in the “overlap of the biological and technological.” In a time of global crisis, both ecological and economic, this seems a pertinent topic. Do you see Schloss Solitude as having a social bias in its concerns?

**J-BJ:** In close cooperation with me, the jurors and the jury chairman suggest themes which are binding for the fellows of the art, science and business fellows from humanities, sciences and economy and optional for the artists. A large majority of the artists participate in the conferences and the lectures, but again, this is optional, not obligatory.

I wouldn't say that Solitude has a social bias (because I am not sure I really understand what you mean with this) but I see the institution as a huge networking machine connecting people from all over the world who were not necessarily “programmed” to meet and be connected. The Solitude network is so strong and so efficient because it is based on the common experience the residents have when they share the same time in the same place and come closer to topics, aesthetics, behaviours they would never have experienced if they hadn't been in Solitude.

**VM:** Your international residency program for artists has been running since 1990, but more recently you have opened up the academy to science and economics. There are other artists' residencies that combine art and science such as the one at University of California Berkeley Space Sciences Laboratory and the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) Synapse residency program for artists and scientists, among others. Schloss Solitude, however, seems distinctive in its inclusion of economics/business as a contributor. While it is clear that you regard the combination of artists, scientists and economists as synergetic, given that this is a relatively new program, can you give us some idea of the type of projects that have come out of this combination so far?

**J-BJ:** The projects are rather dedicated to reflexive and critical topics. We are less interested in scientific applications or new technol-

ogies in art projects (it can happen, but this is not the aim) and much more in debates, reflections, confrontations of knowledge and experiences about common questions (like those you mention above) from different perspectives, from sciences, business, humanities, art, theatre, music. etc... The key questions of our time are the same for scientists, politicians, artists or business people, but they look very differently at them and generally ignore the other points of view. The results of our projects are collective exhibitions; interdisciplinary conferences and publications that are always open to the public and regularly reviewed in leading newspapers or magazines. By doing so, we try to contribute to the necessary public debate about the future of our society, where the place and the value of artistic experience and practice is unfortunately under-estimated. Probably the most important point behind these activities: they widen the horizons of the participants, and help them to think more broadly about their own work. The sustainable success of the Academy is probably based on the continuation of interdisciplinary collaborations between former fellows after their fellowship. Just as an example, a mail I received yesterday mentioning an interdisciplinary theatre and new media production called Mijn / Koel as a result of a cooperation between a Dutch visual artist (Rob Moonen) and a German theatre stage director (Hans-Werner Kroesinger) who met 15 years ago in Solitude (this can be seen on the website: <http://www.culturanova.nl>).

#### Schloss Solitude Artists

**VM:** To the artists at Schloss Solitude: the opportunity that Schloss Solitude affords artists to “do what you like” seems like every artist's dream — a place of infinite possibility — but it could also be a place of crisis for artists who may feel adrift in a space untrammelled by demands and constraint. How did you experience your time at Schloss Solitude? Did you find the “esprit solitude” useful, what were the difficulties you experienced, what surprised you during your time there and what effect did the proximity of the forest have on you?

**Jasmeen Patheja:** Solitude is special. Before I arrived there I was a bit sceptical, often asking myself “How solitary can solitude get?” I found myself in a studio on a hill with the woods at the back and a valley in front. It seemed idyllic and dreamlike. I found myself a bit lost in terms of managing time because all of a sudden I didn't have things to fill up my day — it was uninterrupted time. I could actually own my time.

This was a sharp contrast for someone like me who has always lived in big Indian cities. A large part of my practice is based on interactions with the public, on street actions and public interventions and suddenly I found myself in Solitude. It wasn't a crisis as your question puts it, but it was challenging. I was also at a phase in my practice where I needed the time to reflect and look back at the work produced over 5 years. I welcomed the change. It was a pause. Due to the nature of my practice — which has been arts-activism — I have worked with a sense of urgency and immediacy. Being in “solitude,” I had to pause. I had to take a step back to see where this was going.

For the last 5 years I have been working on Blank Noise, a volunteer led community arts project that seeks to address street sexual harassment in India (<http://blog.blanknoise.org>). While I was at Akademie Schloss Solitude I didn't stop working on the project, but the time spent at Solitude has given me the chance to revisit the project from another perspective. It has also given me enough distance from the issue of street sexual harassment — as a result Blank Noise has become increasingly male inclusive.

Conversations with fellows and staff have been the most invaluable aspect of being at Solitude. Fellows come from different disciplines and countries. To experience and be aware of the diversity in approach and practice from one fellow to another has been insightful and inspiring.

**Iassen Markov:** My year in Solitude was divided in two parts: the productive part and the cool part. I came here and started working, thinking that there will never be a chance like this again in my life, where everything is pos-

sible. Soon, however, I had no more ideas, or too many ideas, so that I was getting bored and depressed all the time. The short vacations I took to contrast the solitude didn't work. I was even more depressed and sad. At some point my work consisted only of sad landscapes - sad landscape 1, sad landscape 2, sad landscape 26 and so on. I became afraid that I was disappointing everyone's expectations so the end of the productive part of my stay was filled with fear and sadness and bad consciousness. The second part started when I was totally empty. After the first explorations of this emptiness and uncertainty as to whether it was good or bad, a wild time came and took away the fear and bad consciousness. This emptiness was filled with a content that was foreign to me up to then. I forgot my previous experiences and the problems I had in my work, because of these new things happening all the time. I spent more time with the wonderful people of the Schloss and when I go, I will leave many friends there. It was not a time of new ideas, but became one of a new attitude to my life and work... I guess I know now what I will become when I grow old.

<sup>1</sup> Singerman H p 271 in Schimmel, Paul (ed) (2001) Public Offerings Thames and Hudson, New York



Above: Jasmeen Patheja, WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME? Blank Noise street action. 2006. This street action has occurred in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai. The photograph is from Mumbai.



Above: studio space



Above: Iassen Markov, totenisland, 2008: Made for akademische mitteilungen 13

# Finnish Academy of Fine Arts

by Adelheid Mers



This brief introduction to the doctoral program at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki is excerpted from Jan Kaila's text that describes the program and its goals in great detail, "The Artist as Producer of Knowledge". The full text is available at [www.kuva.fi/attachments/jatkotutkinto/tohtorit.pdf](http://www.kuva.fi/attachments/jatkotutkinto/tohtorit.pdf)

27 artists have been admitted to the post-graduate doctoral program at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts since its inception in 1997. 5 candidates have graduated. 23 are currently enrolled and work with one full-time and two part-time professors, one researcher, one full-time contracted teacher, an assistant and a planner. For its first seven years, the program was headed by the artist Satu Kiljunen. After graduating from the program, Jan Kaila, part of the first group of students who were admitted to the program, was appointed as professor of artistic research and director of the Department of Postgraduate Studies in 2004. Distancing it from British PhD programs, Kaila describes the purpose of doctoral studies at KUVA as "to produce new knowledge based on creative work done by the artist." As a formidable challenge he cites the development of "author-oriented theory about artistic practice, productions and broader issues in art." Not only is the program part of the European Artistic Research Network (EARN), comprised of six doctoral research programs in Austria, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK, it also includes international professors and students and expects more students worldwide to apply in the future.

**Adelheid Mers:** Your essay, "That Obscure Object of Desire," which discusses internal workings of doctoral arts programs, ends by focusing out, posing an intriguing, political question: "Is Finnish society prepared to invest in small academic units that do not make an economic profit, but paint a picture of the human condition in this day and age?" This question contains two strong suppositions I am curious to hear you speak about in more detail.  
A) "Small academic units in the arts may not make an economic profit."

In recent years, cultural politics have become instrumental as drivers of economies, particu-

larly in the vicinity of the British and Dutch members of the European Artistic Research Network, aptly abbreviated EARN, that you benchmark against. By not projecting economic profit as an expected outcome of your program, are you staking out a particular place for KUVA, or are you taking a broader perspective against Creative Industries trajectories?

**Jan Kaila:** It is true, as you say, that cultural politics has become an important economic driver, not only in Europe, but globally as well. We must remember, however, that cultural politics and cultural industry are both very broad concepts that cover not only the arts and the university world, but also first and foremost entertainment and popular culture — rock music and Hollywood — that aim at fast economic profits.

You have quoted me from a text I wrote in a situation where the State had driven the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts into an unbearable economic situation, conceivably aiming to merge our university with other universities by force. I formulated the question as I did because I am worried about the trend in Finland, and elsewhere in Europe too, if I'm not mistaken, where right-wing forces in power that aim to unmake the public sector (i.e. tax cuts) are merging, cutting down and even winding down universities and art schools on economic grounds. The social and political debate on the role of universities that preceded this process is in Finland at least much too focused on economic rhetoric spiced with innovation and creativity terminology.

I am not opposed to Creative Industries trajectories as such — on the contrary, it's great if creative work can also be lucrative — but I do think it problematic if the operating principles of capitalist markets become the central content of art and art education.

As for doctoral arts programs, including the Postgraduate Department at KUVA, I would like to see them develop into laboratories of fine arts where art could be created and examined without any bias and even take risks. This is seldom possible in the context of museums and galleries that depend on large audiences and buyers. At the same time, however, it

would be important to ensure that such "laboratories" do not become isolated enclaves in art academies, but would remain in live interaction with the field of visual art and art audiences.

**AM:** B) "Small academic units in the arts may paint a picture of the human condition in this day and age."

That the arts are good for society is today in many places a paradigm in search of a well-crafted argument; not so for the sciences. The outcome desired from the natural sciences is delivered through its vehicle, technology. Far from only making money, products of technologies impact cultures in many ways, determining habits and values that form around tools for communication, health, labour, comfort, nutrition and military power. In a bizarre reversal of "art for arts sake," it seems indeed timely to realize that the extensive discussion about methods in the arts quite necessarily leads into addressing how production and delivery of arts related goods and/or services benefit society not just in economical, but in cultural terms. Is it worthwhile or detrimental to the arts to continue to play out the parallel between the two realms? Do the arts possess a delivery vehicle? Could design fit the bill? Can you build on your phrase "painting a picture of the human condition" to begin to describe a new (or renewed), argument that might frame outcomes of the arts as beneficial to society?

**JK:** It's a difficult and broad question you ask. It would be totally absurd to try to develop some formula whereby art might better be of benefit to society. At worst, that would lead to programmatic thinking where art, having attained its aim, could extinguish itself (I'm thinking about early political avant-garde art in the Soviet Union, for example, where didactic goals were realised as a total work of art under the leadership of Stalin).

In my view, the purpose of artistic research and doctoral training must not be to create some totally new type of artistic discipline that would be research-oriented and involve instant social benefits. Instead, they should aim at the analytical and theoretical verification, further development and even deconstruction

of existing multiple approaches in art, sometimes even their demystification. The starting point of artistic research is to paint a picture of the condition of art today from the artist's point of view, and its aim is to add new and diverse layers to the picture through research. In my opinion, art does not develop in a linear way into "better" or "more progressive" art, it leaps in both time and place in a very complex way. Doctoral training must therefore be wary of committing to any preconceived and fixed idea of "good" or "useful" art. Artistic research can be relevant whether the person doing it is an abstract painter reflecting upon his medium or a community artist whose arguments are political.

**AM:** While my first questions range around cultural politics, economy and policy, and their place in your PhD program, my second question takes up the separation of labor in the arts — production, critique, mediation. It is inspired by my recent visit of an exhibition by your colleague and KUVA PhD, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, at K 21 in Düsseldorf. Prominently displayed on the wall was a note that the artist had created all museum didactics. I had already greatly enjoyed the texts, finding them unusually clear and informative, as well as imbued with a pleasing sense of humor. A museum attendant then told me of the unheard of goings-on with this show — the artist had added works after the opening, not once, but twice. The artist speaks for herself, as maker, as mediator, even as administrator. How much emphasis does your program/do students in your program place on mapping the roles and types of expertise that have developed in art worlds? Can you give examples of subversions, confluences, expansions or other responses?

**JK:** One of the central aims of doctoral studies at KUVA is that the PhD students should be able to significantly expand on the concept of artisthood and associated practices. This is already reflected by our curricula. Postgraduate core studies at KUVA include not only the planning and organisation of research seminars, but also of an international symposium on the student's research subject. In other words, our students are also required to assume the role of producer in art and research. Moreover, elective postgraduate studies include the opportunity

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of curating exhibitions and writing texts and essays for journals in the arts and sciences. In other words, our aim is that PhDs in art would be able to, as you put it, "speak for themselves, as makers..." I believe that extended artisthood is of great social significance in many ways, aesthetically, ethically as well as economically. I am also thinking of employment: a passive artist susceptible to manipulation easily becomes just a pawn in the (art) market, whereas a self-generative artist has the capacity to create new, alternative social and economic structures.

**AM:** My last question is for a current student in the program. Tuomas Nevanlinna somewhat provocatively claims "The Third Space of Artistic Research" to be developed at KUVA, describing it as "not like Continental practice-based postgraduate degrees, nor does it represent the British model with its ties to science universities, where students produce some philosophical or theoretical thesis in parallel with their creative work." If so, how is this "third space" manifesting in your experience?

**Jan-Erik Andersson:** When I applied for postgraduate study in visual art in the year 2000, the program had existed only for three years. I remember being very reluctant about artists having anything to do with academic research at that time, a fact I realized during discussions with some of the pioneering six artists taken into the program in 1997. This might have to do with my background. I studied organic chemistry, biology, botany and art history for six years before I went to art school in 1979. The reason I went into art was to be able to act more according to "feelings" and an urge to "express my inner world," to not follow the exact rules and methods given in the natural sciences. During the years after 1997 I became more and more interested in artistic research programs, perhaps because all the artists in the Finnish program were excellent artists with active careers, and everybody was free to develop research in individual ways.

It was after I had the idea to build an expressive, leaf shaped house for me and my family in collaboration with architect Erkki Pitkäranta, that the thought to apply to the program matured. I had been working collaboratively with Pitkäranta since 1995 and we both felt a strong need to challenge the contemporary Finnish architectural scene. As an artist I had always felt the architectural scene to be very narrow, boring, and scared of joyfulness and elements of fantasy. I wanted to step over a border that no architect in Finland, at least not the ones who want to be taken seriously, would cross: to make a building which refers to items from nature or other objects. My building would be based on stories I had written and have a strong fairytale feeling. It was in this context that I finally decided to apply to the doctoral program. One reason was very practical; I thought that I would have better chances to get building permissions for the house in the centre of the city of Turku if the house project would have a scientific status. But of course I was also interested in getting a better theoretical knowledge of architecture and of the interface between the art element in a building and its structure, as well as knowledge of the mechanisms by which the ornamentation (or lack of ornamentation) and art works incorporated in the building add to the affect a building radiates into its surroundings and the feeling it creates for the people (or animals) inhabiting it.

From the very start I could freely develop my own way of doing the research and this happened in a very stimulating intellectual milieu, where colleagues and philosophers were dis-

cussing the students' works. I could invite well-known architects to my seminars to comment on the scale model of the house and in this way the doctoral institution indirectly affected the final outlook of the house! I liked the way I almost stumbled on the material for the theoretical part of my studies. It happened very intuitively during long sessions in architectural bookshops in Chicago, Leeds and Helsinki.

fact that I found myself curating an international exhibition, WILD - Fantasy and Architecture for the Turku City Art Museum in 2007 together with the Canadian curator Jen Budney. The exhibition included well-known artists and architects like Vito Acconci, Will Alsop, Gregg Lynn, Diller & Scofidio, Kim Adams and Kurt Schwitters. The process gave me an insight in the museum world as well as a possibility to publish a book about the exhibition.

Below: Building of the house, September 2008.

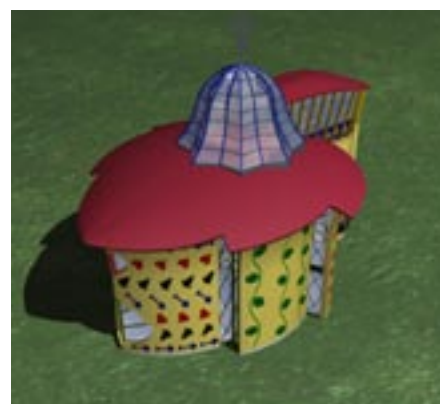


Above: Seminar, on the table is a model of Jan-Erik Anderson's forthcoming house. Present are supervisors, teachers, students and collaborators.

Right: *Life on a Leaf*. Private house/computerstudio. 2004-3D model, 2003. Rendering: Oliver Walter.

I think the whole process — for me — can be compared to a walk in nature, going where it looks interesting and not really knowing where it would end. Perhaps this comes close to describing how I experience the Third Space of artistic research Tuomas Nevanlinna is referring to in his essay. This also counts for the building of the house. I left many things open for improvisation and also invited 15 artists to make their own independent works into the architectural structures of the house. I really appreciate this fact that I did not know — and still don't know — the result of the research. Making the project open for surprises is very essential for artistic research.

A surprise was also how I found ways to use the many thousand photographs I took, without any pre-thought master plan, of buildings and ornaments in many countries as well as during the building process of the Life on a Leaf house. They became an important source for my research and in my final texts I have included several hundreds. A surprise was also the



At one stage of the Ph.D. process, when I doubted my abilities to write academically relevant texts, I thought that the house was enough; it will stand there and be itself, will tell everything that needs to be told. I planned to make a video installation to take the place of the written part of the Ph.D., something I would have been permitted to do, but I was advised to continue writing my text.

I thought that a written and pictorial diary of the building process would be a great way to reveal very concretely all the practical and aesthetical problems that turned up during the building of the house. I also aimed to describe — between the lines — how my feelings changed during the process and how that also might have affected the way the project turned out. I could have described how soci-

ety reacted to the house, from the rejected building permissions to the appreciation of the house as valuable to the city of Turku, where it is built, etc. But during the years I wrote texts about Art Nouveau instead, about the concept of nature in the Arts and Crafts movement compared to the modernist tradition, and also an extensive dive into the theory of ornamentation, which later became the nucleus of the theoretical part of the Ph.D. As a result of reading and of writing the texts I came up with a concept, Iconic space, which I thought would be worth testing. It is developed from a concept, Iconic building, coined by Charles Jencks. In my texts I state that the artistic part of the building — the art incorporated in the building and the ornamentation — are what makes a building into Architecture, and that the use of iconic ornaments and art related to fantasy, along with sound and light, create a mental space in the viewer, which I call Iconic space. A special case of this is when the building itself turns into an ornament (or sculpture if you like to call it that) as in many of the iconic buildings we have seen in recent years (for example the Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing).

I don't think I ever would have finished the texts without the help of my supervisor, artist Jan Svenungsson, who put in a lot of time reading the texts "from the position of the enemy." He succeeded in convincing me that the texts would become better if I removed all overtly emotional outbursts, in other words, made them more academic. And that I should back up my own opinions with quotes from other written sources. I arrived at the point where a further theoretical exploration of the subject would require a full time research job. During the eight years I have been in the program I have always put my art in the first place, the writing has always been done during spare time. This is, of course, a problem because it produces prolonged study times. There is also a real danger that the times get ahead of you. In eight years time your approach might already be outdated! But making it faster would have been to give up my role as a practicing artist for some years. As an artist with many commissions this would need a change of roles and attitudes, which I was not willing to undergo.

I still have to see how the house and my texts stand for a critical review, the time for my dissertation is on the eighth of November this year. Anyhow, the house is up and though it still lacks important features like the facade ornamentation and much of the interior design, it is already affecting the city of Turku and slowly spreading its waves further. Opinions about the house have already been expressed in architectural papers, newspapers and TV-programs. This happens independently of whether or not I get my degree. And this is eventually the most important thing: to get the art done. I know that without the doctoral process the art would not have been as good, perhaps the house would never have been built! I think, like Tuomas Nevanlinna in his essay, that I have not produced a universal model for building, but I have produced a lot of knowledge about one very special way of making a house as an artwork. **BP**

The Ph.D. texts, at the moment only in Swedish language, will be published on the house's web site [www.anderssonart.com/leaf](http://www.anderssonart.com/leaf)



# Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten

by Andries Botha



Above: Exterior of Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten

Somewhere between a school and a residency, the Rijksakademie commands deference from young artists hoping not to dip their feet into the international waters of art pedagogy, but to be baptized in it. Twenty-five artists are invited each year for two years to take residence in Amsterdam and work in the studios of the institution. Somewhere between 25 and 30 Visiting Artists serve as advisors and a small handful of technical advisors are on hand to fill in the gaps. Although it was founded well before the buzz about extensive post-graduate education for artists, The Rijksakademie describes itself as a “post-doc” residency opportunity for artists. It functions much as any other residency — it includes studio space, a stipend for living and working, help with housing — but it comes with a pedagogical structure that mirrors an intense MFA program. The Rijksakademie describes itself as more than just a residency, but always follows with the disclaimer that no degrees are awarded for the time spent with technical and theoretical advisors.

I would like to thank Director and senior advisor, Els van Odijk for discussing the programming of Rijksakademie for this issue of *Boot Print*.

**Andries Botha:** The Rijksakademie invites many international artists for a one or two-year residency. With this international appeal, how does the institutional philosophy balance the tension between “global modernity” and “local authenticity”? Are these tensions necessarily part of the institutional emphasis or does the institution define artistic production as autonomous individual excellence?

**Els van Odijk:** The Rijksakademie aims at access for artists from all over the world, from different cultures, stable as well as unstable social and political systems, from centres within the art market and from so called “zones of silence.” Everyone from South, North, East and West should be able to participate.

Of course, a lot will happen between those artists at the Rijksakademie. However, we only see part of that because interaction between peers happens mostly at an individual level, in the studios.

Half of the artists come from outside the Netherlands, like mentioned above, from all

continents, the other half from the Netherlands, artists who live and work in Holland for at least two years and have their own social and professional network nearby. A few reasons:

- Connection for artists from abroad with the “world” of the Netherlands (art, politics, society/friends) through the artists from the Netherlands.
- Artists from the Netherlands can locate themselves within an international community.
- The main financier is the Dutch Ministry of Culture (Arts department) and therefore it is “correct” to reserve 50% of the capacity for artists from the Netherlands.

The artists, residents, at the Rijksakademie are selected for their autonomous individual excellence and possibilities for further development. They in general have worked independently for three to five years as a professional, preferably having — good and bad — (inter-)national experience in presenting/exhibiting their work, so they can here — “in the eye of the hurricane” — reflect on those experiences. (They are already who they are, they only come to sharpen their opinions and their personality).

**AB:** In choosing the theoretical and technical advisors for the institution, do you self-consciously construct a distribution of influences at a philosophical and formal (skill-based) level? Does the institution believe that artistic or theoretical excellence in this respect equates to pedagogical ability?

**EvO:** Contrary to the selection of the young professionals, which can result in completely different populations from year to year, in the case of advisors, discussion partners of the resident-artists, one can indeed speak of “composition.” Artist-advisors come from different continents, cultures and generations (sometimes the same age as the residents themselves). The aim is a “corps” full of contrast, which is, however, not a unity; it is not a group, not a faculty. They form connections, with different kinds of (artists’) positions in the art practice.

Amongst the theory-advisors (curators, critics, philosophers, sociologists, etc.) is a diversity in views, not an ideological unity. In a way one could speak of “loose sand.” This results in a dynamic abundance of connections with the art practice and society. The technical specialists are not involved on day payment; mostly

they work longer but preferably have their own practice outside the walls of the Rijksakademie as well.

All advisors (artists, theoreticians and technicians) have a lot to exchange when a collegial (amicable) one-on-one relationship develops with individual residents. Putting into perspective one’s own excellence is important in order to cope with excellence of the other. The residents can ask for advice, but they don’t have to. There has to be a reason, an inner necessity or urge.

Many of the artist-advisors are as jurors involved in the selection process. The jury committee — dealing with more than 1000 applications for the yearly available 25 places (of the total of 50 studios) — is international and independent. These professionals will look primarily into the work, in search for authenticity, independence and talent; relationships with the market or critical approval are not a direct concern. Some curators or theorists do participate, but they will be in the minority.

**AB:** Although artists are presumably already working in their chosen mediums as skilled professionals, technical workshops and the assistance of technical support staff is part of the Rijksakademie residency. With the demand for new media skills, are traditional skills factored in as part of the pedagogy of our new modernity? What’s the significance of technical pedagogy at a residency such as Rijks?

**EvO:** Again and again the beginning of every activity is the personal need of the artist; individual and on your own, starting from your own studio. Sometimes the request is broader when some artists connect and touch on a comparable subject. From this point on there can be more focus on a medium, known or to be further developed or even to be investigated for the first time. The goal is to find out if the medium, traditional, advanced or innovative, can give new unexpected and challenging possibilities. The technical advisors in the some 10 technical workshops play an important role here. But the artist activates and mobilises; it’s “artist driven.”

The Rijksakademie offers a broad scope of technical possibilities; construction (wood, metal and plaster), chemistry (paint, plastics and ceramics), graphics (silk-screen printing, lithography, reprography, engraving and off-

set printing), image and sound (photography, video/film and computer). There is no technical pedagogy. The Rijksakademie works with individual plans but knows no institutional curriculum.

By recognizing the necessity of technical support and at least some insight in skills needed to realize a work of art, the Rijksakademie defines the “physical” making as being as relevant as the conceptual phase. Balancing “artistic feedback,” “theoretical feedback” and “technical feedback” shows an open and integral approach.

**AB:** If artists are encouraged to be part of the contemporary museum/gallery circuit in order to be successful, it seems conformity would be emphasized over artistic innovation. The Rijksakademie as a place of Academia seems to be a counterweight to the economic necessity of the gallery. But on the other hand, if consumption of the most relevant contemporary discourses is integral to the learning experience, how can pedagogical structures resurrect the “authentic” or subjective self as essential to the innovative imagination?

**EvO:** The primary meaning of the Rijksakademie for the artist lies not in encouraging being part of the market or emphasizing artistic innovation, but in the interface between the outer world (public, market, etc.) and the inner world (the mental and physical studio). Aspects of shading or diffusing that personal space as opposite to opening up and letting in play a major role in that interface. No “learning” pragmatic tricks and no pedagogical pressure on innovative imagination. That interface — depending on the artistic and practical position(s) the artist wants to take, inner drives, personal handwriting as well as on personality, openness and interaction — is personal and individual.

Of course all of us involved in the Rijksakademie in very different roles have sensitivity for conditions for development. I’ll share with you a tentative alphabet on those conditions, which grows all the time:

**Advice** on an individual level to open up possibilities for new and different approaches in the artistic process

**Alertness** on developments in contemporary art by inviting relevant actors, new actors as well as established ones

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Above: studio of Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten



Nathaniel Mellors 'Profondo Viola', 2004 installation view, Matt's Gallery, London.

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**Belonging** to a broader network of artists, scientists, scholars, curators and art institutions  
**Concentration** as a standard factor by offering every artist an individual studio; a possibility for isolation and being time-captured  
**Connections** not only in the fields of art and science, but also to the world of politics, industry and business  
**Curiosity** about each others work and ideas  
**Diversity** in backgrounds, positions and visions  
**Economical** awareness by being connected to the art market in all aspects and segments  
**Emergence** as a possible state  
**Excellence** as self-evident criterion  
**Extensiveness** by having access to traditional techniques like oil painting, lithography, ceramics and modern technologies like digital imaging, film, video and sound, as well as internet-related applications, electronics and industrial sign making  
**Facilities** technical and theoretical; a broad range of workshops, a library, artists documentation and art collections  
**Feedback** practically in daily matters by facilitators, theoretically and artistically by advisors and technically by specialists  
**Freedom** a space with no explicit frameworks, ideologies or arranged ways of working  
**Global** as an interesting and relevant phenomenon to think about and to relate to  
**Heir-ship** through the presence of antique book collections as well as prints, plasters and drawings collected from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century  
**Hospitality** as basis element  
**Intercultural** environment with respect for every individual cultural and political background  
**Interdisciplinary** in ways of dealing with media and searching for solutions  
**Knowledge** as a common aspect to be shared and searched for  
**Laboratory** a place to focus solely on processes, research and production of new work together with colleagues from different fields  
**Media** as a tool for communication as well as a tool for production  
**Networks** cross geographical borders but also cross disciplines, techniques and artistic positions  
**Objectives** like staying sharp on goals and directions and create conditions to continuously question them  
**Peer** group as a community, surrounded by international networks crossing generations and specializations  
**Presentation** facilities in order to create space

for dialogue and discussion  
**Production** facilities in house but also outside  
**Professionalism** as a self evident quality of the environment  
**Quality** as a constant element in communication, reflection, production and presentation  
**Reflection** as an important and standard attitude  
**Respect** for every individual process  
**Roots** and lifelines through collaborations and relationships being respected and appreciated  
**Scale** as a permanent critical factor, checking if there are enough people; enough worlds to be surprised and challenged (see also Variety)  
**Study** opportunities by facilitating an extensive library and a broad network of universities and scientific institutions  
**Support** by offering a stipend for living expenses and a work budget to produce and to experiment  
**Unfreeze** as a relevant starting point for work, discussion and presentation  
**Variety** as a necessary criterion for difference in cultures, attitudes, positions and ways of working  
**Verification** as a constant critical starting point to create a field where it is possible to sharpen opinions and positions  
**Warm** social environment where lifetime friendships can be developed

**AB:** As an institution, do you promote the assumption that a visual art modernity equates to a Western sensibility? How does your institution tolerate or promote cultural diversity as essential to individual experience and expression?

**EvO:** As mentioned before especially in relation to your first question, the community of the Rijksakademie — which could be seen as an Artists Society — consisting of present and former residents, present and former advisors, constitutes a rich and varied weave of people, experiences and positions: A tissue spreading over the world with shorter or longer points of connection in different places, without hierarchy, without dominant ideology.

One of the clear examples, apart from the composition of the present group of artist-residents, is the development of and co-operation with RAIN artists' platforms set up by former residents of the Rijksakademie in the following places: CEIA, Belo Horizonte — Brasilia; Centre Soleil d'Afrique, Bamako — Mali; el Despacho, Mexico City; Open Circle, Bombay

— India; PULSE, Durban — South Africa; ruan-grupa, Jakarta — Indonesia; Trama, Buenos Aires — Argentina; Artbakery, Douala — Cameroon; Taleb Cherche Midi, Agadir — Morocco; Very Real Time, Cape Town — South Africa; Munandi Art Studios, Ndeke Village, Zambia; Moengo, Marowijne, Suriname; kARTala, Moroni, Comoren, Africa; BAS, Istanbul, Turkey.

#### TO RIJSAKADEMIE ARTIST

**AB:** How has your experience at the Rijksakademie prepared you for your professional career as an artist?

**Nathaniel Mellors:** The support at the Rijksakademie is very broad and quite nuanced, so it's difficult to answer this simply. Key factors include financial support, studio space and technical support, all of which combine to create a situation in which there is a protected environment to deepen and strengthen work and to make more ambitious work — or to experiment with different types of work in ways which are not so easy under normal circumstances. The stresses of "unsupported" day-to-day living and working tend to encroach on these things. At a conceptual and ideological and social level there is also the influence of the international environment and the range of guest advisors, plus the library and access to other stimuli and material which are very important to the quality of this (unusual) environment.

**AB:** Do you see yourself applying your creative skills into the broader fabric of your own cultural community or will you define yourself specifically as a museum or gallery artist?

**NM:** I would say that working in galleries or museums is hopefully part of rather than outside of the cultural communities in which they exist. I am very interested in the idea of art practice as a direct (not necessarily literal) response to social reality. I think being in the Rijksakademie, meeting people from many different backgrounds and diverse social experiences of their own, makes me feel much more aware of these issues, and my aspirations for contemporary art are to fundamentally involve some kind of dialogue with the social and political present.

**AB:** Have you experienced the critical inputs into your work as hegemonic or has there been sufficient tolerance of your own subjective experience?

**NM:** It's not hegemonic because the critical advisors are a number of different people with all sorts of different experiences and backgrounds — there's no one line with it. They are all quite sensitive, empathetic people!

**AB:** Have you felt the "presence" of your advisers as sufficient to defining your artistic evolution or have you experienced their absence as a significant part of your development?

**NM:** This is quite personal: I find I work in a cycle where I like to open up at certain points to all sorts of conversations and questions, and at other points in the production of work completely block other people out. In the Rijksakademie you can do both and this is quite supported. I think it's structured in a way to enable participants to piece together a programme that's right for them. The individuals can set it, it's flexible. **RP**

Rijksakademie  
van beeldende  
kunsten

# Matthew Buckingham at Malmö Art Academy

by Tim Ridlen



Above: Malmö Art Academy

Konsthögskolan i Malmö LUND UNIVERSITET



LUND UNIVERSITY Malmö Art Academy

The PhD in Fine Art at Malmö Art Academy at Lund University typically takes four years to complete and includes visual arts along with music and theatre. After finding his name on the list of currently enrolled students, I could not imagine speaking with anyone but Matthew Buckingham. Matthew Buckingham attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, received his BFA from the University of Iowa, his MFA from Bard College, and participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program. With his background in mind, our interview touched on the shifting boundaries between disciplines, the distinction of art practice at the doctoral level, and the Artist's stake in a PhD program for fine art.

**Tim Ridlen:** First to clarify some details, I assume you are teaching at the same time as pursuing a doctorate? And when will you finish your doctoral research/production?

**Matthew Buckingham:** Yes, the past two years I have been an associate professor at Malmö Art Academy, the art school of Lund University, in Skåne, southern Sweden. Prior to that, and again this year, I will be what our school calls an 'external tutor,' something like a regular visiting artist. I will work with about ten students over the course of the school year on a fairly limited but in-depth basis.

This past year was my first in the doctoral program, so I was dividing my time between beginning my studies and teaching. Currently I'm working on the doctorate at a fifty percent level, but may increase this in future. The earliest I will be finished would be in three years or so, but probably a bit longer.

**TR:** I'd like to ask for your thoughts on the role of the PhD degree in art practice. I don't question the value of artistic research, or art practice as a form of research, but what is the value of having an advanced degree conferred upon an artist's practice beyond the MFA?

**MB:** I think there's a great deal to consider here. Each of the relatively new PhD programs in visual art or art and research that

have appeared have defined themselves very differently. For me the decision to apply and participate was entirely based on the particular offerings at Malmö.

What is interesting to me in the proposition of bringing visual art to the doctoral level of the academy is the potential to raise and intensify the discussion around the production, reception and meanings of contemporary art. For me, personally, this has meant the chance to work in seminar and study groups to reopen and deepen the questions of social memory and representation that I've been working with for some time.

One of the possibilities for doctoral studies in visual art is to create a new space of study where forms of knowledge that perhaps resist the art field, or resist being combined with each other, can be introduced and exploited. Many artists who work with a relationship to research have discovered this in their individual practice, and bringing this enterprise back into a collective place of learning has great potential for renewal and expansion.

We'll get to this in more detail, I'm sure, but one of the important questions is what this "academicization" of the field will mean in the long term. Is it appropriate for all artists doing all kinds of art to do a doctorate? Will the introduction of the PhD in visual art become another bench mark of professionalization, and slowly replace the MFA as a standard the way the MFA replaced the BFA or — in turn, before — the BA?

I think the future importance and use of the doctoral degree depends entirely on what kinds of programs are eventually established, and on how people use them.

**TR:** There seems to be a unique knowledge economy at work in the field of contemporary art. In terms of professionalization in a field or career, how does an artist's position towards the PhD degree differ from that of other disciplines?

**MB:** This question is an interesting way of approaching the problem of "professionalization" or "academicization" of the visual art field itself. On the one hand visual art will never have the same type of standardization that exists in certain other academic fields where the PhD figures prominently. But the differences that mark visual art (and its study) are also its strength. Its being non-standardized is very demanding, if we choose to let it be. In not having any normative path to follow we

must be that much more active in our discussion and decisions. I think the lack of standards is actually one of the best ways to address the risk — especially in the US — of the doctorate becoming, in a meaningless way, the new terminal degree for the field.

It could be useful to consider other disciplines where this line is also sometimes less than clear: history, for instance. To undertake doctoral studies in that field necessarily means engaging with many ambiguous questions of style, mode, representation, scientific method, etc. But these ambiguities becomes part of the whole process, evaluation and way that post-graduate work in the field of history is defined. Again, at the present time, I think the meanings that come from doctoral studies in the arts depend on what doctoral candidates do with their time and the discussions they generate.

**TR:** A doctorate degree takes on the role of a standard-bearer, but you are suggesting that the PhD in Fine Art can be the place where the standard is disputed and given new meaning. Are there any examples of this beginning to happen?

**MB:** Of course there are so many art worlds, all related to each other in some way, and I would say that within some of them the question of what constitutes knowledge has become central. As you suggest, at its best, this could be a critical process. By mutually extending the possibilities and criteria of different fields toward and across each other we may encourage mutual critique. Where visual art is concerned we could say that this necessitates not only reconsidering how we arrive at our knowledge and what forms it takes, but also redefining research. This is maybe the most interesting challenge and distinction for doctoral work in visual art: what does it mean to consciously reflect on our research processes and the ways that we build our knowledge as artists?

**TR:** Perhaps it is not so much that Fine Art is adapting to the model of other disciplines, but that epistemological foundations are being challenged everywhere. How much of the move towards a Fine Art PhD is actually a reflection of the way academic discourse is changing?

**MB:** I agree completely. Our methods and objects of study resemble less and less the preconceived ideas that we bring to those disciplines of study. We have gone through a relatively abrupt shift recently in which disciplines are no longer conceived of as hermetic

fields and instead borrow and employ strategies from each other. History, sociology, and other practices are increasingly used as tools of discovery and analysis in still other fields.

**TR:** The majority of PhD programs are in Europe and not the United States. As an American going through a European education system, do you have any thoughts on the differing approaches?

**MB:** In general there seem to be more varieties of models for study in Europe, or at least the variety may be more visible. Part of this comes out of the tradition of the European art academy with its so-called "master class" system. Part of it is a response to English or American academic structures. At the same time, European education is currently adopting the new academic rules established in the Bologna Process, whereby higher education is mandatorily conforming to many of the structures that dominate US education such as the BFA / MFA distinction and the PhD itself. I think there will be some creativity needed in order to hold on to some of the more open aspects of education in Europe as it has existed.

But there is also another side to the proliferation in PhD programs, not only in the arts, that has to do with funding. There appear to be political and economic motives behind the increase in funding research programs, and in some cases the de-funding of basic education programs. Universities are eager to become research institutions and benefit from this funding.

In the US we could argue there has been a tiny bit of movement in the other direction if we look at the relatively recent increase in the number of low-residency graduate programs. We could also consider the increasing numbers of applications made to non-degree arts study programs conducted by museums and other institutions.

**TR:** Well, since you participated in both a low-residency MFA program and a non-degree art study program, how do these compare to the "new space of study" created by the Fine Art PhD at a place like Malmö? Why not pursue these as alternatives?

**MB:** As I mentioned, each of the relatively new PhD programs is defining itself fairly differently, and Malmö is in many ways an alternate model or hybrid. It is low residency and also offers (or even demands) a lot of the flexibility and self-organization that one usually finds in a non-degree program.

**TR:** I guess I'm trying to get at the essential qualities of the Fine Art PhD, and I suspect it comes down in some cases to the practical concerns of being a working artist and asserting a position between the Academic and the Market-driven. How does the Fine Art PhD position the artist in relation to these two dynamics?

**MB:** Yes, this is another way of expressing the potential offered by PhD study for artists. Both the academy and the market, in their pure or uncritical forms, can be very unchallenging and uninteresting, or much worse. This is partly because academia (or art education) can have a tendency to recreate itself in the form of a sub-market. Some students train to become teachers of art without studying education and without ever really working as artists outside of school. Visual art doctoral studies, if structured right, can become a space to work and question both systems. But this also depends on the individual program providing enough financial and intellectual support to do so. **BP**

# Gender Abuse – or, what it is to be queer

by Sotirios Bahtsetzis

The curatorial section of Boots has started an exploration on the question “what is it to be queer?” Queer is linked to many different discourses that use the term as an umbrella-concept. These queer discourses coincide, although they don't necessarily assign the same meaning to the word, pointing towards inconsistencies in its use. “Queer” refers to people whose sexual anatomy, or gender identity (be that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersexual, genderqueer) locates them outside the “normal.” It is expanded to include any people whose sexual orientations or activities place them outside the heterosexual-defined mainstream. However queer is not a biopolitical category, such as gay or lesbian, but more or less the “contemporary antonym of heteronormative desire” as the Wikipedia article proudly announces. It would be interesting, however, to question how this proclamation is read through out the world.

As queer refers to the identity, lives, history, and perception of queer people, wherever they might live, it is also a highly political term. The self-organization, autonomy and acclaimed solidarity of queer subcultures propose different models of living, experiencing and even creating social reality, or better, a network of realities. These are also linked to a specific aesthetic condition, beyond a conscious or involuntary assignment to any identity or to a particular gender or group. Queer aesthetics – visible in the arts, fashion, everyday pop culture and cultural production – affect everybody.

In this section of Boot Print, people who live as queers, within queer or even beyond queer, have been invited to reflect on following issues:

Does queer constitute an identity in constant flux and is this flux a subversion of the very concept of identity? Which are the queer audiences and how does queer discourse not only create its own communities, but also change the basics of community itself? Can we speak of queer as the new site of politics, as it still maintains a viable subversiveness against any kind of its own academic or political institutionalization? If queer constitutes a new body of political subjectivities or a revolutionary change of perception and sensibility, then is this “brave new world” utopian or a-topian?

And still queer discourse is also about perceptions and sensibilities that affect our relation to the world. Can we then speak about a specific queer aesthetic beyond any gender identity? For example, can queer be associated to genealogies of camp or glamour as aesthetic categories? We consider camp to be an ironic attitude, which focuses on the political subversion of popular culture. The pursuit and admiration of partial beauty in camp discourse (the hair style, the voice, etc.) is often regarded as excessive or affected. Besides that, glamour is an equally strong aesthetic category that focuses on the personal marketability, which transforms people to sovereign objects of spectacle and ever-sustained, thus never-fulfilled desire. Can we consider queers to be such potential camp-superstars? Does the concept of drag performance – a specific type of self-presentation that subverts sexual regimes and depicts exemplarily the socially constructed aspect of gender performativity – point towards this understanding of subjectivity, spectacle and revolt? In the very end, who owns queer? I would very much like to ask this question to everybody involved in this discourse.



course, important, but the fight to become part of one of the most conservative institutions of society, designed to regulate, domesticate, and control its citizens, shouldn't be allowed to strip gays of their most fundamental strengths: their difference, their non-conformist spirit, their sexual imagination. Something's rotten in the state of queer consciousness. It's time to fuck it in the gall bladder.

## Bio

Bruce LaBruce is a Toronto based filmmaker, writer, and photographer. He began his career in the mid-eighties making a series of short experimental super 8 films and co-editing a punk fanzine called J.D.s, which begat the queercore movement. He has directed and starred in three feature length movies, “No Skin Off My Ass” (1991), “Super 8 1/2” (1994), and “Hustler White” (1996). More recently he has directed two art/porn features, “Skin Flick” (2000)(hardcore version: “Skin Gang”) and “The Raspberry Reich” (2004)(hardcore version: “The Revolution Is My Boyfriend.”) His latest feature film, “Otto; or, Up with Dead People,” will have its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008. He has also written a premature memoir entitled “The Reluctant Pornographer”, from Gutter Press. A book on LaBruce's work, “Ride Queer Ride”, was published in 1998 by the Plug-In Gallery in Winnipeg, Canada.

LaBruce was a contributing editor and frequent writer and photographer for Index magazine, and he also is or has been a regular contributor to Eye and Exclaim magazines, Dutch, Vice, and the National Post, and more recently, Nerve.com. and Black Book. He is currently writing a column for the Gay Times of London. He was also formerly a frequent photographer for the US porn mags Honcho and lanches, and has recently contributed to Butt, Kink, Jack, Currency, Kaiserin, and Slurp. As a fashion photographer he has contributed stories to such magazines as Dazed and Confused, Bon, Tank, Tetu, Fake, Attitude, Blend, Tokion, Pref, and the National Post. In October of 2006 he was the featured artist at the Barcelona International Erotic Festival. In September, 2007 he presented the show Blame Canada at Peres Projects in Berlin, a collaboration with artist Terence Koh. In October 2007 he directed his first theatre project, entitle Cheap Blacky, at the Hau 2 Theater in Berlin.

LaBruce was also honoured with retrospectives at the end of '05 at the Madrid and Hong Kong Gay and Lesbian Film Festivals. **BP**

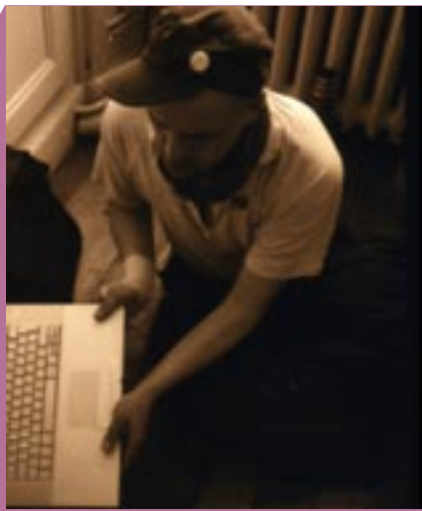


**Name:** Bruce LaBruce  
**Current position:** Writer/  
Photographer/Filmmaker/  
Artist  
**Reading recommendation on  
gender:** *Sexual Personae:  
Art and Decadence from  
Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson,*  
Vintage Books, 1991  
**Most recent work:** *Otto; or,  
Up with Dead People*  
**Hometown:** Toronto, Canada

The word “queer” has gone through so many permutations in the last few decades that it's difficult to situate it or define it precisely. Personally I never really related to the word. I never had it hurled at me as an insult; people had moved on to “fag,” “faggot,” and “homo” when I was in high school. When AIDS-inspired organizations like ACT UP and Queer Nation re-appropriated it as an affirmative term in the late eighties, I was involved in the punk movement and we were more interested in re-appropriating the more contentious “faggot,” which has the power and punch and the underlying historical significance that “nigger” has for blacks. (“Faggot” and “punk” can both be traced etymologically to the kindling wood used to burn homosexuals at the stake in medieval times.) I like the older usage of queer, when it had the connotation of something strange, abnormal, unusual, or suspicious, the homosexual aspect existing more as a sub-text. (“My little horse must think it queer / To stop without a farmhouse near” – Robert Frost; “Sometimes I think I've found my hero / But it's a queer romance” – Rodgers and Hart; etc.). The “queer” of Queer Nation was already for us homo punks a signifier of the institutionalization of the word, a kind of politically correct moniker with a mere hint of militancy and subversion. We thought their conception of queer was a bit dilettantish, even precious, and indeed the “queer” organizations that evolved out of the AIDS health crisis became the foundation for the new assimilationist movement that would eventually hijack the gay agenda completely, leaving us with the quagmire we are in today: queer marriage, queer parenting, the queer as responsible, well-adjusted, domesticated citizen.

The notion of queer, and indeed the notion of any sort of political homosexuality in general, need to be completely rethought and revamped. The emphasis on gender politics, which is vital and necessary, and which the term “queer” has accommodated in terms of the acceptance of sexual difference and solidarity against oppression and exclusion, has nonetheless shifted the focus of gay politics from a broader political consciousness to a more internalized focus, a struggle with biology that can sometimes translate as narcissistic egoism. Gender is crucial, but it shouldn't be the only game in town. In the current climate of unbridled capitalism and corporate hegemony, which has resulted in the political and material entrenchment of a ruling class not seen since pre-revolution France, it's more important than ever for gays to develop and maintain a more integrated socially and politically conscious philosophy of homosexuality. Gender warriors are important, but if the fight is to be integrated and accepted into a morally corrupt and classist society, programmed and maintained by a consolidated corporate media, then what's the point of the exercise?

A profile last year in Sleek magazine of my melancholy gay zombie movie *Otto; or, Up with Dead People* was called “Rotten Queer.” It was the first time I really responded to the term. The “queer movement” has begun to rot from the inside, and it's time to bring it back from the dead. Homophobia is bigger than ever, and gay teen suicide rates are much higher than the average. The gay marriage juggernaut has dislodged homosexuals from their political roots. The oppressed are becoming the oppressors once again. Civil rights are, of

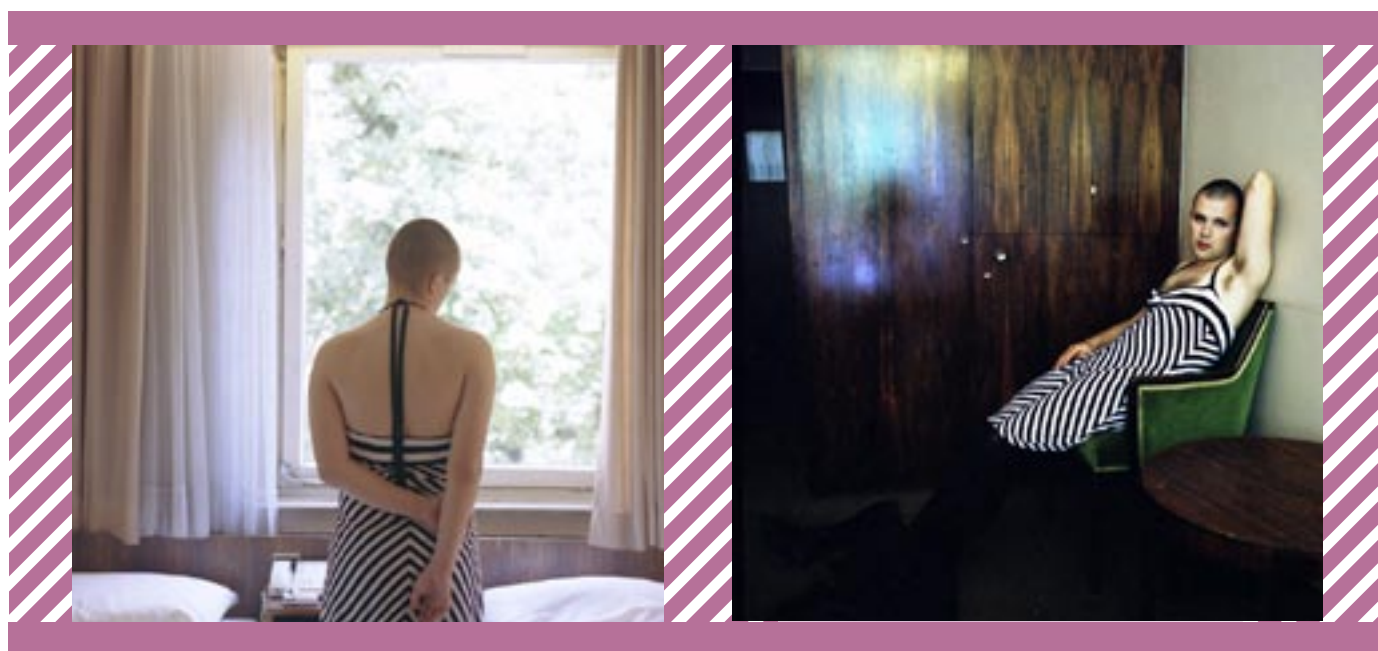


**Name:** Tim Stüttgen  
**Current position:** writer, curator and performer, BA Film Studies (Middlesex University, London)  
**Reading recommendation on gender:** *Beatriz Preciado - Contrasexual Manifest, b\_books, Berlin, 2003*  
**Most recent work:** *Precarios Intellect (Series of Drawings and Performances)*  
**Most recent book:** *Post Porn Politics (released through b\_books Berlin end 2008)*  
**Most recent curation:** *Genderpop Festival Athens, April 2008*  
**Hometown:** Berlin, Germany

#### Queer: A (double-)movement

The roots of the q-word link it to a whole assemblage of material histories and body practices questioning the ongoing logics of the naturalization of sexual normativity: anal sex, dildos, pro-sex-feminism, HIV-mourning, drag performativity, hormone-consumption, promiscuous sex, gender melancholia, affirmative activism and much more.

At the moment I use "post porn." Post porn activism is an interdisciplinary practice (of texts, performances, films, images, parties, practices) looking for a re-actualization of a queer militant aesthetics. These aesthetics (and ethics) are making use of the affectivity and non-human intensity of what Linda Williams has called a "body-genre." If Judith Butler is right that gender is performative, under what politics of performance? And what are the images, bodies and gender that



subvert the symbolic order? What queer biopolitics and technologies of the self are out there that could be a proto-communist remix of the sexual revolution of '68? How do we link criticism and utopia, skepticism and affirmation of the politics of sex and power? As queer pop is interacting with the profanization and appropriation of commodities for survival strategies, they could actualize what Benjamin dreamt of: other potentialities of the objects around you.

In neoliberalism, where every life form is either to become an excluded or included commodity, the queer project feels like the last joker in the game. Nearly all institutions of history, including patriarchy and the state, medicine and the pharmaceutical system, aesthetics and ethics of community and representation, and of course, Fordism, rely on what Monique Wittig has called "the straight mind." In post-Fordism, time and bodies themselves become the space of suppression and production, life itself and all that the body suppresses and mobilizes. It is a time of the breakdown of "the private" (what feminists called the space that is supposed to be political in '68), the death of the masculine proletariat as the revolutionary subject, and the neoliberal project of making life forms into lifestyles to be marketed and controlled. This fragmenting of (national, sexual, class) identity — the crisis of heterosexual roles — makes it the perfect space for suppressed subjects — which have always been precarious — to jump into the lines of flight from a heterosexual system that doesn't need heterosexuality any more for its means of production.

Through what Butler calls "being outside oneself," meaning on the one hand sexual ecstasy and on the other hand vulnerability to violence, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and so on, queer practices have always been (appropriation-) arts of the self produced through loneliness and shame. The precarious intellect of a body who feels exposed and not one with itself becomes a new creativity, an alternative, a different value questioning how to enjoy, move, dress, fuck, produce culture, live, die.

Queer culture is produced through various double-movements and contradictions. One would be between glamour and precariousness, a precariousness, which is for a lot of queer identities not only one of the body and recognition, but also one of economy. Another one would be the humanist dream of inclusive democracy versus a critique of the communitarian per se. Also, there are different important temporalities of "queer." For some contexts in some countries it might already be sold out, while it could be the best way towards a new micropolitics in others. But the core one would be the movement between questioning heteronormativity (which, at the end, would not only involve the dualism male/female, but also the dualism heterosexual/homosexual) and being historically grounded on homosexual identity-formations.

"Everyone knows that some lesbians and gay men could never count as queer, and other people vibrate to the chord of queer without having much same-sex eroticism or without routing their same-sex eroticism

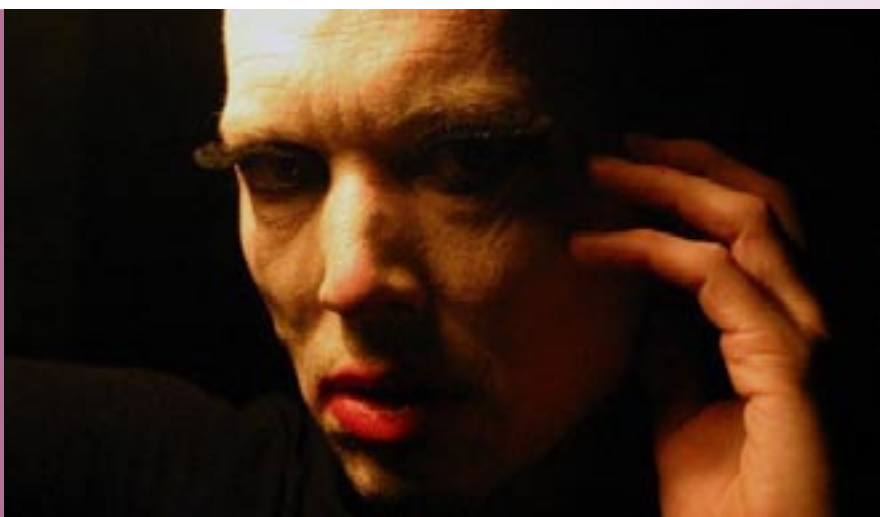
through identity-labels 'lesbian' or 'gay.' Yet many of the performative identity vernaculars that seem most recognizably 'flushed' with shame-consciousness and shame-creativity do cluster intimately around lesbian and gay worldly spaces..."

Whatever will happen with the inclusion, commercialization and academization of sexual diversity? There will always be precarious bodies. I hope, the queer project might offer them helpful strategies of survival — or even useful revolutionary machines for a new community to come.

*Sedgwick, Eve Kosovsky: "Queer Performativity: Warhol's Shyness / Warhol's Whiteness", in: Doyle, Flatley, Munoz (Ed.): Pop Out - Queer Warhol. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.*

#### Bio:

Tim Stüttgen is author and artist. He holds a BA in Film Studies (London / Berlin) and was Postgraduate Re-researcher at the Jan Van Eyck Academy, Maastricht. As a journalist and theorist he has published on afro-american and asian popculture, cinema, performance art, queer and feminist politics and poststructuralism. At the moment he is editing a reader on Deleuze / Guattari (b\_books) with Nicolas Siepen and publishing the reader "post / porn / politics", after the self-named symposium at Berlin Volksbuehne in 2006. 2008 he curated the performance festival "genderpop" with Margarita Tsomou at Bios, Athens, GR. Under his drag queen alter ego Timi Mei Monigatti he has performed in various contexts and countries. [www.postpompolitics.com](http://www.postpompolitics.com) **BP**



**Name:** Jørgen Callesen  
**Artist Name:** Miss Fish  
**Current position:** Performance artist, Media Artist, Curator, Activist  
**Reading recommendation on gender:** *Queer Power #2, zine Published by Queer Jihad - Copenhagen*  
**Most recent work:** *Emotional Fish #2 performed at Koh-I-noor.org, Copenhagen 11.*  
**Hometown:** Copenhagen, Denmark

#### Who is miss Fish ? Thoughts about issue based art

MISS FISH is inspired by punk rock, electronic music, puppet theater, butoh, dark german movies, the beauty of the ocean and the infinity of the mind.

Since his debut in 2001 miss fish has done performances, installations, actions, lectures & concerts in different collaborations all over Europe.

Miss Fish claims to be 50% man, 50% woman and 50% fish. A normal, healthy human being is considered to be 100% and "a whole,"

but Miss Fish is an art project, an artifact and a metaphor for a lifestyle and an identity beyond ancient and traditional heteronormative gender constructions. However Miss Fish is "made of" a real person — a "me" — with a history and a habitus positioned in an actual contemporary social context.

The character Miss Fish embodies and communicates my attempt to navigate in the personal, private, individual, fragile and experience-based existence, through an aestheticized, conceptualized, speculative artistic project.

In 2007 I founded the artist and activist driven performance space warehouse9.dk with the ambition to mix social, artistic and sexual political strategies. Warehouse9 is a formal platform where artists can present their work on queer or other issues and also a community, where people use the art space as a safe informed environment for artistic reflections on personal, real-life experience. But what is the background for this; is there a need for such a thing as "issue based art"?

When I, as a young gay man back in the 1980s, was looking for theoretical and intellectual answers to my ever present feeling of alienation and marginalization, the only proper source of information in Denmark was Kvinno.dk — a center for Information on women and gender. Reading the Book Men in Feminism, by Alice Jardine and Paul Smith, made me think that a new discourse was needed that was able to grasp the social, artistic, intellectual, political and theoretical issues beyond biologist and separatist perspectives, and also able to handle irrational bodily, spiritual, sexual and emotional experiences. At this point it was clear to me that such a discourse would imply the investment of my own life as a material for my theory and art work.

From this experience, I and other like-minded artists and queers founded the sexual political performance group "dunst.dk" in 2001 (dunst=odor). We made a manifesto with 10 statements reflecting that apart from the overall purpose of sharing experiences in transgressing gender boundaries, everything must be debatable. Categories are helpful

continued on page 25



for contemplation and social positioning but are also restricting new manifestations and development. By constantly subverting gender boundaries and developing new looks, Miss Fish and the other trash drag artists from Dunst became the elephant men and women on the queer scene in Copenhagen and Europe. But to the established academic institutions and the art scene within theater, film, performance and fine arts, these activities were mostly perceived as private, provocative, extreme and exotic.

We quickly realized that when you operate outside the safe and rigid categories of the LGBT community the frontiers are everywhere. You are in an unprotected maze where you can only exist through your ability to create manifestations of your position and constantly to redefine this position.

Attending the one day event Perform History, January 26, 2008 at the Institute of contemporary art in Copenhagen (Overgaden.org) with presentations of art projects where the material was reenactments of other people's lives, identity and history, it became obvious to me that such art work can only legitimize itself if it also reflects how it aims to represent these people. There is an overwhelming risk of "exploitation" when any social, political or aesthetic movement is used by artists to position themselves, since the original people who actually started the movements and carried out the actions had a different agenda and didn't necessarily see themselves as "artists." On the other hand, by entering an academic discourse or the discourse of art critique, new issues can be discussed and introduced to the public.

These dilemmas are central in the performances, actions and installations by Miss Fish, such as the performance lectures "Dr. Fish and the Deviants" and "the Platypus complex," which are a satire on the classification attempts within gender studies, psychology, biology and sociology. Or the action "Looking for a job", where Miss Fish formally applies for a position as a lecturer in Performance Design at Roskilde University – a position for which her alter ego Jørgen Callesen is qualified.

The interactive installation "Emotional Fish" (2007) is a more subtle comment on how to perform gendered acts in public spaces. The site-specific video installation represents Miss Fish as a mix of 5 archetypal entities – a woman, a man, a goddess, a demon and a fish. Each entity can be activated visually through

movements, which are registered by infrared sensors, whereby the gendered acts of Miss Fish become a dialogue with the audience.

These works, the experiences from the Dunst group and also the many art projects and activities in warehouse9.dk is evidence to me that a specific aesthetic emerges from people living queer lifestyles – being artists or not! It is specific expressions which serve to create spaces, which can not be governed by rational discourses, laws and legislations. This answers the question of the necessity of "issued-based art," of which Miss Fish's 150% are just a small part.

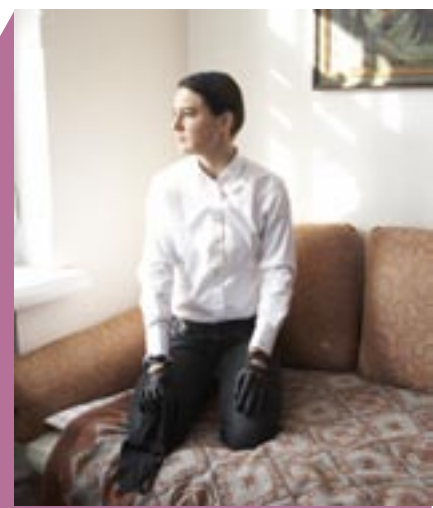
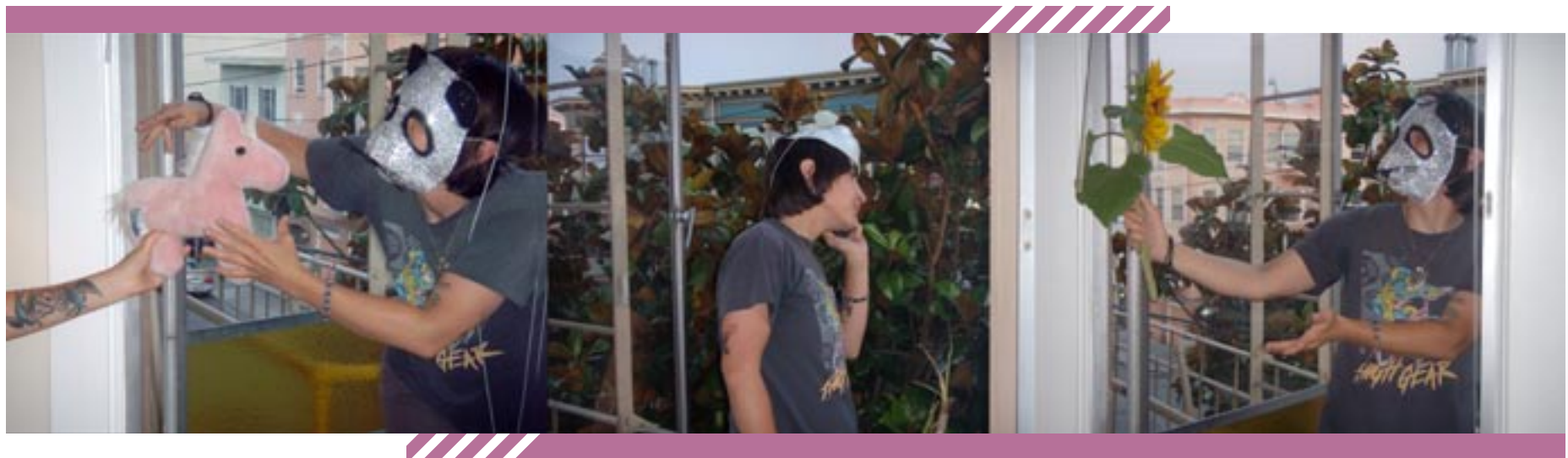
**Bio**

Born 1966, moved back to Denmark to study Information & media studies at Aarhus

University. During and after the academic studies Jørgen lived in London and Berlin for a number of years and now lives in Copenhagen, DK. Finished a Ph. D. in 1995 with a dissertation about Mixed Reality, Media Art and Performance.

In Copenhagen Jørgen is the co-funder of the queer poly-sexual activist and performance group "dunst" (www.dunst.dk) in 2000 and the performance & media art space warehouse9.dk in 2007.

As an artist Jørgen works under the pseudonym miss fish - a queer art project challenging notions of gender, identity and media representation in late modern society. **BP**



**Name: Susanne M. Winterling**  
**Current position: Artist**  
**Reading recommendation on gender: All of Helene Cixous and all of Jane Ward**  
**Most recent work: An exhibition entitled Isadora's Schal in Stuttgart at Parrotta Contemporary**  
**Hometown: Berlin, Germany**

Gender identity or denial of a concept of it? The rebellion against is a constant questioning and scratching of surfaces, and part of a political subjectivity, of course, in relation to a sensual appeal that is rooted in life and culture, and vice versa.

Not sure what a contribution in language from my part can be, I would rather address even more questions as I don't believe there can be anything apart from a respect for individuality and a respect to difference in general. (Maybe I should quote Helene Cixous??)

But the topic is intriguing as it sums up a lot, ranging from what is political engagement from the point of cultural production to what is style and aesthetics of life in relation to certain works of art and the personality behind? Is there an aesthetic that can be approached in any but a personal way??? And then, if the personal finds an expression that is part of the cultural life when do we talk about queer-, gay-camp??? Does that mean or denote anything??

Is trying to describe and stereotype it, like Susan Sontag, not the end of it? Ok that's not a new thought I know but taking that serious is... "Lets take Maria Montez for granted" and we

are back to the Recherché du Temps Perdu where Proust is talking exactly about this as a somehow outside perspective of sensing and seeing touching and listening to ordinary things. An inversion, and that allows a perception and sensibility that can only be understood by

And what about the creation of a dyke cultural deprivation chamber for erotic reasons?

She is overestimated but she's out big style for a while that pays off at one point in these circles... No, its leather in boys and girls.

Queer is a sensibility, more or less, to difference and respect that has a reaction that is pink and formerly loud, now maybe preferably another quiet loudness, one of neurotic desperate housewives as well as not just the dyke rider, but are we really aware of the fact that we are actually confirming the gender difference in these acts of emphasizing??? So the introverted judge is sexier than the drag. Sure, that's a difficult history, but maybe difference can be embraced like Hoelderlin and not so much like Klaus Nomi, or both?

But that also takes into consideration that we have queerness in all the classes including the

get-lost-in-fighting-la-bourgeoisie small margins for example.

How can I ever start to distinguish art and life? This is the Wittgenstein problem. I just don't know what these terms refer to. I cannot conceive of them as separate entities in any way.

Seeee? Here we go, inevitably misunderstood.

**Bio**

Susanne m Winterling is an artist born in Rehau, based in Berlin, Germany. Among other projects she is the author of a screening program called The fantasy of failed utopias and a girls daydream... a film and video screening that includes different artistic positions on the topic of gender identity and its structures ...as I believe that is what it is a constantly knitting and loosening network of visual ideas as well as languages and gestures and there we are back to the question of a queer aesthetic or rather visual ethics as we might quote the L word being lesbian has become ...about being political ...in a different way than in the 70s whatever it means. **BP**

# A Couple Thousand Words About A Couple Thousand Films About Glenn Gould

by Tim Ridlen



Photo: Colin Davison, courtesy of Film and Video Umbrella

Couple Thousand Words about A Couple Thousand Films About Glenn Gould installation

Cory Arcangel is quickly coming to define a genre of art I had all but given up on. I won't try and say precisely what that genre is, but have a look at his prolific career and you'll get the idea. Working with the Beige Programming group, Arcangel began as an artist in the tradition of Radical Software, inheriting the sensibility if not the aspirations of early video and computer artists. With an education in music, Arcangel manages to stand in particularly well for the cultural producers/receivers we'd like to pretend we are becoming.

"A Couple Thousand Short Films about Glenn Gould" was a video project by Cory Arcangel that began with a software program for editing video. Arcangel's innovation was to create a program that first composed individual notes at a rate faster than other video programs based on 25 or 30 frames per second. The book is a small edition, 1106, the same as the number of frames — or films — in Arcangel's video. The bulk of the pages are taken up by a text Paul Morley has written in short fragments, presumably to imitate in essence the fragmentary style of Gould's recording. Additional contributions by Arcangel, Steven Bode, and Dexter Sinister make up a headlong plunge down the rabbit hole that is electronic music and culture from the Moog synthesizer to the YouTube clips that make up Arcangel's video. While it is difficult to explain every aspect of the project, let this interview stand as an introduction to a one of the most understated artist books/exhibition catalogs of the year. What follows is a verbatim Instant Message conversation with Cory Arcangel about the publication.

**me:** Thanks for meeting me here in the world of Instant Messaging.

There are tons of interviews already out there on the web -- your web presence is very strong -- BUT! we are here to talk about this book, and only this book: A Couple Thousand Short Films About Glenn Gould

**cory.arcangel:** cool

im not a big "chatter" so when i log on, all my friends who have never seen me on this are "chatting" me :) so its like raining chat windows right now :)

**me:** Do you know the "invisible" feature?

**cory.arcangel:** no

**me:** it's wonderful,,, I use it when my mom's online

**cory.arcangel:** oh i just saw that k, give me a moment to not be rude and tell people im gonna go underground for a bit

**me:** cool

**cory.arcangel:** ok

cool r u going to include that part about your mom?

that would be nice

**me:** Ok, So when you introduced this book, you seemed more excited about the book

then the project that actually begat the book. Is that still the case?

\*yes

**cory.arcangel:** hahahaha

lol

yeah, the video was so difficult to make, i still have nightmares about it the book was pretty easy, so thus the difference in energy

**me:** Well, I gotta say, I love the book because there's so many levels going on... We're adding to it right now, not to creep you out.

But, when you told me about, you said it was meant to be read from back to front. Is that a suggestion or a rule?

**cory.arcangel:** oh yeah, another "unedited" about a book about editing? :) suggestion

**me:** Well, it certainly cut to the chase... I mean, it explained itself a lot faster...

**cory.arcangel:** "cut"...nice pun also "faster"

well, to b serious, the entire book was based off of p.morley's essay

**me:** The interview in the back is helpful in explaining all that's going on in the project of the same name. Without the book, one might gloss over the "nightmarish" work you put into the video...

Ahh, I was gonna ask, where did it all start and if it was meant as an exhibition catalogue.

**cory.arcangel:** yes, it started as a catalog, or thats what FVU [Film and Video Umbrella] normally does.....but then Dexter and I and Steven from FVU wanted to do something that was more an addendum to the work, the a normal catalog.....

.....this decision was partly based on the history of Paul Morley's writing.....so we decided to have him write his thing first, and then base the book off of that

**me:** Yeah, it is totally a supplement, not a compliment ... Can you tell me a bit about his writing?

In general, before this text?

**cory.arcangel:** Well, I was familiar with his book "Words and Music" which is a great book trying to kinda explain the history of the last 100 years of music in between 2 songs: Cant get you outta my head by Kylie, an I am Sitting in a Room by Lucier

**me:** Ok, so does he always write in this fragmented style?

**cory.arcangel:** Well, I am not familiar with all of his writing, but I can say that the sentences in the book from his essay are all copied from the web

continued on page 27



# Writings of Manto in English Clothes

by Asma Kazmi

Writing about his translation of Victor Hugo, Manto explained that he had dressed Hugo's masterpiece in Urdu clothes. *Mootni* and *Khushai*, two powerful short stories of Manto, feel ill at ease in English clothes. Perhaps this is so because this work is a product of the post-colonial examination of cultural decay in South Asia. *Khushai* is a tale of sexual anxiety and the social constructs of masculine identity. I chose *Mootni* because of its raw and vivid descriptions of human waste and degradation, serving as a metaphor for the corroding sociopolitical climate at the time of partition of India.

Manto was born in 1912, in the province of Punjab in India. After the partition of the Indian Subcontinent, Manto moved to Lahore, Pakistan. Much of his writing deals with this historical moment and its impact on people of all social classes. The partition led to a huge transfer of people across the Indian-Pakistani border, giving rise to a bloody ethnic conflict. Manto's fictional work reinterprets South Asian history from the point of view of the man on the street, the prostitute, the inmate at an insane asylum.

## Shithouse

A short distance from the Congress House and Jinnah Hall is a public latrine. This latrine is called "shithouse" in Bombay's vernacular. Nearby neighborhoods dump their filth outside this polluted dark room. The intense stench that surrounds the "shithouse" forces men to cover their noses when walking through the market.

He found himself near the "shithouse" and he needed to take a piss. In this predicament, he covered his nose with a handkerchief and held his breath before entering the stinking shit hole. Inside, feces were bubbling on the floor and the walls were covered in diagrams of the human reproductive organs. On the wall in front of him were these words written with coal:

"Pakistan is the Muslims' sisters' cunt. Fuck it!"

These words magnified the foul smell and he hurried to leave this place.

The government controls Jinnah Hall and the Congress House, yet the "shithouse" comes under no jurisdiction. It freely flaunts its rotten putridity. The outside of this structure is embellished by piles of garbage, brought here from nearby neighborhoods. These obscene mounds keep growing.

On another day, he had to urinate. He reluctantly covered his nose and entered the "shithouse." Runny diarrhea was drying in a crusty mass on the floor. Illustrations of procreative genitalia had multiplied. Someone responding to "Pakistan is the Muslims' sister's cunt. Fuck it!" wrote these vulgar words underneath it:

"Hindustan is the Hindus' mothers' cunt. Fuck it hard!"

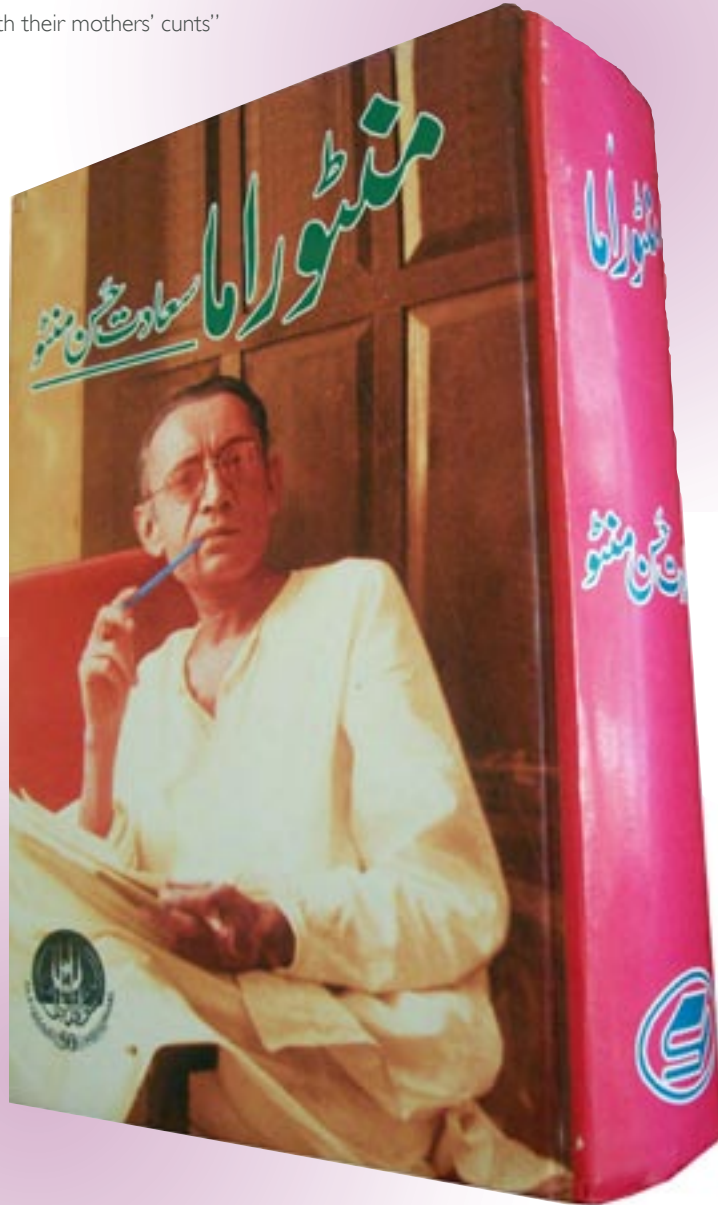
Reading this heightened the stench for him to a repugnant acidic level. He rushed out of there.

Mahatma Gandhi was unconditionally released from prison. Mohammed Ali Jinnah lost Punjab and had no support from the Muslim majority areas in the creation of the new nation. Jinnah Hall and the Congress House were neither released nor lost. They remained as they always were: under the control of the government and oppressed from the stench of the "shithouse." Neighborhoods in close proximity kept bringing heaps of their garbage and filth here.

For the third time he was forced to use the "shithouse," this time not just to urinate. He covered his nose, held his breath and entered this lair of putrescence. The floor was infested with vermin and the walls were drowning with images of shameful parts of the human body.

The words "Pakistan is the Muslims' sisters' cunt. Fuck it!" and "Hindustan is the Hindus' mothers' cunt. Fuck it hard!" were overpowered by other obscenities. Conspicuous and bold, written in white chalk were the following words:

"Fuck both their mothers' cunts"



Momentarily, he forgot about the foul smell that surrounded him. Slowly, he left the "shithouse," his olfactory senses creating an illusion that there was an unnamable scent in the air. This was a fleeting mirage.

## Khushia (an excerpt)

Spending time on the dark platform was part of Khushia's routine. He had visited Khaitwari's fifth lane today, before making his way to the platform. Kanta, who had recently moved here from Mangoor, lived at the edge of the fifth lane. Khushia was told that she was changing her home. To confirm this news he had gone to see her.

He knocked on Kanta's door and he heard her voice, "Who is it?" He replied, "I am Khushia."

The door opened after a short delay. Khushia entered and was shocked at what he saw when he turned around. He saw Kanta completely naked. She was practically completely naked even though she was holding a towel up to her body. But one cannot say that she was covered, because all the body parts that need to be concealed were completely exposed in front of Khushia's shocked eyes.

"What brings you here, Khushia? I was about to go and take a bath...sit...sit...you should have asked the guy outside for a cup of tea... you know, Rama ran away."

Khushia was one whose eyes had never seen a woman naked so abruptly. He was disturbed and speechless. He had set eyes on shameful-ness without warning and he wanted to hide somewhere.

In a hurry, all he could say was, "go...go take a bath." The his tongue loosened, "If you were naked, why did you open the door? You could have called out...I would have come back... but go...take a bath."

He was still seeing Kanta's naked body. Her skin was as firm as the hide tightened on drums. She seemed unaware of Khushia's wandering eyes. In spite of his astonishment, he did search her dark even skin but Kanta did not even get goose bumps. She stood there unmoved, like a sculpture carved from a dark stone.

There was a man standing in front of her! A man, whose eyes can reach a woman's body even through layers of clothing. A man, who can reach many places through his imagination. But she did not worry about this at all and her eyes showed no sign of emotion, like they had just been washed. She should have withdrawn. Her cheeks should have blushed. It is true that she was a prostitute, yet prostitutes don't stand around naked.

He had been a pimp for ten years. During these years, he had known every secret of the prostitutes that he had worked with. For instance, he knew that the girl who lived at the edge of Paidhoni with a young man that she called her brother, constantly played "what is the reason for your love, love, love" on her broken tape recorder. She was madly in love with Ashok Kumar.<sup>1</sup> Many rascals got in her pants by falsely promising her that they would introduce her to Ashok Kumar. He also knew that the Punjabi woman who lived in Dawr, wore a western suit because her lover had once told her that her legs were just like the American actress who starred in "Morocco." She saw this movie over and over again, since her lover had told her that Marlene Dietrich wore pants because her legs were beautiful and that Marlene had insured her legs for two hundred thousand rupees. To be like the American actress, she wore pants which were excessively tight on her buttocks. He also knew that the woman from Mazgou went after beautiful young men in college because she wanted to have beautiful children. He also knew that her wish would never come true because she was infertile. She was infertile like the dark skinned woman from Madras, who always wore fake diamond earrings. This woman knew well that her dark complexion would never change yet she wasted her money on skin lightening creams and medicines.

He knew all about the private lives of his prostitutes. What he could not predict was that one day Kanta Kumari, whose real name is too difficult to pronounce, would expose herself in front of him and give him the biggest shock of his life.

Deep in thought, his mouth got really full with saliva and the red liquid of the betel leaf that he was chewing on. He could barely chew on the tiny pieces of chalia, that were swimming around in his mouth.

His bare forehead was covered in small beads of perspiration, like cottage cheese being squeezed tightly in a cloth. He felt that his masculinity had been attacked. When he recalled Kanta's naked body, he felt that he had been violated.

He thought to himself, "What is this but an insult? The woman stood in front of me completely naked and said that it is no big deal...it's just Khushia. She thinks of me like the damn cat that constantly sleeps on her bed."

He recognized that indeed it was an insult. He was a man and he knew that all women, whether decent or of the market, should recognize him as a man. **BP**

Kanta smiled and said, "When I heard the name Khushia, I thought to myself that there is no harm in letting him in...it's just Khushia...let him come in."

Khushia could not erase the memory of her smile from his mind. At this very moment he could imagine Kanta's naked body in front of his eyes. Her body was like a wax sculpture, which was melting.

Her body was beautiful. For the first time Khushia realized that prostitutes can have firm bodies. This fact amazed him. The thing that amazed him the most was that she had no shame in standing in front of him with no clothes on. Why was that?

Kanta had given him this answer, "When I heard the name Khushia, I thought to myself that there is no harm in letting him in...it's just Khushia...let him come in."

Kanta and Khushia were in the same line of work. He was her pimp. In this regard, he belonged to her but this was not enough reason for her to get naked in front of him. There had to have been another reason for her behavior. Khushia was trying to interpret the meaning of her words.

Her reasoning was clear, yet at the same time it made little sense to him and he could not come to a conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> Indian movie star.

Saadat Hasan Manto by Manto Rama Sang-e-Meel Publications Lahore, 1998  
Titles of short stories: 'Mootni' & 'Khushai'

# Art Destruction and Fundraiser to Benefit Boot Print

by Georgia Kotretsos



Ellen, Shannon and Susan hosted a unique event, which peaked right when our guests were invited to de-install Serkan Ozkaya's ephemeral installation entitled A Sudden Gust of Wind.



Ellen Curlee, Shannon Fitzgerald & Susan Werremeyer invited the St. Louis art community on Thursday, October 30th, 2008 to support Boot Print. Three extraordinary power ladies invested their energy and contacts on making our job at Boots easier.

On behalf of Boots, I thank all of you for your generosity and for continuing to back up Boot Print. I am grateful to you for your commitment to stand by us and make this issue of Boot Print possible.

Ellen, Shannon and Susan hosted a unique event, which peaked right when our guests were invited to de-install Serkan Ozkaya's ephemeral installation entitled A Sudden Gust of Wind.

Special thanks to Ellen Curlee, Shannon Fitzgerald and Sussan Werremeyer for their time, effort and support; to Katherine Chávez who crafted the Boots gifts with motherly care; to Carol Baker who worked the event like a pro; to Parker's Table Wine and Food Shop for the wine and finally to L'Ecole Culinaire student, Michael McGovern who catered the event by impressing the most demanding guests.



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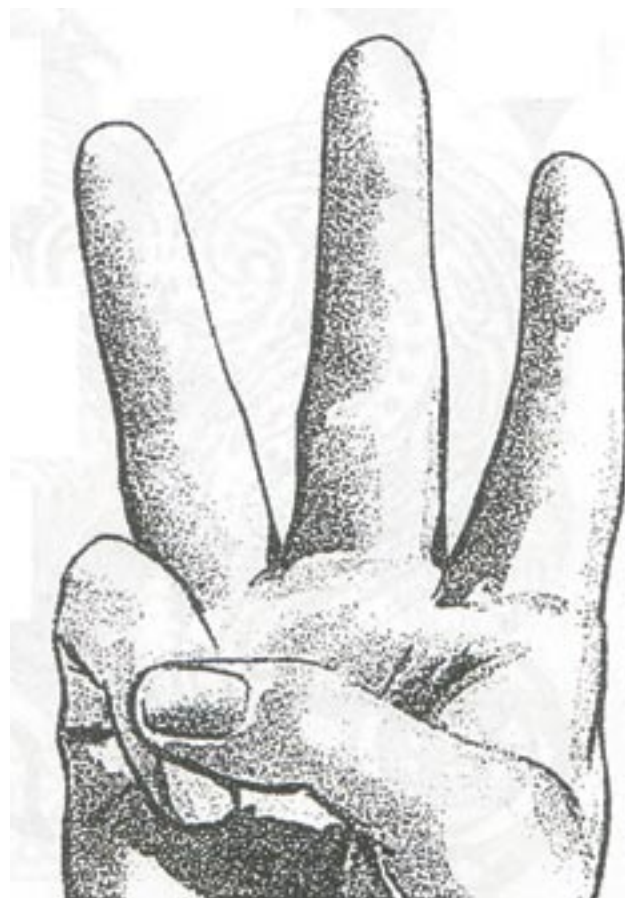
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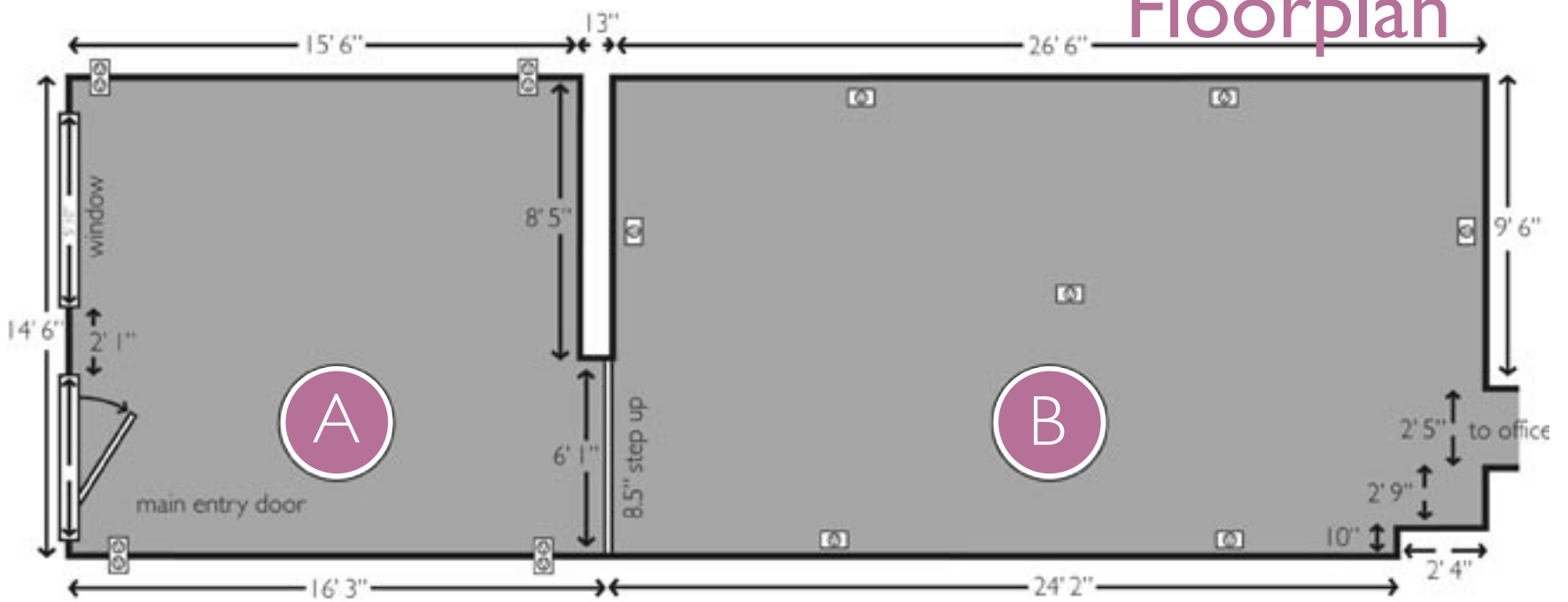
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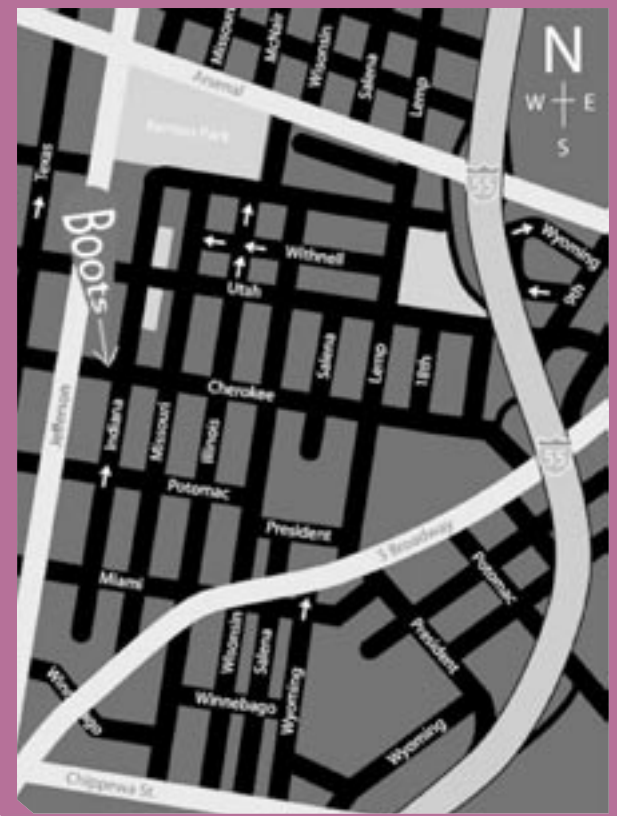
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