

CORPORATE MENTALITY

Corporate Mentality documents the emergence of recent practices within a cultural sphere occupied by both business and art. Based on an archive (1995-2001) maintained by Aleksandra Mir, it presents a diverse spectrum of artists who take on business as site, as material, and as subject of their work.

Calling for a reassessment of the function of art in late capitalist society, Corporate Mentality focuses on the complex and ambiguous ways artistic production inhabits corporate processes, abandoning the autonomy of the artwork in order to elaborate resistant approaches to a world increasingly determined by commercial strategies and market concerns.

JOHN KELSEY, NEW YORK, JANUARY 2003

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An archive documenting the emergence of recent practices within a cultural sphere occupied by both business and art
by Aleksandra Mir

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From: laura_jo@hotmail.com
To: aleksandra_mir@hotmail.com
Subject: The Clearest Picture Ever
Date: Mon, 14 May 2000, 13:40:02 -0400 (EDT)

Laura K. Jones, *Reconstructed Office Email,* May 14, 2000.

THE CLEAREST PICTURE EVER
>
>This is a message I wrote in chalk on my door
>We are all part of something so amazing and transformative, it's humbling.

The situation in North America is nearly solved.
the total transition
>will take in the neighborhood of 4 months to complete.

>
>What a buzzzz to create a strong and high level: it is a sign of strength and maturity
>and a beautiful access to the top management - as great as they should be.

We hired a very strong person
Von Herrmann is building the infrastructure of people
(The Roland Slot framework will support Dallas/Chicago)
we are
>honored to have them on board

>as we close in

it becomes elevating

it
should be a celebration,
It should be inspiring, exciting on both sides of the pond
>

>Can't get rid of me now
>
>
Later.
>

Laura K. Jones

Aleksandra Mir: What is artistic freedom?

Martina Westin, Manager of Communications, The Absolut Company, Stockholm: The artists that collaborate with us are given complete artistic freedom. But it is important to understand that we don't buy art, but look for a relationship in which we ask artists to interpret our bottle. In that, they are free to do whatever they like but of course there are a lot of considerations taken on the way. Practical issues are discussed for example. We consider the location, and that the work is transportable. If the artist would want to do something immensely BIG that is impossible to transport or even realize, well, I guess that wouldn't be so great either for us or for them. Since many of the art works are advertised, some policies and laws apply, such as no cars, no children and no pornography. That way the freedom of expression may be limited, but our parameters are clearly stipulated from the very beginning when we brief the artist and he/she accepts and enters the collaboration. Most art projects involve constraints either from a gallery, a museum or a curator so when does an artist really enjoy total freedom? I can prove to you, however, how far we are ready to go: Chris Ofili has made a painting for us in which he includes the medallion on the bottle featuring Lars Olsson Smith, the ancestor of Absolut Vodka, on elephant dung. We would NEVER allow an ad agency that kind of freedom. And Maurizio Cattelan's rat in the bottle… I tell you, I have worked in the food industry for many years, and rats in conjunction with food is the ultimate no-no. But here we felt that the artistic freedom and the integrity of the artist is important, so we approved it.

AM: It is interesting you brought up this particular ad because I think it is the ultimate Absolut Vodka ad. Apart from being a brilliant interpretation of the bottle, it also becomes self-referential and talks about the traditional and dubious relationship artists have with alcohol. It is daring from all ends. So, who takes the initiative in your relationship?

MW: We do. We contact artists we find interesting, that are inventive and cutting-edge, and if there is a mutual appreciation we form a partnership with the artists and start a project. This collaboration could either result in an art work that is advertised or occasionally we may commission events or other types of work. Puneet Sulhan in England, for example, recently made an art project about loving people that became an installation. Also, we are very interested in the artists as individuals and their personalities. We want to form a long-term partnership and have a personal relationship with the artists. Since many of the projects involve openings and interviews for the media it is an advantage if the artist is attracted to that kind of activity. All that comes up during our initial meetings with our artists when we explain what we do and they come up with their ideas. The people we end up working with like taking the challenge and are able to find an inner expression. Dan Wolgers said, "It is fun to do something difficult." The artists find it exciting and they compare themselves to each other. " 400 artists did this before me; Warhol did it; What could I do?" Apart from the challenge, we offer the possibility to reach a large number of people through our advertising and international exposure through the Absolut Art exhibitions around the world, and the artists will find themselves in good company with some of the leading artists of the world. Money plays a very small part in this collaboration. Many times, artists will call us and ask to borrow a work they made which is in our collection, for a show they are making somewhere else. So it is a mutual relation in continuous development.

AM: You work with ad agencies and with artists. What is the general difference?

MW: There is no comparison at all. They are two completely separate ways of working and approaching the subject. When we hire an ad agency, PR company or a promotional agency, we create an assignment to which they have to respond in a very defined way.

AM: So who comes up with the ideas there then?

MW: Well, we come up with the mission here in Stockholm and brief the agency, it is the traditional way of working with an advertising agency. We may, for example, say to them, "We would like to be speaking to a group of 25-32 year olds who are interested in music." And the agency comes up with a creative solution to that. In comparison and contrast, the artists are involved in a dialogue with us all the way.

AM: I find that very strange because some of the ad agency ads I have seen are so much better than some of the artists'.

MW: But we don't ask artists to make ads. They make artworks, which then become photographed for ads, by agencies. The original artwork remains intact and circulates at shows. Then there are of course a whole lot of very creative art directors who can allow themselves a great deal of freedom in the ads they do for us.

AM: Are artists who approach you categorically refused?

MW: Yes. A lot of artists want sponsorship from us, or want to sell us ready-made work. We prefer not just to be a mere sponsor but rather have an active collaboration with the art world. We are really interested in creating projects with the artists and so ready-made works are not very interesting for us.

AM: And what about all the amateurs? You must be sitting on a gold mine of ideas people have sent in?

MW: We work with over 100 agencies all over the world and they constantly submit creative ideas to us. There is the copyright issue. If we look at an idea sent in from an amateur and it turns out that someone in our network already had this idea, it is a hard thing to prove, so given the possibility we ask people not to send their ideas to us. We only produce ads based on ideas that come from our network.

AM: But wouldn't that be yet another possibility?

MW: It is a great RISK. If we did something members of the public would recognize as their own two years down the line, we would get sued. The most typical proposal we get is from people who inform us that the Circle Line on the London Underground Map looks like the Absolut bottle. We once even put that as copy into the ad ABSOLUT TRIVIA: "Number of people who think the Circle Line is shaped like an Absolut bottle: 19,142. Number of advertising creatives who've thought of doing an Absolut Circle Line ad: 3,897," etc.

AM: I was thinking more in terms of personal interpretations people might have done. Naiveté is a recurring theme in contemporary art. A few years ago, thrift store painting was all the rage. I am sure it would be really popular among people of my generation to see some outsider ads next.

MW: But we do that of course! We have worked a lot with graffiti artists, for example, or computer animators. Although their names may not be world-class, we are really interested in people who are credible within their own contexts. We also work on putting the work into its right context. If we plan an activity in Bulgaria, we will consider working with a local artist. What is really important though, is that the label and the artist have the same value and collaborate on equal terms. We don't want to take advantage of anyone's ideas and all our artists are contracted to execute a clear idea. I can add that ours is a highly original way of working. The more I travel and the more I see, I realize how fortunate we are to have this relationship with the art world. Many other companies are involved in the arts. They usually play a classic patronage role, offer stipends or function as detached sponsors. For us it all came about in a very particular way: We launched Absolut Vodka in 1979 and over the years we received a lot of attention and prizes for the bottle design. In 1985, Andy Warhol made contact. He had met with our distributor in the U.S. and asked to do his interpretation of the bottle, since he found it intriguing and different. His silkscreen was the first artist commission and for a long time it just hung on a wall in a board meeting room. Then Andy started recommending people. He introduced his protégé at the time, Keith Haring, who became our second artist. And then Haring said "I have this friend I go to art school with, Kenny Scharf." At that time, nobody could have imagined the consequences. Fifteen years later, we still do projects with Kenny Scharf and the collaboration between Absolut and the art world continues.

AM: So Warhol took his own initiative.

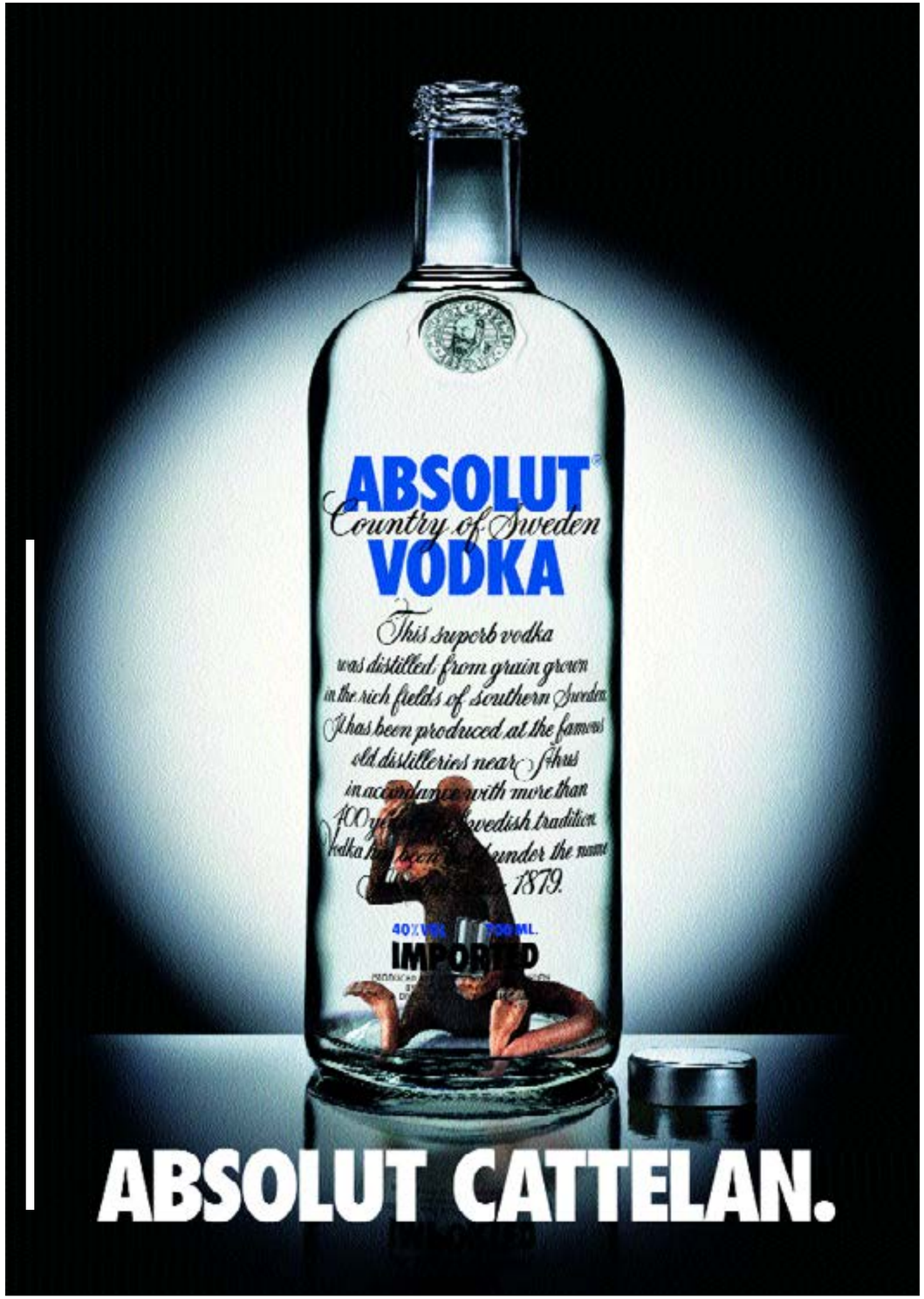
MW: He did. Warhol, Haring, Scharf. We consider them the founding fathers of Absolut Art.

AM: What is good and what is bad art?

MW: I don't know. I have many artist friends, I go to shows and exhibitions and I read magazines, but I am not equipped to answer that question. We consult art experts for that. My role and responsibility is to deal with the commercial side of our marketing, to make sure our product remains credible, that the projects are run professionally and that the integrity of the artist is respected. It is a very exciting position to be in and it is very inspiring to work with people like Damien Hirst, *l'enfant terrible* of British art, or someone like Francesco Clemente, who just had a retrospective at the Guggenheim in New York, It is quite amazing. In all humbleness I have to say, we are but a Swedish vodka company and world famous artists work with us!

ALEKSANDRA MIR/MARTINA WESTIN, STOCKHOLM, AUGUST 2000

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04/Oct/2000 08:34

NOBODY EVER SAID ANYTHING TO ME ABOUT IT

Andy Stillpass

For some time, I had grown tired of my image. I had begun to find it shopworn and troublesome and I could not figure out what to do. So in 1993, when I read a brochure outlining the services of A to Z, I thought I saw a potential solution, and I arranged for a free, no obligation consultation with Andrea Zittel. I was convinced that the best way to renovate my persona would be through the creation of a uniform to be worn for all non-casual activities. At first I agreed to wear this uniform exclusively for six months, and I imagined this would be very difficult. But once into it, I realized how much easier my life had become by not having to worry about what I would wear every day. The following year, I had my tailor make two more suits exactly like the original. The suit was made of thick wool and was designed to be worn in the fall and winter seasons. Although the start and end dates for wearing the suit did not always coincide with the beginning and ending of these seasons, each year I marked in the calendar the day I put it on and was fastidious about wearing it exclusively and continuously for six months to the day. I wanted to have another one made for spring and summer but always put it off until it was too late. The first two years I started in late January, which proved to be somewhat problematic in that I had to finish up the term in the summer. The first year, I went to an outdoor wedding in July. It was well over 90 degrees and I felt very uncomfortable. I remember my father asking me why I was wearing a heavy winter suit on such a hot day. He hadn't noticed that I had been wearing the same thing for the last six months! Wearing the uniform has continued to affect my manner of dress as a whole. Although the two suits are identical, I know which one is which. I wore one on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the other on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. On Monday and Wednesday, I wore the same brown tie and shoes. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday I wore the same plaid tie. On Friday I always wore a solid black tie. Sometimes I felt a little self-conscious, especially during business meetings with people who I saw on a regular basis. Nobody ever said anything to me about it. I wore the suit for six years altogether, from 1994 to 1999, the year I sold the car dealerships and no longer needed a uniform. Besides, by then it was worn threadbare in a number of spots and I have to admit I was looking pretty shabby. Originally, the uniform was an edition of two. After the end of the first year, I decided to retire these and let them enter the realm of art. There was enough material left to make two more suits and these were the ones I wore for the next five years. The complete edition of four is now hanging in my closet.

ANDY STILLPASS, CINCINNATI, APRIL 2001



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREA ZITTEL





ANDREW STILLPASS
7700 ROCK HILL LANE
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45243

July 31, 1993

Andrea Zittel
A to Z Administrative Services
c/o Andrea Rosen Gallery
130 Prince St.
New York, NY 10012

Dear Andrea,

Thank you for making available the opportunity to own the perfect garment, and, concomitantly, a work of art which, it is hoped, will improve my living conditions. In the process of formulating the following answers to your questionnaire, I have come to realize how disorganized have been my wardrobe choices in functionally and symbolically determining my identity. And now stripped of the idea of needless diversity, I am looking forward to being dressed anew.

Six days a week I drive twenty miles to work at an automobile dealership. I carry with me the same items everyday: a wallet, a pocket notebook of things to do, a kleenex, keys, a pen, reading glasses, and 40¢ for a Diet Coke. At work I spend most of my time at a desk where I talk on the phone and do paperwork. Periodically, I get up from my desk and walk

ANDREW STILLPASS

around the dealership to follow up on something or to inspect and advise. Often suppliers or customers come to see me. This sometimes entails getting up from my desk and sometimes even going outside. Occasionally, I go to business meetings.

Four days a week at lunch time, I go to the Scandinavia Health Spa, change into gym clothes, and work out. I am gone from work approximately an hour. About once a week, I'll meet a friend for lunch. Most nights after work, I drive home, eat dinner, read or watch T.V., and then go to bed. At least once a week, we eat dinner at a restaurant. Regular leisure activities include the mall, parties, and movies. Now and then I travel for business or fun.

As a businessman, I feel it is appropriate, even obligatory, to wear a coat and tie to work. And because my job is in the Sales/Service field, it is fitting that this attire should be traditional and somewhat conservative. But it should also be friendly and not too formal. Basically, I want my customers, employees, and business associates to feel that I have authority and am

ANDREW STILLPASS

also one of them. And yet I still want to believe that I am different, i.e., as an individual. Without calling attention to myself I have tried to accomplish this effect by picking clothes that I consider casual but elegantly tailored.

In the Spring and Fall, I prefer tropical weight wool. I don't like the look or feel of artificial fabrics. Although car dealers have the reputation of wearing loud clashing plaids, this look though, perhaps, quite widely true is no longer really the case. Nevertheless, I feel that I look best in dark solid colors. I also like minimal detailing: no vent in the back and no flaps on the pockets. I do, however, always buy pants with double pleats, cuffs (1½ inches), and belt loops. Pants without these features seem to me unfinished. I like a zipper fly. Once I had a pair of pants with buttons instead, but I found this technology awkward and inconvenient.

Sometimes I wear my work clothes out at night, for instance, to a restaurant. But usually I like a more informal look and although

ANDREW STILLPASS

wearing the same suit will take off my tie and shirt with button down collar and put on a T-shirt. For totally casual functions I usually wear jeans and depending on the weather, either a T-shirt or sweatshirt. I often change into this out-fit before eating dinner at home because I'm rather sloppy and like clothes I can sponge off.

I hope this information, boring as it may be (I really need this uniform!), will be of use to you.

Sincerely,
Andy Stillpass





Jennifer Nelson, *Process/Ecstatic Motion*, 1995.

THREE PERFORMANCES

Jennifer Nelson

Process/Ecstatic Motion

I altered the activity or the movement of the business day. During the hours of business (9am-5pm), I army-crawled down Market Street from Van Ness to the Embarcadero, downtown San Francisco. The activity, although very different from usual work activities, was not practiced dramatically. I had learned the form of the army crawl from instructors at ROTC in Berkeley and my day was spent in full concentration on the task. ROTC is the military training school found in US colleges and universities. I went to University of California at Berkeley to speak with some trainees about the US military technique for the army crawl. I figured that they might have found the most efficient system for this kind of movement. Because the soldiers generally must cradle a rifle in their arms while they crawl, however, I didn't find the movement especially efficient. They keep their arms too far to the side of their bodies to maximize their strength. I systematized the movement by fusing the army's crawling technique with swimming strokes. I was unsure if I would be able to crawl the entire day but I expected that my inability to complete the task would be an important part of the piece. I became more exhausted throughout the day, despite lunch and two coffee breaks, however I did find myself at the Embarcadero at exactly 5 o'clock. The precision of that timing surprised me – it indicated how powerfully the framing of a piece determined the result of an activity in spite of doubt and physical breakdown. Response was varied. People ignored me or offered help. They cheered me on as if I were running the marathon. They blessed me, cried, thanked and threatened me. I was unaware of many of these responses partly because of my concentration on my work, and partly because of the difference in my geographical position relative to others. I became aware of a hierarchy of height. Mostly, the only people at my visual level on the ground were homeless. Otherwise, my vantage point was one of shoes. The people around me that I remember most were the ones that altered their position vertically in order to address me. Not very many did.



Jennifer Nelson, *Business Walk,* 1996.

Business Walk

I wanted the activity of the business day to be a hyper-aware passage. I organized an event in the California Plaza in Los Angeles where several people in business clothing took apart the structure of walking to such an extent that it took them 8 hours to walk across the plaza. In this way we became a kind of human time-keeping device. These were dancers, all of whom, at some point or another, had office jobs. People in the high-rise offices surrounding the plaza looked down on us throughout the day. At first they thought we weren't moving but over time, our progress became apparent.

OFFICETEAM®

Specialized Administrative Staffing℠

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ASSIGNMENT

Jennifer Nielson
Accounts Payable
1033 ½ Sandborn Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Thank you for your confidence in **OfficeTeam.** Our employee for the assignment—

General Office is Shirin Rhodes

As verbally agreed, we will invoice your firm at the rate of $ 16.00 per hour.

Should you wish to use our employee for assignments other than the one mentioned above, please feel free to do so. The hourly billing rate may then change to reflect the amount of experience necessary to complete the assignment. The billing rate charged is determined on a basis of the amount of experience necessary to do the assignment and not the amount of experience of our employee. Call **OfficeTeam** for any adjustment in the hourly billing rate.

Our employee is assigned to you under the following **Conditions of Assignment:**

The person assigned is an employee of **OfficeTeam** and shall not be deemed to be your employee. **OfficeTeam** warrants that its employee is adequately covered by workers' compensation insurance and that it assumes total responsibility to pay all applicable Federal, State and Local withholding taxes and unemployment taxes, as well as Social Security, State Disability Insurance and all other payroll charges.

Guarantee

OfficeTeam guarantees you satisfaction with our employee's services by extending to you a one-day (8 hours) guarantee period. If, for any reason, you are dissatisfied with the employee assigned to you, **OfficeTeam** will not charge for the first 8 hours worked, provided, of course, that **OfficeTeam** replaced the individual assigned. Unless you contact us before the end of the first eight hours, you agree that our employee assigned is satisfactory and further agree to those **Terms and Conditions of Assignment.**

Time Sheet

Our employee will present a time sheet to you or your representative for verification and signature at the end of each week. Your signature thereon indicates your agreement with all the **Terms and Conditions of Assignment.** Our compensation to our assigned employee is on a weekly basis, and you will be billed weekly for the total hours worked. Because **OfficeTeam** invoices reflect payroll we have already paid, our invoices are due upon receipt.

Overtime

Legally required overtime will be billed at the same multiple as is required to be paid to the employee (e.g., one and one-half times the billing rate for overtime that must be paid at time and a half.)

Client's Responsibility

Supervision of an **OfficeTeam** employee's work on your premises (or wherever you assign the employee) is your responsibility.

It is understood that we will not authorize an **OfficeTeam** employee to operate machinery (other than office machines) or automotive equipment. The insurance furnished by **OfficeTeam** does not cover physical loss, damage or liability caused by the operation of the client's automotive equipment. It is agreed the client accepts full responsibility for bodily injury, property damage, fire, theft, collision or public liability damage claims, any of which may be caused as a result of an accident while an **OfficeTeam** employee is driving the client's vehicle, whether owned or rented.

An **OfficeTeam** employee may not handle cash, negotiables or other valuables without the written consent of **OfficeTeam** and then only under your direct supervision. An **OfficeTeam** employee may not, under any circumstances, transport or convey monies, securities or any negotiable instruments (including, but not limited to, delivering bank deposits to a bank or other institution).

It is understood that under no circumstances will OfficeTeam be responsible for claims for work performed unless such claims are reported in writing to OfficeTeam within ninety (90) days after termination of the temporary assignment.

Charges for hiring the temporary person referred to you.

After you evaluate the performance and potential of our employee on the job, you may wish to employ this person directly. Our employees represent our inventory of skilled professionals and in the event you wish them converted to your employ, you agree to pay a conversion fee. The **OfficeTeam** conversion fee is 12% of the annual base salary for employees hired up to $18,000; 17% of the annual base salary for employees hired from $18,001 to 24,999; and a fee of 22% of the annual base salary for employees hired at or above $25,000. Part-time conversion fees will be based on the percentage of the employee's part-time work (based on hours).

The conversion fee is payable if you hire our employee assigned to you, regardless of the employment classification, on either a permanent, temporary (including temporary assignments through another agency) or consulting basis within six months after the last day of the assignment. You also agree to pay a conversion fee if our employee assigned to you is hired by a subsidiary or related company as a result of your referral of our employee to that company.

Each invoice will evidence a separate and distinct contract.

By [signature] Date: 1/29/97

Work Order No: .....

3005 (7/96)

Office Team Temps

In order to change business choreography more directly, I hired 4 people from Office Team Administrative Staffing to stand part-time for three days. The first two days I gave them some guidance in the principles of standing – teaching them exercises in alignment and concentration. I suspected that standing quietly for an extended time in the presence of others might be almost frightening and I wanted to give the employees some tools to work with. We met in my studio, professionally dressed, and discussed our feelings about temping before beginning the standing. I had hoped to find people for whom this would be a radically different way of thinking about what work could be, however, this work being performed in Los Angeles, three of the four people hired were unemployed actors. They felt fairly comfortable with the exercises. For the fourth person, however, the practice was difficult, almost torturous. On the third day we stood in a business district in Los Angeles. After an hour and a half, our standing was interrupted by security. I then spent an hour obtaining permission for us to stand on corporate property. All of our standing sessions ended organically. They lasted from fifteen to forty-five minutes and ended when the employees started to move or laugh.

JENNIFER NELSON, LOS ANGELES, AUGUST 2001

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLEY

PLEASE DELIVER IMMEDIATELY

OFFICETEAM

FAX COVER SHEET

TO: Jennifer

COMPANY:

FAX NUMBER: 2/666D-0772

FROM: *ROBYN WOMBLE, STAFFING MANAGER*

DATE: 1-31 FAX NUMBER: (310) 209-6850

2 PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER SHEET

FOR TRANSMISSION PROBLEMS, PLEASE CALL: (310) 209-6811

MESSAGE

Jennifer -
Thanks again! Our candidates seemed to enjoy the assignment...
Please sign & mail or fax to me ASAP
Robyn

Robyn P. Womble
Staffing Manager

OFFICETEAM®
Specialized Administrative Staffing℠

[illegible] Boulevard, Suite [illegible], Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 209-6811 Fax (310) 209-6850

The World's Leader in Specialized Administrative Staffing

Jennifer Nelson, *Office Team Temps*, 1997.



SUIT FOR STANDING

Chistopher Trembley

Performance Sculpture

A resin and cement enforced business suit is inserted into the corporate landscape. The participant wears the suit like armor. The suit is to be worn for several hours daily, blending the physical and corporate image. The suit could be sold as an edition out of apparel stores; it is produced directly on the body of the customer/wearer. The intended market reach is amplified through the use of brand names such as Armani, Hugo Boss, etc.

Performance Promotion

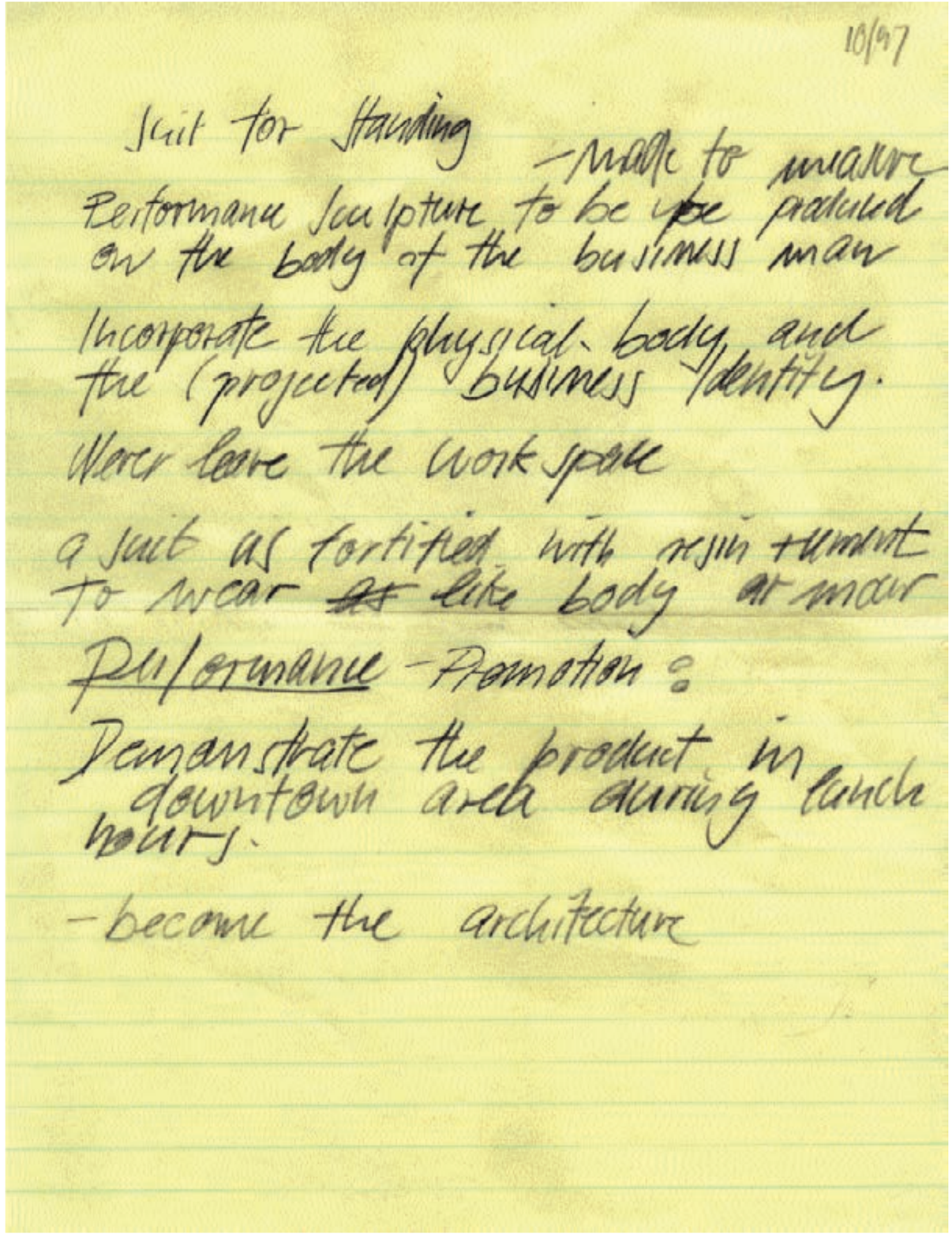
Promotional demonstrations are intended to illustrate the use and wear of the product. These should take place in central locations of business districts during lunch hours. Placement of the demonstrators should take the architectural features of the environment into consideration and aim to establish correlations.

CHRISTOPHER TREMBLEY, LOS ANGELES, 1997

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER NELSON

Chistopher Trembley, *Suit For Standing,* Los Angeles, 1997.





Carey Young, *Liverpool Street Station*, London, 2000.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW HAWKINS

ADJUSTED AND CORRUPTED

A report derived from a discussion between Carey Young and Liam Gillick

At issue are two distinct approaches to similar territory. One is applied and integrated, involving negotiation and scepticism, the other is distanced and more abstracted, focusing on the conditions that underscore the aesthetics of the built world as they are affected by revised business practice. The report here muddles the two, bringing statements together that focus upon the working practice of Carey Young in a form that is the end product of a discussion with, and questions from, Liam Gillick. The structure is formed from question and answer statements, with supplementary comments in parentheses.

Answer/statement: Over the last four year period I have been working for an information technology and consulting multinational. When I joined, my practice as an artist was very much rooted in investigating how notions of a technology-rich future as visualised within mass culture are formed, so the potential of working in a leading-edge technological environment was undeniably attractive. But I became more attracted to dealing with corporate language and corporate behaviour at the point when I noticed that my own identity seemed to be in a process of transition – from finishing my masters degree at the Royal College of Art, I had then somehow, and quickly, become part of a corporate "tribe." I still remember where I was the first time I said "we" and meant the entire corporation: a sort of personal "merger" must have occurred, however surprising that felt at the time. Reading Freud on the uncanny, and taking inspiration from Hans Haacke, Marcel Broodthaers and Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills,* I began to make work investigating the process of concurrently gaining and losing my identity as both an artist and corporate insider, particularly because it seemed a fertile metaphor for the relationships between corporations and the individual. Through various anthropological texts on organisational cultures, I was able to reflect upon and distance myself from the processes of "normative control" as they seemed to be happening to me - by which a corporation imbues new recruits with certain values and beliefs, particularly the notion that their own personal life-goals and the process of self-actualisation, in which a person achieves their own potential in life, can be realised, at least in part, within the corporation. People tend to joke about this as a kind of mind-control, like creating the "Stepford Wives," but that's a myth – it's far more subtle and intelligent. It involves everything from specific training to the ways in which one becomes gradually oriented to an unfamiliar culture with its own norms, terminology, etc. The purpose is to get maximum loyalty, pride and productivity from the employees, so in many senses the process is intended to make them feel great. The term "symbiosis" seems rather more apt, in that there is a process of choice and allegiance happening on both sides. My work often refers to corporate training procedures and participative commercial systems, or uses them as readymades, to suggest these soft and kinetic boundaries, and the ease in which corporate messages are believed and internalised, whether at the level of becoming an employee, or within a wider social context.

Question/statement: Recent readings of *Walden 2,* written by the behavioural scientist B.F. Skinner in 1948, affected some of the questioning. Although the book is appallingly-written and very clunky, it's interesting because it describes a utopian community living in the desert in the southwest U.S. It actually appears to describe a modern progressive corporate "campus" environment. It seemed to pre-vision the idea of what the decision-making part of Microsoft or Nike might actually be like. A slightly dynamic situation which has fed on previous visions of what the future could be. A question emerged: how much do you think it is impossible to make the same value judgements people used to make in light of this kind of appropriation of progressive thinking?

Answer/statement: As corporate thinking, and business practice in general, has changed radically due to the rise of an information-based networked economy, so must the forms that its critics employ if they intend to be a constructive influence. This is probably also true for those intent on offering critical distance via cultural means. Business thinking is now voraciously nimble, especially at the level of advertising, where new subcultures are quickly understood both as a social demographic and as a set of trends. Transgression seems rarely able to remain transgressive for long. One example is an ad from Nikon, in which "Reclaim the Streets," the name of the anti-corporate activist group, was used as the strap-line for its new lightweight camera. If a resistant ethos becomes hip, it will be marketed back to us as style: a sort of win-win proposition for those consumers who want to associate themselves with bettering the state of the world, but who don't want to think too hard. Right/wrong or inside/outside binaries seem ever more outmoded.

Question/statement: In terms of progressive thinking within the inner workings of an organisation, a key figure promoted within an information economy model would be the "change agent" – the (ironically Beuysian) figure who attempts to change a system or organisation from the inside, often along more ethical or progressive lines. With this model, change can be effected by a process of earning respect, and thus influence. Not so impossible in a commercial landscape in which the ability to creatively adapt is seen as a key signifier of market worth. This is, in fact, a role in which artists could be engaged if they wanted to make politically-motivated or socially-oriented work which actually had a grounding in business terms. However, the challenge for them would be building credibility within a business context – to do this they would need to take on the right language, understand the culture….

Answer/statement: Nike's ad agency, Wieden + Kennedy, rents part of their building at low rates to a publicly-funded contemporary art gallery, the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art. Their aim is to feed off the resulting "creativity" in the building, and are on record as saying it helps them generate great advertising, as well as motivating their employees to live creative lives. (Making them progressive employers, perhaps? Or exploiters of a sphere of activity that they would like to control, alongside everything else, in a manipulation of brand image.) So, in terms of these kinds of questions, it is mistaken to try to see edges – in this example, where does the gallery stop and the advertising agency begin? (Surely, at the end of the gallery and the beginning of the office? Or, a more likely possibility, where both meet the street?) (This last point is possible, but my gist here is that there are, in this relationship specifically engendered by the ad agency, no strong boundaries between them. The only delineation, from the agency's perspective, is that of intensities of expertise.) Does this fusion represent the co-option of culture, or just a new type of power base in which ideas are particularly free-flowing? The art gallery, in this example, could have all sorts of potential "reasoned influence" on one of the world's most powerful brands, if they learned how to play with it (work with it?).

Question/statement: Clichéd construction of artistic persona leads to a situation where you are supposed to symbolise something better or worse, or more anti-social or more complex than the neo-liberal corporate structure. You are not supposed to be within the middle area yourself.

Answer/statement: Let's think of the centre in a different way, as potentially at the edges of two or more overlapping elements, as with a Venn diagram in mathematics. In this sense, instead of being the territory of the familiar, the space of compromise, status quo and majority, the median area, (and for me the specific interest is with the strategic operations of large corporations, particularly as a reworking of Beuys' notion of social sculpture), could be seen as offering a new and rather overlooked "edge," a sort of quasi- (and knowingly ironic) avant-garde territory. It's based on potential: a rhizomatic space of becoming – for me the "becoming-corporate" as a state in which we are all probably more involved than we realise. I am interested in creating or inferring chaotic structures within this flow – to employ Cildo Meireles' term, making "insertions" into ideological circuits rather than "interventions." This is more a process of distortion, slippage, or adding catalytic friction than actual disruption, because I have witnessed the mutual parasitism between corporations and the cultural sphere too often to think that the notion of an artistic "disruption," now, is anything other than a chimera.

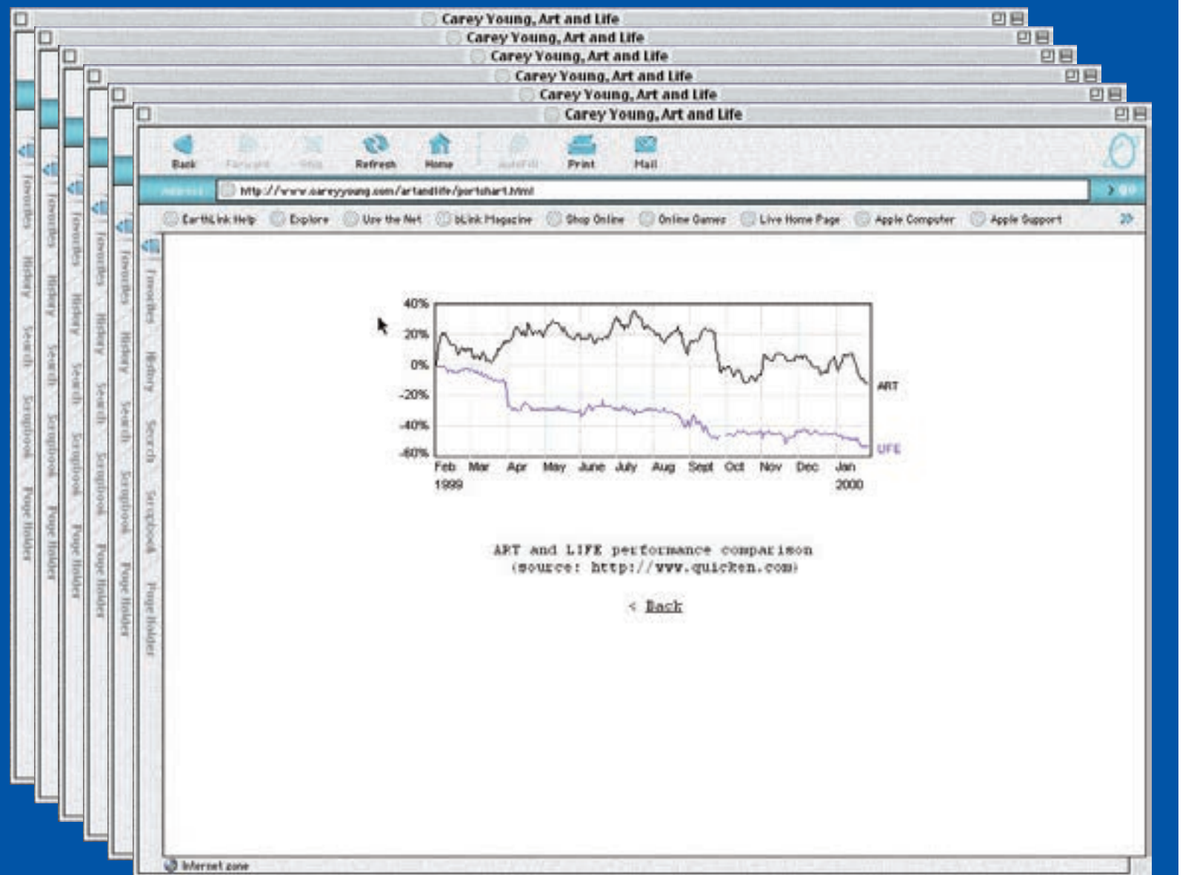
CAREY YOUNG/LIAM GILLICK, LONDON, JUNE 2001

Art and Life is a web project which re-examines the classic artistic dichotomy between art and life.The artist, using public arts funding provided as a commission from the UK-based Film and Video Umbrella, made investments in two companies traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the acronyms "ART," and "LIFE." The site shows documentation of the artist's working process, and portrays the fate of these investments as they competed against each other on the international money markets, until the project was ended by a corporate takeover in early 2001. The investments are shown visually via generic software graphing tools which portrayed the details of their ups and downs – an emergent drama which set this dualism on to the stage of the global markets, using the tools and language of an information-driven economy.

While their history, as depicted on the site, was mostly one of tragic proportions (although ART had a consistent tendency to beat LIFE) the shares' successes or failures were immaterial – it was the interplay between them that counted, the shrinking or growing gap controlled by the chaotic flow of news and economic events on a global basis. The site also presents selections of written analyses found on stock market websites, showing market analysts' views of ART and LIFE, thus giving a financially-oriented prognosis of their future. This specific terminology translates both into something apparently unfamiliar, while questioning whether an economic rationale is the only basis from which to understand their future.

Project update: In January 2001, Carey Young was approached by a holding company called Artist Acquisitions, who bought her shares in ART for almost double what she paid for them, as part of a corporate takeover of AC Nielsen. She sold her shares in LIFE at the same moment.

CAREY YOUNG, LONDON, MAY 2001



Carey Young, detail from *Art and Life,* website, 2000.
www.careyyoung.com



Carey Young, *Nothing Ventured,* Installation at the Northern Gallery of Contemporary Art, Sunderland, April - June 2001. Call centre, telephone, desk, chair. Dimensions variable.

Carey Young: Nothing Ventured, 2000
Call Transcription (excerpt)
Date of call: 23 May 2000

Call Centre: Good afternoon, Carey Young, Nothing Ventured. Are you a member of the press, a prospective customer or is this a general enquiry?

Caller: General enquiry.

Call Centre: OK, I can offer you a range of information. Would you like biographical information, previous exhibitions or themes and influences or reviews and review quotes?

Caller: Oh, I dunno. Review quotes?

Call Centre: Can I take your name please sir?

Caller: XXXXX.

Call Centre: OK. Carey Young's work has been reviewed in Art Monthly, The Guardian and Mute. A quote from Mute, "Young's work retains a ludic approach that should not be written off as co-opted."

Caller: OK.

Call Centre: Would you like any other information?

Caller: No, that's all thanks.

Call Centre: Right, thank you for calling. Bye.

Carey Young: Nothing Ventured, 2000
Call Transcription (excerpt)
Conversation no.
Date of call: 24 May 2000

Call Centre: Hello, Carey Young, Nothing Ventured. Are you a member of the press, a prospective customer, or is this just a general enquiry?

Caller: General enquiry.

Call Centre: OK Sir, and can I just take your name please?

Caller: It's XXXXXX, Mr XXXXXX.

Call Centre: OK, Mr XXXXXX, I can offer you a range of information, would you like to know biographical information about Carey Young, her education, list of her previous exhibitions, her artistic themes and influences or sales information?

Caller: Sales information.

Call Centre: Information on her photographic works are available in the information pack, which I can send out to you.

Caller: Oh right. I've got a phone here.

Call Centre: Oh, you are ringing from the phone in the gallery? You've come through to an information line about Carey Young's work.

Caller: Can I buy the phone?

Call Centre: The phone? Can I just ask you to hold the line please…

Carey Young: Nothing Ventured, 2000
Call Transcription (excerpt)
Conversation no.
Date of call: 24 May 2000

Caller: I want to know what it's all about, I mean there's just a telephone in an empty room. It's very intriguing, but what does it mean?

Call Centre: Hmm. Right, this phone is a direct line to us, promoting Carey Young's artwork. So it's introducing her, and I can tell you a little bit about her. She has a BA (Hons) from Brighton, 89 to 92, and a Masters in Photography from the Royal College of Art.

Caller: Well, that's good, isn't it?!

Carey Young: Nothing Ventured, 2000
Call Transcription (excerpt)
Conversation no.
Date of call: 26 May 2000

Call Centre: Good Morning, Carey Young. Are you a member of the press, prospective customer, or is this a general enquiry?

Caller: Who are you?

Call Centre: We are Carey Young.

Caller: Oh, you are Carey Young. Oh, so you are the artist? I thought I saw someone here who was the artist. OK. So we can ask you what you look like?

Call Centre: Yes, well, I can give you some general information if that's what you wish.

Caller: Uh-huh. Well, actually, you did photography at the RCA, what was that like?

Call Centre: Just bear with me. RCA? Can I take your name?

Caller: XXXX.

Call Centre: Just looking up that information for you. Just looking it up on the screen.

Caller: Is that a difficult question?

Call Centre: There's so much information here on the computer, I ' m just trying to find the appropriate bits.

Caller: Just want to hear about your personal experiences at the RCA.

Call Centre: Hello, I do apologise, can I take your number, I need to get someone and call you back. I just don't have access to that information.

Carey Young: Nothing Ventured, 2000
Call Transcription (excerpt)
Conversation no.
Date of call: 26 May 2000

Call Centre: I can offer you a range of information: would you like biographical information, previous exhibitions or themes and influences or reviews and review quotes?

Caller: Artistic themes.

Call Centre: OK, artistic themes and influences. Art and commerce, especially the relationship between the art and business worlds, and the ready-made, i.e., taking one object, calling it art and...

Caller: OK, yes, yep yep yep, OK...

Call Centre: And influences – the artist Joseph Beuys and his notion of social sculpture, i.e., that everyone can create art.

Caller: Right.

Call Centre: Would you like some information sent to your home address sir?

Caller: I'll have it sent to my gallery address.

Carey Young: Nothing Ventured, 2000
Call Transcription (excerpt)
Date of call: 26 May 2000

Caller: I was just wondering how you thought she broke down the barriers between commerce and art? If you could just explain that over the phone.

Call Centre: That's a tough question. What I think it is, is that there are certain things which are held taboo to art, and certain things which are held taboo to business, and what I think Carey sees is that these things can be broken down through the medium of art. It's a universal thing and everyone can be involved in it, can make art, but business has been almost an antithesis of art. It's been the opposite.

Caller: But can't everyone be involved in business?

Call Centre: Erm, I personally think it's the nature of the society that we live in that it's not always the case that people, depending on their background, can always necessarily ge involved, but I think it's something that's changing. I'd like to think art is one of the ways that that becomes accessible. Art, perhaps in the form of music or film, is one of the ways people can do that.

Caller: OK. Thanks a lot for your help.

Call Centre: Would you like some information in the post?

Caller: No, thanks.

CAREY YOUNG

From: carey_young@hotmail.com
To: aleksandra_mir@hotmail.com
Subject: Re: Corporate Mentality
Date: Wed, 21 Sep 2000, 19:39:21 -0400 (EDT)
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>If you'd asked me what is beautiful right now, I'd say this...
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>If you'd asked me what is beautiful right now, I'd say this...

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NEW YORK OBSERVER

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February 7, 2000

The New New Strategy: Do Nothing and Do It Well

By Michael Lewis

(BLOOMBERG NEWS)–The Internet boom has transformed the idea of the company. A company used to be a group of people who organized themselves for fairly well-defined tasks. But these days the U.S. stock market indulges a new, looser definition. A company is now a group of people who raise capital to do whatever they want to do.

The reason usually given for the new tendency of companies to morph overnight is that they operate in a fast-changing environment. A company should not be expected to predict what it is going to be doing in six months because six months suddenly feels like a lifetime.

That may be true. But it is also true that once an Internet company is considered established, or committed to a line of attack, it loses its allure. It leaves itself open to the sort of hard analysis Internet companies strive to avoid. To be desirable, an Internet company must be slightly unknowable. It must remain forever in a state of pure possibility.

A Bloomberg user recently pointed out what must be one of the purest examples of pure possibility, an Internet company called NetJ.com Corporation. NetJ.com is smaller than most of its Internet cousins. It has a market capitalization of a mere $22.9 million. Still, its stock price has soared–up seven-fold to $3.50–since the middle of last year. Six months ago it offered a 5-for-1 stock split.

The only hint that NetJ.com is in any way different from most Internet companies is Bloomberg's description of it: NetJ.com currently has no business operations.

Assuming that the Bloomberg machine was mistaken, I went to the documents filed by NetJ.com with the Securities and Exchange Commission. There I found the following confession: "The company is not currently engaged in any substantial business activity and has no plans to engage in any such activity in the foreseeable future."

Translated into English: We do nothing and we intend to continue to do nothing.

This in itself is unremarkable. Many people do nothing and intend to continue doing so. What distinguishes NetJ.com is the spirit in which it does nothing, which is astonishingly similar to the spirit of many new companies widely viewed as successful.

NetJ.com began life as NetBanx.com, which hoped to collect bad debts for doctors. That didn't work out. So the company gave up, and went into another line of work: searching to acquire or merge with another company that actually does something. For this it claims to be well suited.

You might wonder why a company that actually does something would care to merge with one that does nothing, even if it has a gift for doing nothing. You are naïve. The mere fact that NetJ.com is a public company, with a share price that goes up and down every day, apparently makes it potentially desirable to a private company that wants to avoid the hassle and the wait involved in going public. NetJ.com offers itself as a kind of bandwagon, albeit one without wheels.

Such an approach to business would have been risible just a few years ago. Maybe it is even now. Still, it is hard to say what distinguishes NetJ.com from most Internet companies. A lot of putatively successful Internet companies raise capital first on the pretext of creating one kind of business, only to deploy it in the creation of another. Netscape Communications Corporation invented this approach, pretty much by accident. (Microsoft Corporation took away its original business.) Others now do it more deliberately. The trick, as one prominent Internet chief executive told me, is to keep yourself new. You have to present the stock market with a face lift every three months.

That is the beauty of NetJ.com. By doing nothing, it has avoided ruling out the possibility of not doing something else. As the company explains in an S.E.C. filing, "The company does not intend to restrict its search [for a partner] to any particular business or industry." Its list of possible ventures includes, but is not limited to, "high tech, natural resources, manufacturing, R&D, communications, transportation, insurance, brokerage, finance and all medical related industries." Not even Amazon.com Inc. leaves itself open to so many different opportunities.

Of course there are risks here. Some of them are stated pretty clearly in NetJ.com's filings with the S.E.C. The company has $127,631 in accumulated losses–tiny by Internet standards. It has "extremely limited assets" and "no source of revenue."

But the most telling passage of the risk-disclosures section in NetJ.com's confessional is the one that describes, incredibly, the danger of competition. You might think a company that does nothing, and which is looking to merge with a company that does something, would have the field to itself. But no! As the filing explains, "Management believes that there are literally thousands of 'blank check' companies, many of which have substantially greater financial and management resources."

Indeed, there are.

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This column ran on page 29 in the February 7, 2000 edition of *The New York Observer.*

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION FROM BLOOMBERG/NEW YORK

Internet zone

SUPERFLEX

Superflex

In the beginning, we were simply trying to find a way to organize our practice. We were attracted to the corporate model as a method of working together and building a network of people and skills. At first there were only three people trying to define the organization as an entity: Jakob Fenger, Rasmus Nielsen, and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen. The perception of Superflex as a group of three persists today only because the researchers we later came to collaborate with were not directly visible in their activities.

During the startup of the organization we were looking for a profile and decided to have a logo made. We approached Per Arnoldi, the most famous and successful Danish designer. Per Arnoldi posters can be



Superflex, Installation of Arnoldi banners, *RAM*, Copenhagen, 1995.



Superflex, "We always buy new goldfish and leave them to the curator after each show."

found in almost every home in Denmark, and IKEA catalogues always featured Per Arnoldi posters in their backgrounds as signs of quality. He even had his own talk show at the time. When we contacted him, he already knew who we were, and even though he normally charges 100,000-500,000DK per logo, there was never any talk about money. At the presentation he said he had designed two versions and showed us the first. "This is the one I like best, and if you don't you are stupid, and I will sell it to Superfoss, the largest fodder and asphalt firm." After we accepted it, he crumpled up the second page and we never saw it again. The first time we used the logo was when we presented it at a generational exhibition *RAM,* 1995 . We felt it would be appropriate to invite Per Arnoldi to make this presentation for us because we wanted to subvert the whole idea of "a generation," and he is not part of ours.

Visual statements are no longer as important to our project as the tools we develop and how they are used. After only a year we registered Superflex as a business, the purpose of which was to facilitate direct collaboration with other corporations and to be taken seriously in that respect. In the beginning of that phase we experimented a lot with communicating as a corporation. We organized meetings and presented our then "secret" products to potential investors, as is customary in that realm. We met with representatives from the fashion industry, and various scientists we saw as potential collaborators for our organization.

Today Superflex works more as a research organization. If our projects reach a certain stage of development, we create new organizations for each of them. Supergas, for example, provides a tool to produce biogas. The users are people who live in equatorial areas, mainly in central Africa and Asia. Superchannel, a partner company, provides people with a tool to create their own internet TV channels via the internet community Superchannel.org. It is extremely experimental, and deals with the interrelation between the producer and the users, not so much with broadcasting per se.

Supergas is a public shareholder company. At the moment shares rate at 1000. To be able to sell shares, we needed a starting budget, private investors or public institutions, as well as the money that we ourselves made with earlier Superflex projects.

At the moment the partners are:

Supergas A/S

Jan Mallan, engineer and partner in the invention; shareholder. Peter Eriksen, economist and investor in Supergas; shareholder Surude (Sustainable Rural Development, an NGO situated in Tanzania), an early collaborator and local partner during the first installation of the biogas system.

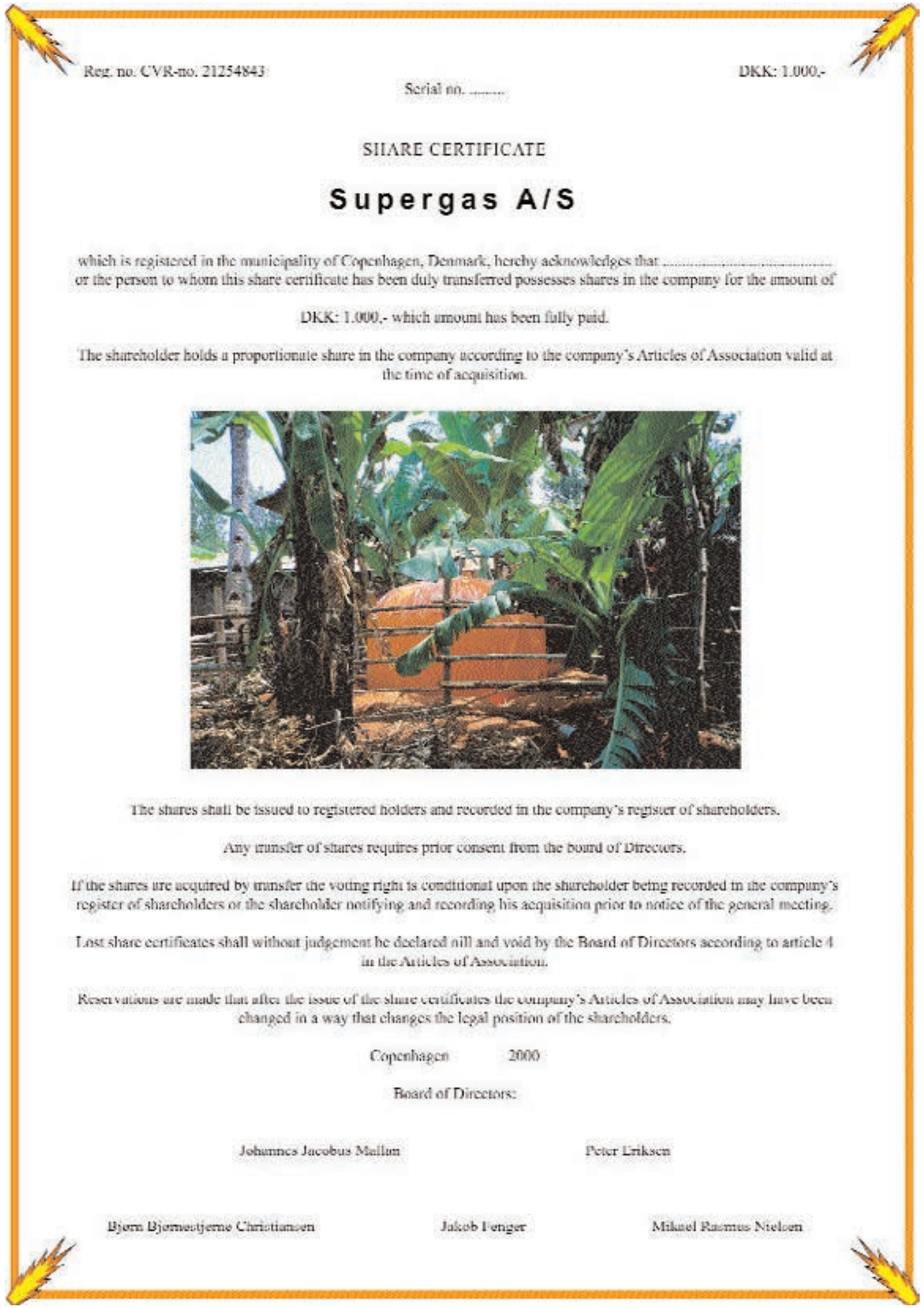
Superchannel Aps

Sean Treadway, programmer with strong skills in streaming media; business and conceptual partner in the project. Each of the channel producers are partners who have an influence on the development of the tool.

We are essentially a flexible structure, as the name implies. So while most corporations declare a mission statement, we have no need for a manifesto because we constantly reflect back on what we do, how we are organized and how people use our tools. Some of the projects make money, some don't. It depends on our interests.

SUPERFLEX, COPENHAGEN, JUNE 2000

www.superflex.dk



Reg. no. CVR-no. 21254843

DKK: 1.000,-

Serial no. .....

SHARE CERTIFICATE

Supergas A/S

which is registered in the municipality of Copenhagen, Denmark, hereby acknowledges that .....
or the person to whom this share certificate has been duly transferred possesses shares in the company for the amount of

DKK: 1.000,- which amount has been fully paid.

The shareholder holds a proportionate share in the company according to the company's Articles of Association valid at the time of acquisition.

The shares shall be issued to registered holders and recorded in the company's register of shareholders.

Any transfer of shares requires prior consent from the board of Directors.

If the shares are acquired by transfer the voting right is conditional upon the shareholder being recorded in the company's register of shareholders or the shareholder notifying and recording his acquisition prior to notice of the general meeting.

Lost share certificates shall without judgement be declared nill and void by the Board of Directors according to article 4 in the Articles of Association.

Reservations are made that after the issue of the share certificates the company's Articles of Association may have been changed in a way that changes the legal position of the shareholders.

Copenhagen 2000

Board of Directors:

Johannes Jacobus Mallan

Peter Eriksen

Bjørn Bjørnestjerne Christiansen

Jakob Fenger

Mikael Rasmus Nielsen

FAXAFSENDER +45 33 16 18 23 SUPERGAS AS 25/06/01 08:55 S.: 1
25/06/01 17:35 S.: 1

PER ARNOLDI

AMALIEGADE 40
DK-1256 COPENHAGEN

Kære Superflex + Jacob + co...

som lovet,et par ord om vores logo:

...det er klart at når en flok kunstnere bruger ordet super lurer supermen og alle overdrivelser og hype lige under overfladen slet skjult og man kan alligevel ikke lave en ironisk logo for så bliver det for meget af den vidunderlige ironi der (måske) var brændgas i de første tiltag så vidt jeg kunne se...så det her er en ganske almindelig logo for højst usalmindelige tiltag har det fortsat meget veloplagt vist sig.Jeg tror ikke det kan gøres meget bedre men superflex forpligter sig vel også ved at få det bedste til at give det bedste tilbage i virkelighedeb og hvor de ellers færdes...

ARNOLDI

Kbh.9.7.2001

PHONE +45 33 14 00 18
FAX +45 33 14 01 84

Translation on fax transmittal

Dear Superflex + Jacob + co...

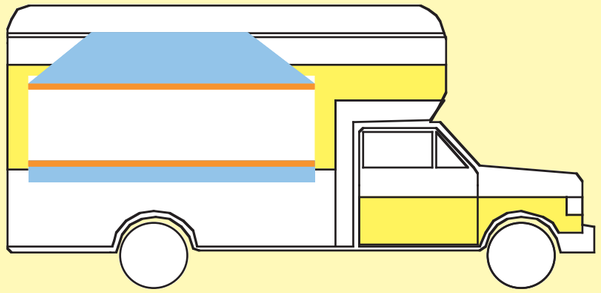
as promised, a few words about your logo:

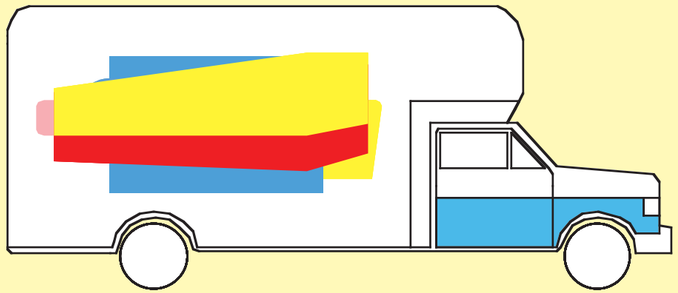
It is obvious that when a group of artists uses the words “super” or “superman,” then the hype and all exaggerations are just lurking below the surface, so you can’t really create an ironic logo for then it simply becomes too much of this wonderful irony, which I believe (maybe) is what supergas was about during it’s initial stages...so this is quite an usual logo for some highly unusual ventures...I don’t think it can be made much better but superflex is in return also obliged to make the best out of the best in reality or wherever they go...
ARNOLDI
Copenhagen. 9.7.2001

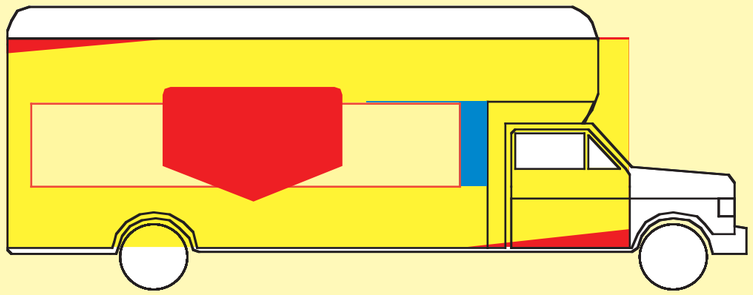
Superflex, *Supersauna*, Norway, 1995.

DANIEL PFLUMM

Daniel Pflumm

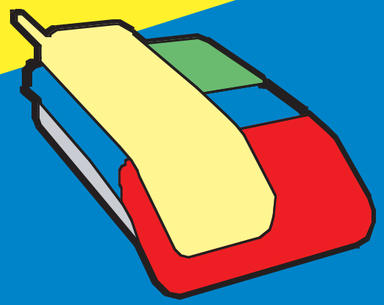






Daniel Pflumm, sketch for advertisement in *Corporate Mentality,* 2001.

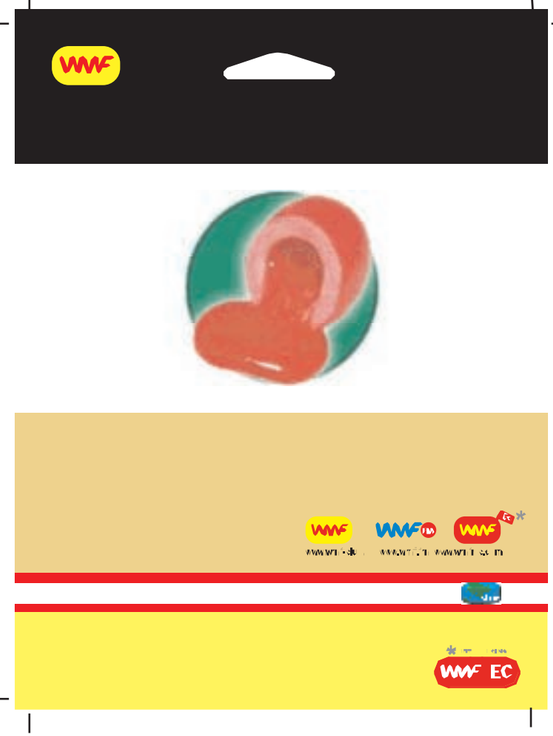


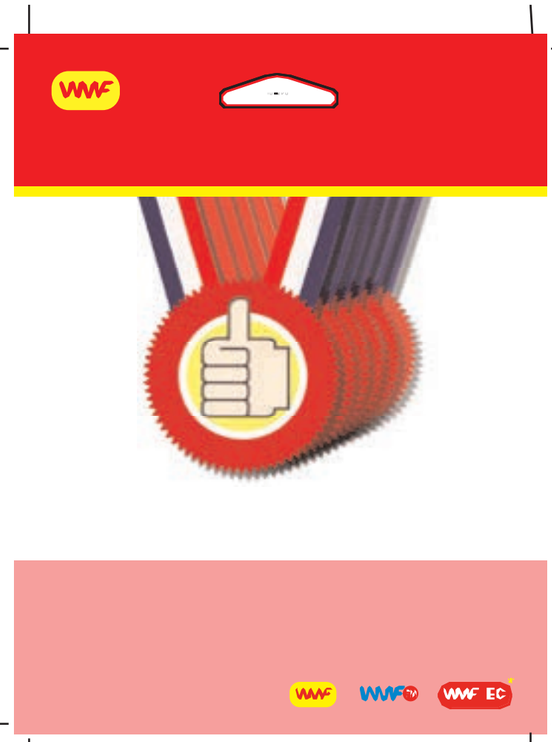




Daniel Pflumm, designs for *WMF* club flyers, Berlin, 2000-2001.



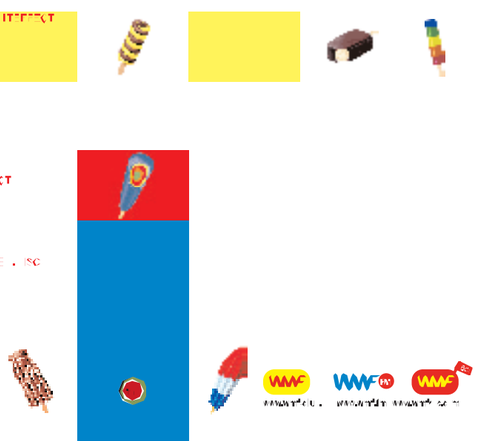












©SANDY NICHOLSON

Daniel Pflumm, designs for *WMF* club flyers, Berlin, 2000-2001.





Daniel Pflumm, logo design for gallery *NEU*, 2000.

POWER FLOWER

Peter Persson

In the spring of 1999, I was invited to take part in a project at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. The project was a joint exercise between the museum's Educational Department and the College of Art in Umeå where I was a student at the time. Our assignment was to engage Moderna Museet as an educational site.

During the 1960s, Moderna Museet was a place for experimentation and freedom of artistic expression, but that was not exactly the feeling I got when I first visited the museum. What I saw was a colossus that had come to a halt and been preserved. When I sat down to formulate my contribution to the project, my thoughts circled around the possibility of reactivating positive dynamics that remained buried in the 60s. I also reflected on a central concept of that period: solidarity.

I decided to create an exhibit that would radiate happiness, positivity and generosity. My ambition was to succeed in creating an environment that would make people think about our need for what I would like to call the "soft values" of love, empathy, civil courage, fraternal compassion and equal rights. I would call my work *Kärleksskulptur (Love Sculpture)*.

In time, *Kärleksskulptur* has become an extensive exploration of the various applications of a stylized flower of my design. My flower is based on a popular design that flooded the market during the 60s. Created with a 90s tool (Adobe Illustrator), it takes on the quality of a flat, empty, graphic motif that can be endlessly appropriated and reproduced.

It is a contemporary sign of something that was already a sign then, and is a way for me to measure my own political desires against those of a nostalgic, historical past. And then there was the matter of generosity. As an element of the complete installation, I wanted to make 10,000 copies of the flower, printed on paper flyers which would be handed out for free to the visitors. These printing costs exceeded the museum's project budget, but the idea was eventually made possible through a generous donation by the energy company Umeå Energi. This turn of events coincided with a fruitful dialogue that developed between myself and Anette Mångsén, the company's marketing director.

Before I entered the picture, Umeå Energi had already founded an art sponsorship program with the intention of decorating and stimulating the company. At our first meeting, we had a general discussion about possible forms of collaboration. No concrete decisions were made at that point, but the company expressed its interest in borrowing the flower for a limited time. They also wanted one of my barrels filled with demonstration placards, another element of my installation at the Moderna Museet, which ended up being used as props for a photograph of the executives in the company's latest annual report.

After the show, Umeå Energi bought several parts of my installation, which would then function as a separate work and be exhibited as such at their premises. It now goes under the name *Power Flower* and is located at the company's new facilities, the Dåva Myra heating plant in Umeå. Curiously, the purchase of my installation coincided with a demonstration by Greenpeace, who had climbed the chimney in protest against rubbish incineration. There was a strong counter-reaction from the townspeople who found this particular protest – by an organization that is exceptionally skilled in manipulating signs – to be poorly researched and unfounded. In fact, Umeå Energi, in collaboration with the University of Umeå and several environmental organizations, was working towards creating the world's most energy-effective and friendly heating plant, based on the principle of recycling waste as fuel. I hope that my work can be perceived as a small homage to these efforts.

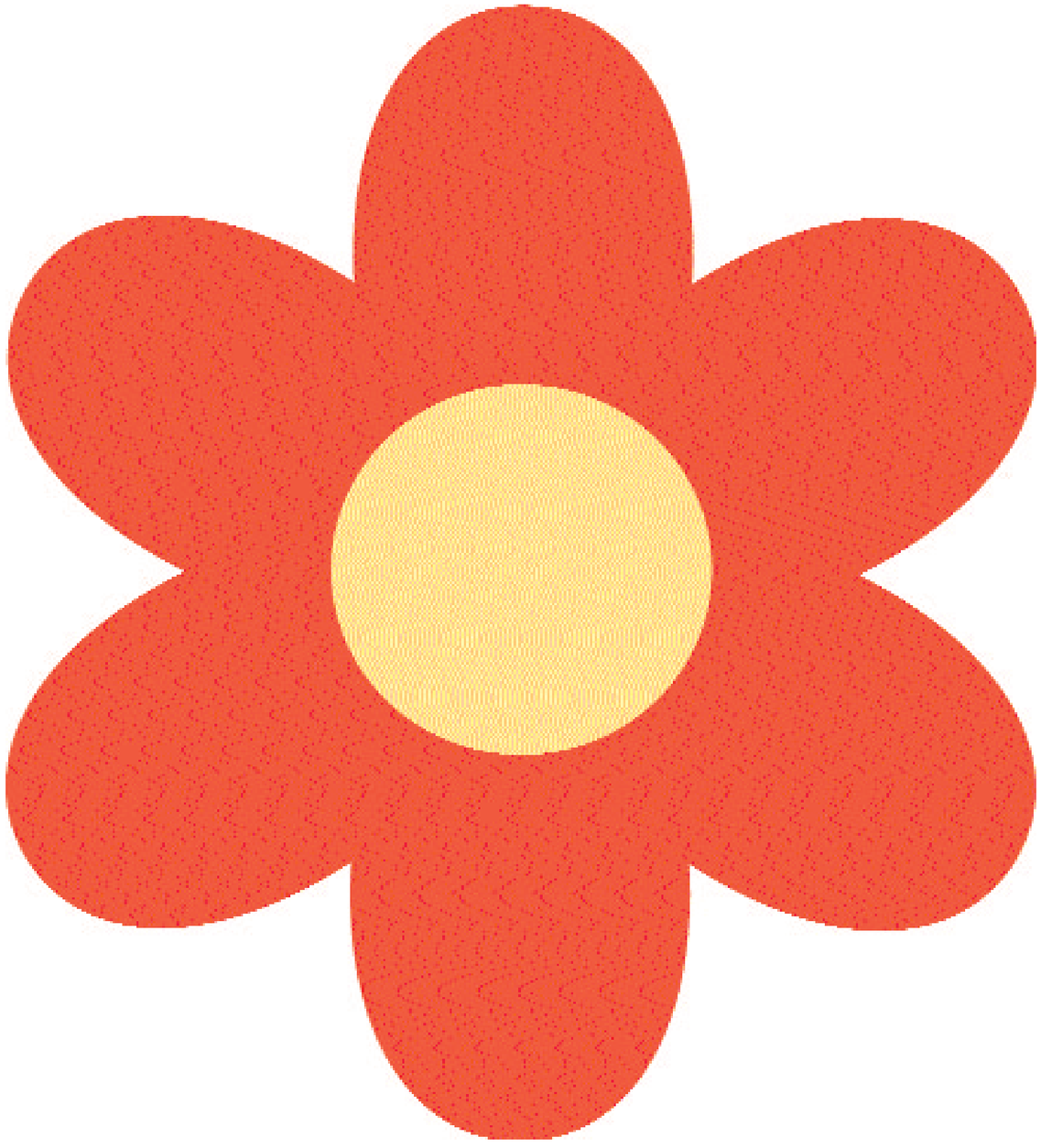
My relation with Umeå Energi continues. Every so often we get together and the company expresses an interest in new applications of the flower. It has recently appeared on T-shirts for a sponsored youth football team and in various marketing initiatives, both in print and on the internet. The motif has primarily been used in Umeå Energi youth projects and in their marketing of the local broadband server Ume Net. Every time I have to evaluate the company's suggested use against both my artistic concept and my financial revenue. If the situation is intriguing enough, I see it as yet another opportunity for me to make a critical analysis of the flower (and the soft values it stands for). Letting it go is necessary for it to bloom. Getting paid is a way of bringing it home.

PETER PERSSON, MALMÖ, JANUARY 2001

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHAN GUNSÉUS







NEWSLETTER

Umeå Energi

Power Flower Winning Art

You will certainly be aware of *Power Flower* – an art project under the signature of Peter Persson. His colourful flowers and hearts can be seen here and there in the context of Umeå Energi. Umeå Energi has worked closely with the College of Art in Umeå over the years. The students there have designed our Nolia stands, and Roger Wikström, a former principal of the College of Art, is a member of the company's artistic advisory committee for the Dåva combined power and heating plant.

"*Power Flower* is a sponsorship arrangement that has taken unexpected turns and, at the same time, is an example of how art can be used for more than just adornment," says marketing coordinator Anette Mångsén, whose responsibilities include sponsoring.

Power Flower was created by Peter Persson – at the time a finals student at the College of Art, and today an artist living and working in Malmö – head of an exhibition at Moderna Museet (Museum of Modern Art) in Stockholm in the spring of 2000. Umeå Energi sponsored Persson's exhibit, entitled *Kärleksskulptur* (Love Sculpture) with a small grant, in return for which parts of the material would be exhibited at the Dåva combined power and heating plant. This is what actually happened.

Giving and taking

Anette Mångsén: The agreement with Peter Persson also gave us the right to use the Power Flower theme in our advertising, in our information activities for schools, on our website, in our *Multum* and *Spektrum* newspapers, on T-shirts and as a screensaver, etc. He has also designed an exhibition stand for us.

This is how sponsoring works. It should involve mutual giving and taking, in which both parties are winners, regardless of whether the area involved is culture, sport or anything else. A sponsorship agreement is just like any other business arrangement.

One exciting and unexpected development is that the cooperation between Umeå Energi and Peter Persson will be described in an art book to be published by Lukas & Sternberg Publications in New York and edited by the Swedish artist, Aleksandra Mir.

The picture of the management team with the *Power Flower* placard is included in the book, which will be launched at the International Book Fair in Frankfurt in October this year.

"Art definitely has a place in our technological world," says Anette Mångsén.

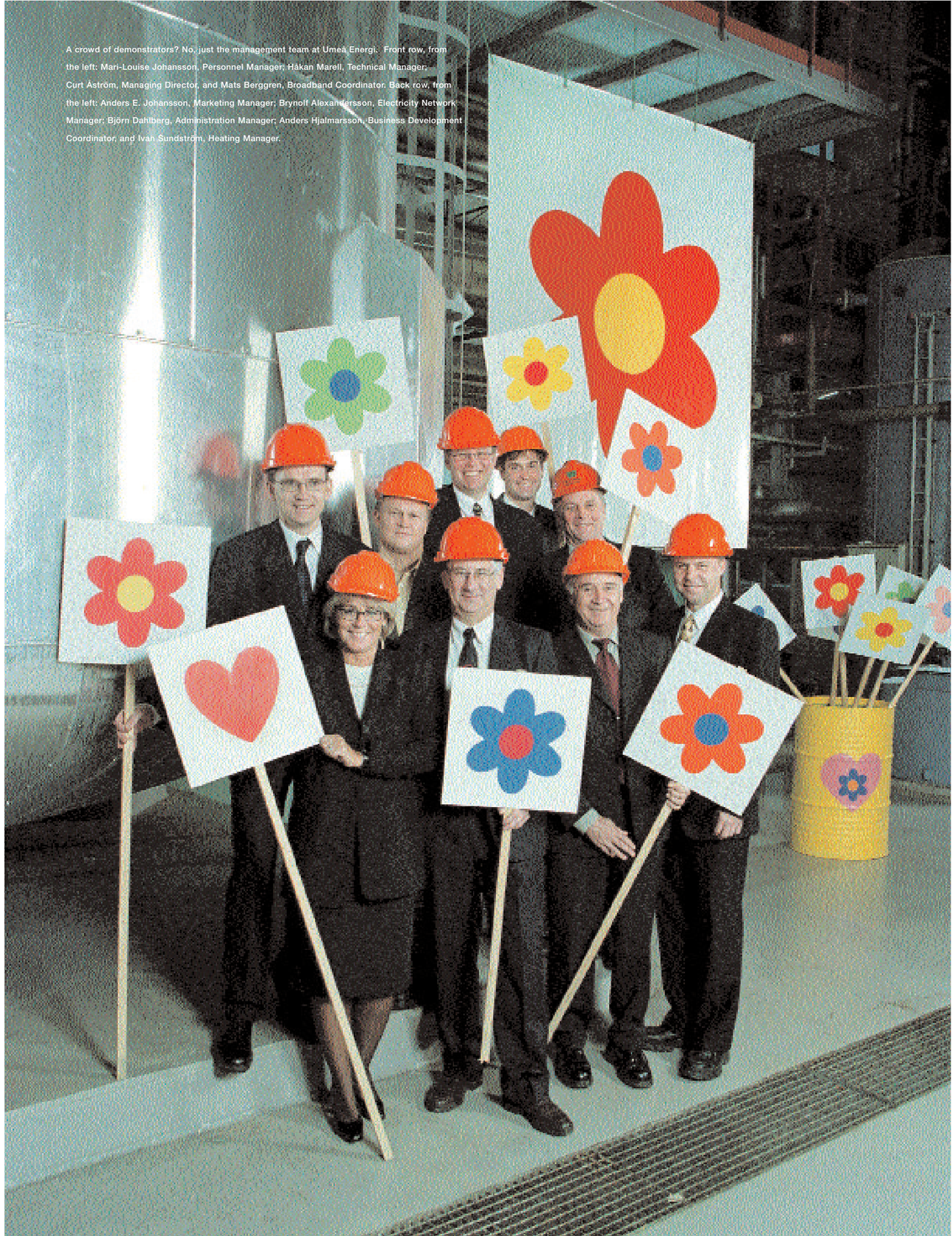
Why we use art

Why should Umeå Energi concern itself with art in the first place? Anette Mångsén has this to say: By means of artistic expressions, we can transfer aesthetic values to our otherwise quite technological reality. We can demonstrate that Umeå Energi is more than electrons and incinerators, and that we are people with warmth, feelings and a sense of humour. It is also true that we operate a business that affects practically everyone in our vicinity. This gives us a special responsibility for the physical environment and the local community, and we should do whatever we can to ensure that it has an appealing form. Employees also benefit from seeing art in their everyday lives. We spend a large proportion of our working hours at work, and it is important to have various forms of stimulation. Art is enriching, and it liberates the senses.

Umeå Energi, excerpt from *Spektrum,* employee newsletter, January 2000.

Facts about Umeå Energi

Umeå Energi – located in the northern part of Sweden – produces, distributes and sells electricity, district heating and district cooling to a total of around 55,000 customers. We provide energy services and offer rented connections on UmeNet, a broadband network for data and telecommunications. Umeå is the city with the highest Internet density in Sweden – more than 60% of households have access to the Internet – thanks in part to UmeNet. The autumn of 2000 saw the start of an extensive technical trial involving telephony via broadband, IP-telephony. In August 2000, we commissioned the Dåva combined power and heating plant – an investment of approx. 650 million SEK and in many respects a unique initiative which has attracted considerable international interest. Dåva combined power and heating plant hosts study visits from all over the world. The Group has 260 employees and a turnover of approx. 750 million SEK.



A crowd of demonstrators? No, just the management team at Umeå Energi. Front row, from the left: Mari-Louise Johansson, Personnel Manager; Håkan Marell, Technical Manager; Curt Åström, Managing Director, and Mats Berggren, Broadband Coordinator. Back row, from the left: Anders E. Johansson, Marketing Manager; Brynolf Alexandersson, Electricity Network Manager; Björn Dahlberg, Administration Manager; Anders Hjalmarsson, Business Development Coordinator, and Ivan Sundström, Heating Manager.

WE ARE NOW

The Icelandic Love Corporation

The myth tells us that if standing on the moon, only two human phenomena are visible: The Great Wall of China and four Icelandic girls that call themselves, “The Icelandic Love Corporation (ILC).” Coming down to planet Earth, another myth can be heard amongst earthlings about this corporation operating on an international basis, spreading their outlandish ideas around the globe by performing colorful and burlesque happenings. It all seems very innocent at first, hidden under the nominal disguise of “art,” but looking closer (and now the perspective is from a microcosmic level and not from other planets) we detect a serious questioning of…“the Thing.”

And matters become complicated. I’m not sure, but I think I might have smelled the stench of conspiracy here. The thing is that in the mother language, Icelandic, these girls conceal their activities behind the apparently innocent name “Gjorningaklubburinn,” meaning “The Happening Club.” We Icelanders then smile and think of just another pre-feminist women’s club that has something to do with sewing or making food. “Ahh, very nice, indeed,” we think, “when young girls are active and joyful” and do not suspect anything at all. But in the universal tongue, the very language spoken on the moon, the name of the club – The Icelandic Love Corporation – has very different connotations. It immediately becomes clear to us that we are concerned with an organization that spreads its propaganda (with a target population that is not local but international and, if extended further, interglobal) under the sweet icing of…“the Thing.”

What is this thing with the corporation? Why don´t they call themselves “The Icelandic Happening Club?” No, no, they never would. From an interglobal standpoint such an old-fashioned and sheepish name is doomed to fail. Here everything is made with precise intention. Under the concept “corporation” there are layers of meaning that disclose themselves if we take a careful look. Corpus is the Latin for “body.” And we, the humans that have witnessed some of the ILC’s happenings, know that their activities are always highly corporal. But it is not the corporality of the Church we are observing; the ILC goes beyond such dualism and the result is the very carnal metaphysics for which it is now getting known. Let us just have a quick look at the titles of the happenings; *The Autopsy, The Revivification, Faith, Hope and Grace, The Genesis, Sublime Beings, Hope,* and you can see what I am getting at. They even manipulate one of the most sacred and intimate rites of our postmodern existence in a happening they call *The blowjob*. Looking more closely at the etymology of “corporation” we see that a “corporation spiritual” is the working title of the dean in the cathedrals of former times.

Yes, this trans-feministic, lunary visible club is fully aware of art’s position beyond science and religion, but they appropriate the signs and symbols of these established institutions. They have, for example, designed a logo for themselves, and that logo is the postmodern equivalent to the old religious symbols. Where we once had symbols for transcendental reality, we now have logos: trademarks that denote things constituting the world of commodities. And matching this: what we once called the “heavenly sphere,” we now call “the Market.” The logo of the Icelandic Love Corporation consists of four hearts, each containing a vagina. A beautiful logo that might as well have originated from the morphology of Indian religious mandalas. The robes that ILC wear in their rites are white laboratory robes, which is obviously appropriate because when the clergy has lost its authority and respect, the scientists take on the role of the priests and give us our daily *Weltanschauung*. Perhaps art has a saving function in the media-saturated contemporary society – a society of people for whom the magic has not only disappeared from nature, but also from the language and thought itself. Perhaps art and only art is able to open up the gates of the unknown and mystical that were closed by the advent of modernism when all aspects of society were rationalized and subjugated under the new *Law of the Market*.

Could it be that art has a redeeming power in our society in a time when we witness the constant territorisation by humans of all spaces (outer space included)? When nature disappears by being asphalted over, transformed into power sources or references for the designed souvenirs of the tourist industry, then culture becomes even more important as a potentially powerful resistance to the cold rationalization and unrestrained capitalism of the modern welfare and information society.

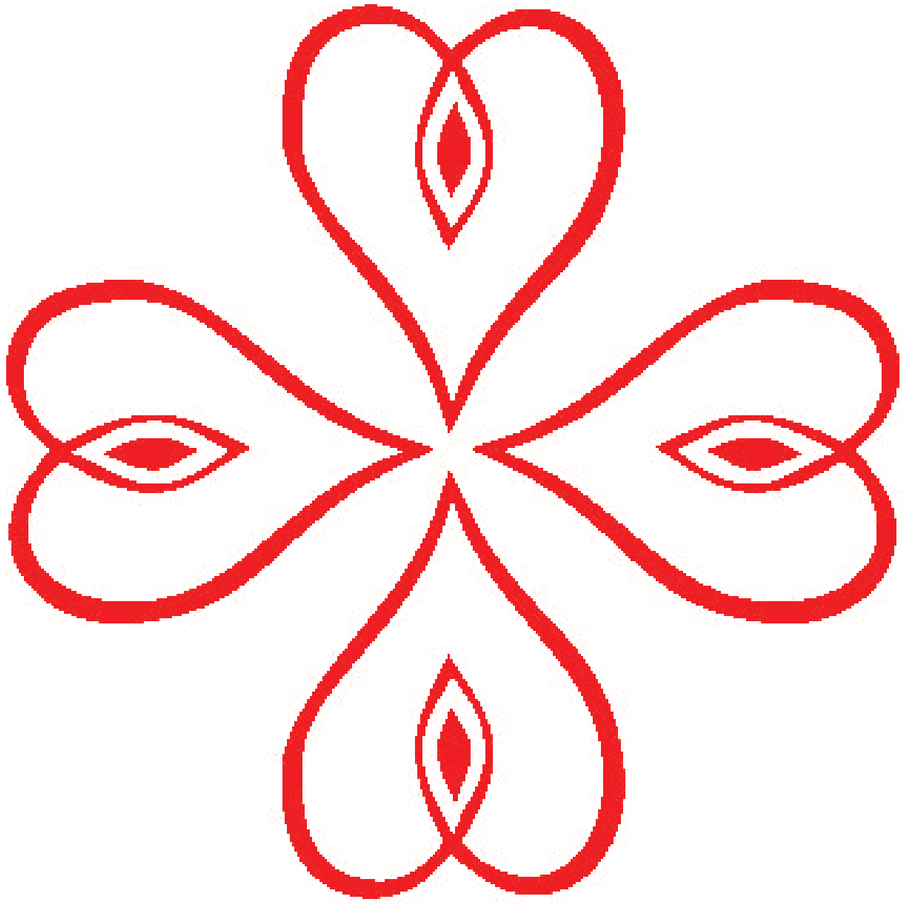
But where have I strayed to? Oh yes, I was discussing the corporal magic of the Love Corporation, thinking about spirituality in our profane world, and trying to make out what kind of body would lie under the icing of their happenings. I mean: what is really happening in the activities of those four girls visible from outer space? Well, they are, in a joyful and humorous manner, presenting and worshipping “the Thing”…the only thing from the sacred past we have left to worship, namely, Love itself.

THÓRALLUR MAGNÚSSON, REYKJAVÍK, NOVEMBER 2000

www.ilc.is

The Icelandic Love Corporation: Dóra Ísleifsdóttir, Eirún Sigurðardóttir, Jóni Jónsdóttir, and Sigrún Hrólfsdóttir have been working together since 1996.

“As a corporation we figured it was necessary to have a logo, as a symbol for our actions. A logo is a powerful tool, both to get attention and to be remembered. Our logo is four hearts, with vaginas inside of them. The hearts are symbolic for our faith in love and affection. The vaginas are symbolic for us being female. A single heart from the clover like logo can also be like looking from behind, at a naked woman crossing her legs and bending forward. We think this logo is very beautiful and symbolic for the Icelandic Love Corporation.”



GJÖRNINGAKLÚBBURINN

The Icelandic Love Corporation

During the summer of 1997, The Icelandic Love Corporation had a show in Gerduberg Cultural Center, Reykjavík. TV personality, Vala Matt, approached us and invited us to do something for her show, Iceland Today, which airs prime time to the nation. Here is a short description of the performance and an excerpt from the conversation.

Performance



Standing in the actual news set of Channel 2, Iceland, we begin by holding up small purple colored mirrors.
We carefully put on lipstick for a few seconds.
We then get small pink index cards from our pockets, look into the cameras, and start reading the “news”:

“Good evening.
Freedom, Beauty, Freetime.
Love conquers all, without a doubt.
Everything is full of love.
The world is good.
Love is your friend.
Freetime, get going.
You are beauty and life itself.
Freedom is great.”



We then look each other in the eyes, smile and giggle a little and then walk towards the interview set.

Excerpt from the talk show interview

Vala Matt (Host): This was a rather unusual newshour! It had quite a different tone to it.
Jóni: Yes, these are our messages and we want people to belive these messages like we believe them.
Vala: Now you have spread your message over the whole country in one take!
Jóni: Yes.



Vala: I know that for us that are familiar with it, this may be an akward question...but I know that there are many people who wonder and ask themselves...what is performance art?
Jóni: Yes, but to me it is something very simple. It is just one of many great art forms. It´s just something that you do in art...like painters paint and so on.
Sigrún: It is also something more personal. Because there is an actual person doing the art before your eyes. Not just some dead object hanging on a wall.
Vala: Aha, but tell me, have people ever acted strangely or has anything peculiar happened when you are doing these performances?
Jóni: Nooo, not exactly strange, but things have happend such as a woman starts crying during a performance and so on. But that wasn´t very weird considering the performance we were doing, which was both very sad and very beautiful.
Sigrún: It is also really funny when people become like, you know...they think this is very weird, a lot of the time...some people, you know. And they ask a lot of questions.



Jóni: Most people think it´s a lot of fun. And they take part in having fun, just as much fun as we are having.
Sigún: But I still think that people really understand what we are doing...even though they think they don´t.

THOMAS BAYRLE

A conversation with Gardar Eine Einarsson and Matias Faldbakken



Thomas Bayrle: All of a sudden, in 1969, the RAF logo appeared in public for the first time. One could easily see that it was merged out of a Kalashnikov and the Chinese Star plus the three letters RAF. By that time about 30 different independence movements, wars and rebellions took place all over the world – aside from the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia, in Africa, South America, etc. Most popular on the left scene were the Polisario in North Africa, Bolivia, Angola, Al Fatach, and Lotta Continua. All these groups used symbols and images which had been emphasized through the cultural revolution in China. The RAF logo was probably not thought over too seriously and that is its strength.
As everyone knows, the RAF did not have the ability to find any roots in the so-called working masses in Germany, and I suppose they did not really try very hard to reach out for more orthodox groups like the Marxist/Leninists, who at least in some cases (Frankfurt/Hamburg) got the chance to walk into factories. From the beginning, they tried to co-operate with intellectual outlaws like teachers, university professors and students, priests, commercial and free artists, kindergarten employees, etc. – often with people who had learned their lessons well in the Frankfurter Schule, and who sympathised with attempts to change this immoral post-war capitalist Adenauer positivism with all its narrow-minded, well-known reactionary tendencies.

Gardar Eine Einarsson and Matias Faldbakken: It is interesting how RAF seems to have been triggered by opposition to power in the same way as much art is conceived, and how this opposition takes different routes in articulating itself.

TB: I suppose, when they all of a sudden went into illegal activities – after the burning of the Frankfurt Kaufhof – they did not have much time to install an efficient network, and you are right to say that in a way they organised and worked very much like anarchistic artist groups before them. Their nervous, spontaneous way of knocking at all sorts of doors – exploring, fishing, moving in fast cars, crossing borders – was (at least in its beginning) based on a very new form of their cultural studies. It was a journey through households, offices, squats, illegal businesses, churches, cafés, etc. An extreme creative mix that moved a lot of minds in a very short time. In this first phase, many people appreciated their activities, like the warehouse burning, as the right answer to the static repressive behaviour of police and society. This rather broad sympathy went on – even after the clear announcement of violence. Emphasised by the logo, it fell into our nice, naive republic like a stone through a window...right in front of us. Anyhow, nobody really took it too seriously until the first killing changed everything. At that moment, the real headache started for many of us, as humanist free thinking creatures turned into a loop of ordinary crime with a guilty feeling – that changed minds a lot.

GEE/MF: As you say both the Soviet-made Kalashnikov and the Chinese star seem to be symbolical in their reference to communist ideology. Why was the Kalashnikov in the logo later replaced with the German-made Heckler and Koch machine pistol?

TB: I suppose, as most of the RAF members came from a humanist background and only very few of them had been experts at violence, their approach toward almost anything in the beginning was rather spontaneous. The dive into illegal activities was so fast (like Bonnie and Clyde) that they needed help from legal sympathizers. Probably these people often did not think very much about traditions or historical backgrounds – like to merge elements of the Russian and the Chinese revolution. At that time there where hundreds of flyers going around the large universities, Cuban, Chinese, Albanian, Palestinian, Algerian, Vietnamese, etc. On each of these you could find images of guns and stars, and I tell you, if nothing else was around, you just ran into the next weapon shop and took whatever was available like even the image of a Heckler and Koch if it looked good. On the other hand there was awareness of internationality. Rote Armee Fraktion was compatible with Red Army Fraction. RAF was more than coincidence...

GEE/MF: Allegedly, the RAF logo appeared in public for the first time in the communiqué *The Concept of the Urban Guerrilla* in April 1971. Was this the first time it was used?

TB: Yes, I think it first appeared in *The Concept of the Urban Guerrilla.* There truly had been collective ways of doing jobs and tasks. It was part of an intelligent concept that nobody really knew about in other circles – except for those very, very few who had an overlapping knowledge. And these divided forms of work also influenced the products. A logo, for which different persons contributed with different things, had to look different from how it would have looked if it had been made by a single artist in his studio.

GEE/MF: You mention that other freedom/terrorist groups of the time used communist imagery, but was the use of a specific logo unique to RAF, or did other such organisations place equal emphasis on a visual brand?

TB: I suppose it was not so unique. I think there had been similar images in Bolivia and North Africa before, but its mystic dimension came through the media. To see it on TV in shocking spectacular circumstances...that was totally new in Germany.

GEE/MF: The logo as a way to promote oneself is today a strategy that seems to be borrowed from (capitalist) commercial trade. Was this problematic for intellectuals and other students of the Frankfurter Schule, or was this seen as a subversive tactic?

TB: On the one hand it was not deeply reflected, if capitalism worked the same way, but on the other hand there was some unspoken corporate identity feeling even in the left – that a strong brand can do a lot – as they also knew from the swastika. Aside from these questions, at that time the Frankfurter Schule had turned into some kind of an inferno with pure activism in its centre – except for those few planning people backstage in the RAF who planned very cool and efficient strikes against the state.

GEE/MF: The idea of a terrorist group – the image of an extreme opposition to the powers that be – seems in a way to be its most potent aspect. In a way maybe this was the ultimate insult to the state? As in the corporate world, what ensures their impact and power is not so much the service provided (or in this case maybe the disservice), but rather the impact of the image – the brand name?

TB: How does a brand really grow? Where did the Mercedes Star come from (it was an ordinary engineer in the factory who made it), and what was incorporated into it later on? If it is strong and able to incorporate, from a certain moment on it turns into some kind of a mental container which draws ideas, failures and utopias into its space like a black hole. Everything kind of melts into it regardless of success or no success. It gains momentum and incorporates a whole period. Companies would die for this. In other words: a logo may do a lot, but the circumstances around it make it fat.

GEE/MF: Were the RAF themselves active in the circulation of the logo, or was it the media who made it known to the public? What efforts did the RAF make in order to circulate it?

TB: This so-called commanding cell probably knew very well how to launch the logo effectively. In the beginning they tried to make the small organisation look large. They arranged the capturing of their first prisoner by involving the press and TV, showing the prisoner holding a sign with the logo in front of him. With one photo put in the center of our (until that moment) rather harmless Wirtschaftswunder Society, they shocked the entire state.

GEE/MF: You mention the planners and the backstage operators. In a way it might seem as these planners and operators pull the group from being an idea of a terrorist group into a practical terrorist organisation with a rigid structure that seems to adopt the form of their enemies – the corporation/state. To what degree did the RAF develop more or less corporate or governmental strategies and ways of operating?

TB: I really don't know how far they developed...I suppose pretty soon factions formed with different suggestions and strategies. As they operated Europe-wide, their friends in Milan or Paris had a more distanced outlook on the events than those right here at the front. As the State pursued them and their sympathisers in such a strong and hysterical way, there was soon very little space left over to move. That probably lead to a certain isolation or regionalisation among the different fractions and this probably caused different forms of strategies. Baader, as a real practical maker, must have been orthodox – not very timid in using violence inside and outside the group, while Ulrike



Meinhof (as the intellectual figure) was probably shy towards violence. She had to force herself against her mentality to walk into "the Räderwerk" (Sartre) of violence.

GEE/MF: Were the efficient strikes against the state a functional way of using the enemy's own strength against him, or do you think it was a mistake that subtracted from the ideological foundation of the group?

TB: At least in the beginning, people like Teufel and Kunzelmann in Munich and Berlin brought a lot of tricky movements and anarchistic jokes into their ongoing struggle with state institutions. They performed many funny and intelligent actions that toyed with the state's own methods and gave examples of how to turn them around. And I suppose, at least in the beginning, the RAF used the clichés of society in order to trap it, but later on – as they were under strong pressure ranging from total telephone surveillance via street, train and airport controls, to civilian surveillance (a German speciality) – you saw their Wanted posters everywhere – actions took a fatal turn into very helpless and cynical forms. And as they tried to line up with international groups like Alfatach, they were drawn into a maelstrom of feelings and actions that were no longer their own.

FRANKFURT AM MAIN, MARCH 2001

IMAGES FROM: www.baader-meinhof.com

Thomas Bayrle, born in 1937 in Berlin, has been working as an artist for over four decades and is currently a professor at "Städelschule" – Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Frankfurt am Main, where both Gardar Eide Einarsson and Matias Faldbakken were his students.

THE PLURAL OF MYSELF

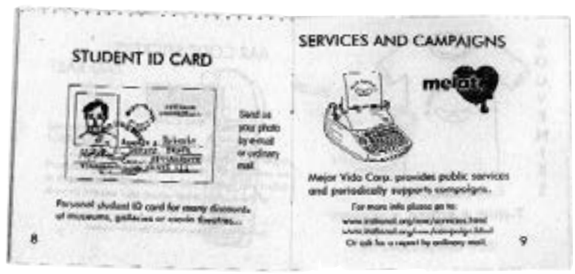
Mejor Vida Corporation



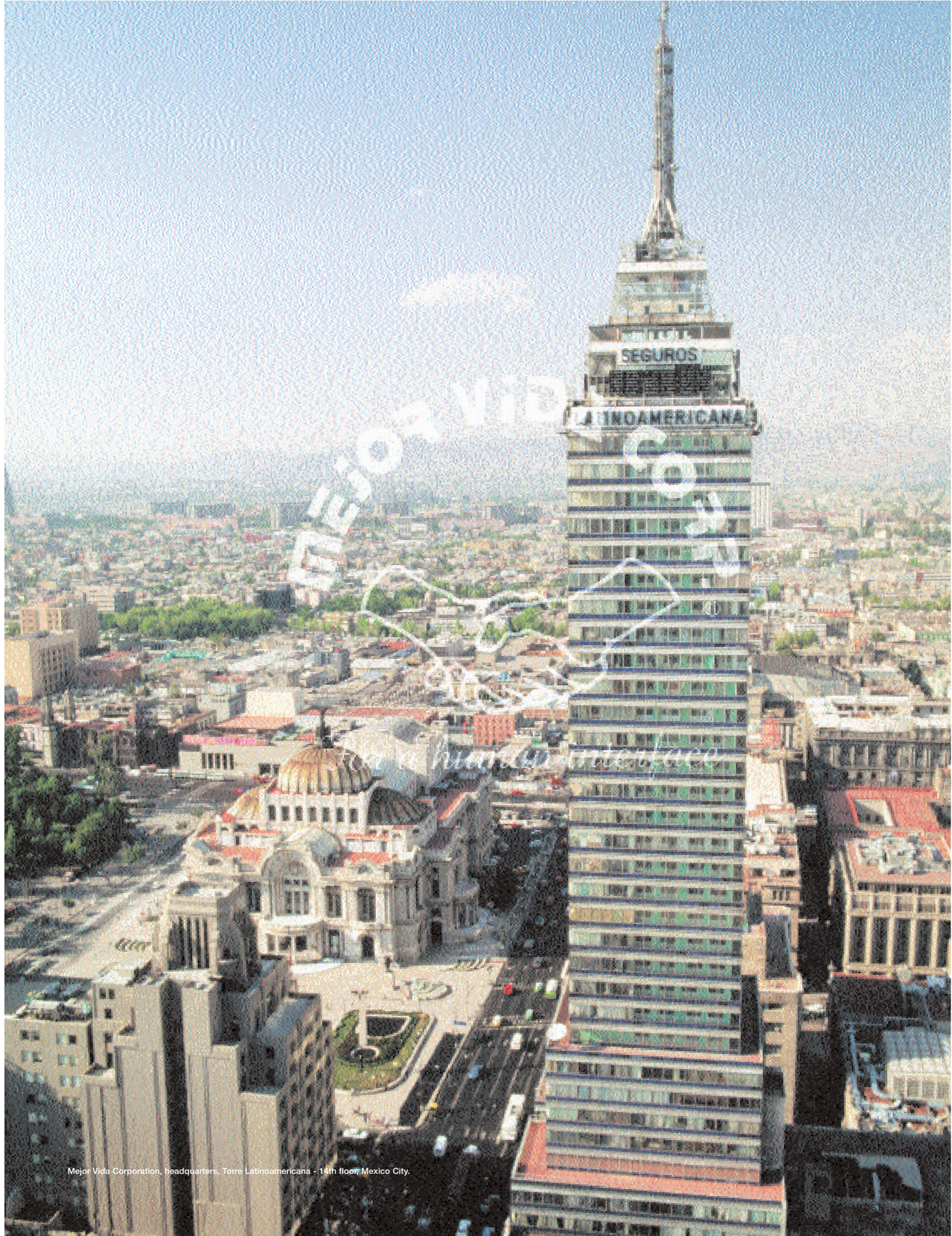
Mejor Vida Corporation, student ID card, 2001.

Aleksandra Mir: You recently moved into a new office. What does it look like?
Minerva Cuevas: Our office is a small nice place on the 14th floor in The Latin-American Tower in Mexico City. This is the most well known building in Mexico and also the second tallest one. The front door has our logo and motto (MVC – for a human interface) on a golden plaque, and many of the stickers that I or my friends have produced. Inside we have two areas, both with walls covered with visual documentation of our activities, postcards and posters. The large area is very much a reception/library/meeting space and the smaller is our "Kitchen," where you can have a tea or coffee, some food or find all our technical stuff. It has more equipment than food, actually: computer, audio transmittor, mixers, microphones, cables, phones, faxes, scanner…everything is there. But Sergio, a friend, just baptized it the "Kitchen."
AM: I've noticed that sometimes MVC is an "I," and sometimes it is a "We." How so?
MC: Oh, it's just that I got used to using the plural of myself when I speak about an MVC project, as a corporation would. But I also have friends coming to the space who make their own projects. Some people I know work with me on the radio project, others who work on their own similar projects may just come to drop off their stickers.
AM: Who are your neighbors in the tower? Do you mingle with them at lunch or talk to them in the elevator?
MC: The whole building belongs to an insurance company. There are also lawyers, optometrists, architects and even a famous fortune teller in there, but I don't really mingle with them. What I do very often though, is that I take advantage of their clients. The office next door gives housing credits and it closes at lunch time. Sometimes people who arrive there, that don't know this and just wait for the office to open, so I invite them to come into our office instead. I give them products or explain a little bit about what we do. As a result of some casual interaction, some of the neighbors or the elevator staff, the security and their relatives have, for example, received MVC student ID's.
AM: How do the relatives end up with ID's?
MC: It's a chain reaction. Someone has one and then their friends and relatives want one too. So far, we have distributed around 2000 cards worldwide via the Internet and international shows. Local people are most often very shy. They come in with a photo of a cousin or a daughter and ask if we can make it for them. The security guards most often use theirs to get travel discounts to their hometowns in other Mexican states. They can get up to 50% off with our card.
AM: And where do you live? Do you commute to work?
MC: I get up at 8 in the morning. But I live in the outskirts of the city so I usually get to the office around 11-12 AM as it would be a real nightmare to travel this way at rush hour. I use public transportation. First a "microbus" to the closest subway station, and then the train to the center of the city. It takes me 50 minutes one way. But I don't really have a fixed schedule. I don't like to go home after 9-10 PM, to feel a bit safer (I never feel safe), but my work extends far beyond these hours. I keep "working" on the way home and almost every day I end up using the computer at home before I go to sleep, to see what's the first thing I have to do the next day. Usually, I also receive/make the first calls of the day at home in the morning. I mainly go to the office to use the equipment there and because we have our suppliers and facilities in the area, such as the printers and post office. But most importantly: the office is a strategic place to meet.
AM: Do you sleep well at night?
MC: Yep.





Mejor Vida Corporation, product catalogue, 2000.



Mejor Vida Corporation, headquarters, Torre Latinoamericana - 14th floor, Mexico City.











Mejor Vida Corporation, stickers, 1998-2001.

A solitary protest meeting

It is International Anti-Capitalist Protest Day and MVC is one of its organizers in Mexico (on the J18 web site, MVC is the only one listed). MVC distributes information leaflets on Paseo de la Reforma, positioned on the sidewalk directly outside the Mexican Stock Exchange. Approximately ten policemen block the main entrance. Although MVC is unable to congregate a large number of people, it certainly has the building's safety team on its toes. One of the main objectives of this protest is to block the lateral street of this important avenue. Unfortunately, coordination breaks down with the 40 members of an anarchist punk group who were supposed to participate in the protest: they are at a subway station a kilometer away, performing street theater under close observation by the mounted police. MVC has a soccer ball but is unable to organize an informal match.

The Mexican protest hardly matched those that took place in London on that same date. However, for a couple of hours, one person handing out leaflets was able to put the Stock Exchange on alert. The highlight of the event was when MVC and the Stock Exchange security guards simultaneously photographed each other. After handing out leaflets for a while, MVC ran into a branch of the Bilbao Viscaya Bank. At the entrance stood the well-known figure of the pig, the mascot of the bank's advertising campaign. MVC placed the leaflets on its fat stomach and took a photograph. The protest ended at dusk.

The Campaign

Undoubtedly one of the most outstanding of MVC's successes was its campaign addressing the national population census for the year 2000, which was carried out by the Instituto Nacional de Geografía, Estadística e Informática (INEGI), the Mexican census bureau. The timing was perfect. Her first action was to alter the campaign's publicity, specifically the large plastic posters placed throughout the city. MVC'S goal was to denounce the resources wasted on publicity and logistics. The census bureau hired thousands of part-time employees, printed thousands of manuals, questionnaires, bags, etc., in an effort to collect general information from a population that does not receive the benefits of this campaign. It questioned the fact that the census does not take the homeless into account, even though this is one of the most vulnerable population groups. Supposedly, the results of the census are used to design government programs and to plan the distribution of available resources. Their refusal to acknowledge the homeless population underlines their lack of interest in dealing with the problems of the disadvantaged. In other words, the facts they apply when designing their programs are unreliable.

MVC's intervention was based on the Melate Lottery publicity campaign, parodying it by advertising the number of Mexicans living in extreme poverty (40,000,000) in place of the monetary amount of the huge cash prize. The posters were also going to include the number of homeless Mexicans but MVC was unable to obtain official statistics from INEGI. When MVC wrote INEGI's main office requesting information on the homeless in Mexico, whether exact or approximate numbers, she was told that these people were impossible to count because they live in the street. The email included some information on children with mental deficiencies and child labour, "in case this information could be of use." Based on this lack of information, MVC launched the campaign "If you have a house, the INEGI counts you. The homeless don't." She also produced stickers with the modified INEGI logo.

For an exhibition at Room 7 at the Museo Rufino Tamayo (June 22, 2000), MVC produced a giant billboard which was placed outside on Reforma Avenue. Thanks to a newspaper article covering the opening, the general director of INEGI, Lic. Antonio Puig Escudero, learned about MVC's campaign. He personally phoned MVC's representative, explaining that "he had read the newspaper article and it is false to say that INEGI does not take the homeless into account in its statistics." MVC answered that she had obtained her information from INEGI itself and that she even had documentation to prove it and that she would be more than willing to stop her campaign and the statements made to the press as soon as she had reliable proof that the homeless in Mexico were being taken into account in the census.

MVC's correspondence with INEGI could have led to a public debate on the institute's evident negligence regarding the homeless. It also raised questions regarding the usefulness of "official" information and revealed the general population's lack of access to it. But MVC's dialogue with INEGI dissolved and the institute never reported back, so a true debate never took place. Unfortunately, the campaign never reached its maximum potential. Throwing the first stone is not enough.

Concrete Fictions: Offices at the Latino Tower

There is a problematic lack of clarity in MVC's definition of itself and its work. Everyone has his or her own opinion, but the organization has not formulated a clear mission statement to explain its purposes and actions. Some statements refer to the corporation as a "fiction," disregarding the fact that MVC's mission is to be a "social agent" and a "politically active organization." How can a fiction be engaged in concrete social activism?

The term "corporation" can be confusing. It suggests an entity driven by profit. In fact, MVC assumes a corporate image not in order to falsify it, but to apply its organizational structure – one that works efficiently toward its goals, which means there is a certain rationality behind its actions. The corporate image is a support. It suggests reliability, providing MVC with an identity more seductive than the typical non-profit, pamphlet-based activist groups we are so bored with. Therefore, both MVC's identity and logistical structure are those of a "corporation." Another factor that leads to a mistaken perception of MVC is its relationship to art. Although MVC is both an artist and part of an artistic project, the purpose of its actions is to have an effect on reality. In fact, MVC acts directly in the street, risking exposure to the unexpected, unlike some so-called "committed" art which produces stupendous discourses but simply evaporates at the end of the lecture or once you leave the museum. This is the dilemma or ambiguity of MVC as a project: it defines itself as a "fusion between art and activism," and this does not necessarily mean simulation.

We have to question the truth of statements like: "If analyzed critically, there is no doubt that MVC is only possible in the field of art." MVC also rejects the brand of "political art" which simply appropriates elements of the social and political everyday life. It is not satisfied with turning a piece of work into something "political" in the manner of, for example, Cildo Meireles and his Coca-Cola bottle interventions. His anti-corporate message never left the museum or gallery.

Perceptions of MVC as a youthful prank may be due to the fact that its products, services and campaigns are totally free. Some may view this as a sort of senseless potlatch, in that MVC does not intend to increase its prestige or to legitimize itself by handing out "presents." The work of the corporation is free, but this does not necessarily make it fictitious. In the Torre Latinoamericana building, nine floors above the MVC offices, one can find the offices of a peculiar organisation called Cardini. Cardini is a Columbian fortune teller who advertises on several radio stations, selling his expertise in reversing the effects of evil spells as well as his "XXI Century Talisman," which gets hot when it senses danger or bad vibrations. Many people visit Cardini's 23rd floor offices every day. They write him letters so that he can use his powers to guess the true personality of the sender. But no one would call Cardini a fiction, particularly because he charges between 15,000 and 30,000 pesos per session. Cardini Productions has products and services, a corporate image, secretaries and employees in its office. We can say that it generates a profit out of people's superstitions. On the other hand, MVC's engagements in political and social actions are understood as abstractions which deal with "hope."

MVC has minimized these problems of perception. As a "corporate personality," it should insist that it is not a symbolic representation, but a real social agent, and therefore must be considered and criticized as such. What complicates the matter is the multiplicity of strategies it employs to reach out to people.

Cruzvillegas, Jesús, *Hoy es el último Martes 13 del siglo XX,* Mexico, 1999.

Gracián, Baltazar, *Oráculo manual, El arte de la prudencia,* Planeta, Mexico, 1998.

Medina, Cuauhtémoc, "Formas políticas recientes: búsquedas radicales en México, Francis Alÿs, Santiago Sierra, Minerva Cuevas," *Trans* magazine, number 8, New York, 2000, pp. 158-160.

Pimentell, Taiyana, "Mejor Vida Corp.," leaflet Sala 7 Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico, 2000, REYES.

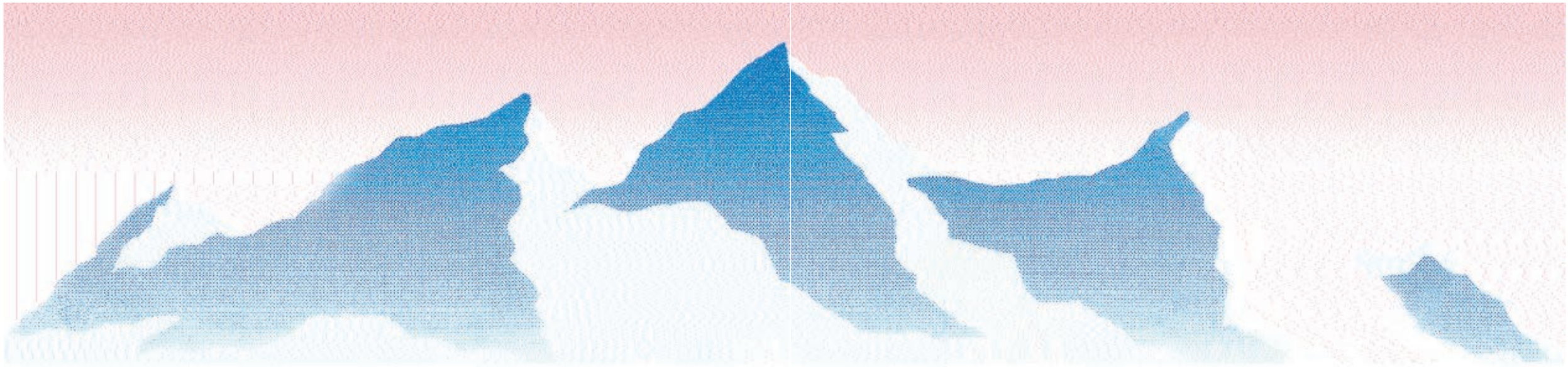
Palma, Francisco, "Guerra de corporaciones, La historia de Minerva y el puerquito BBV," *Curare* magazine, number 16, p. 79.

JESÚS CRUZVILLEGAS, MEXICO CITY, MAY 2001

www.irational.org/mvc



Mejor Vida Corporation, *melate*, campaign.



Mejor Vida Corporation, *égalité*, poster design, 2001.

THE WORLD MARKET – LIVE FROM THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

Daniel Knorr

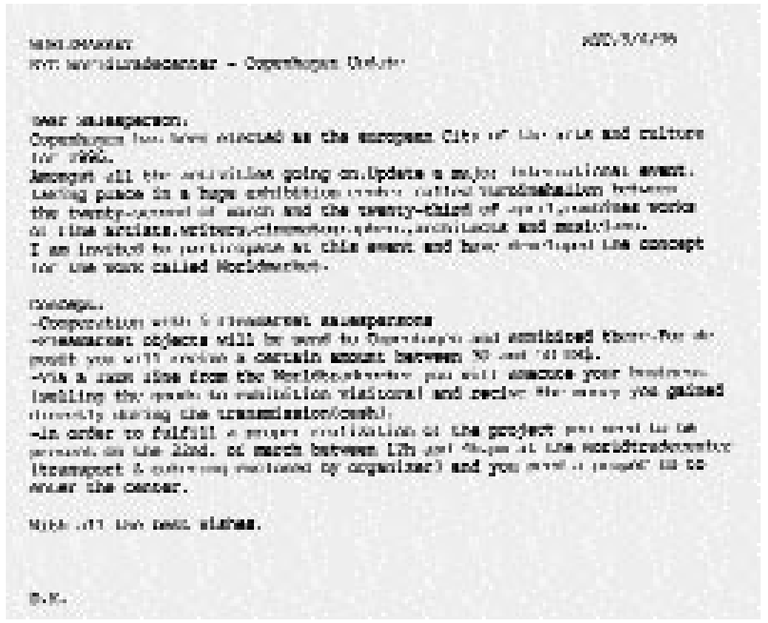
On March 22, 1996, artist Daniel Knorr finalized a complex, international trading deal. It involved befriending a New York streetpeddler, Chris Gamble, and shipping his street market inventory to Copenhagen. As Danish buyers bid on each object, Knorr and Gamble auctioned them off from a conference room in the World Trade Center. The two locations were connected for three hours via an ISDN (Picturetel) video-conferencing line, so the transactions occurred in real-time. The following text is comprised of two parallel reports – one from Copenhagen, the other from New York – of the events leading up to the deal, its detailed orchestration, and its aftermath.



Daniel Knorr, *World Market - Live from The World Trade Center,* World Trade Institute, NYC, 1996.



Daniel Knorr, *World Market - Live from The World Trade Center,* visitor's pass, NYC, 1996.



Daniel Knorr, *World Market - Live from The World Trade Center,* invitation to streetpeddlers, NYC, 1996.

Copenhagen Report

OCTOBER 1995, COPENHAGEN

UPDATE, a loose independent network of visual artists, designers and multimedia artists in Copenhagen is formed. Their agenda is to create both literal and discursive environments outside such conventional platforms as gallery exhibitions and music concerts. UPDATE strives for spaces where artforms and people overlap, simultaneously re-negotiating these coexistences. A month long festival, UPDATE '96 in Copenhagen is planned.

JANUARY 1996, COPENHAGEN

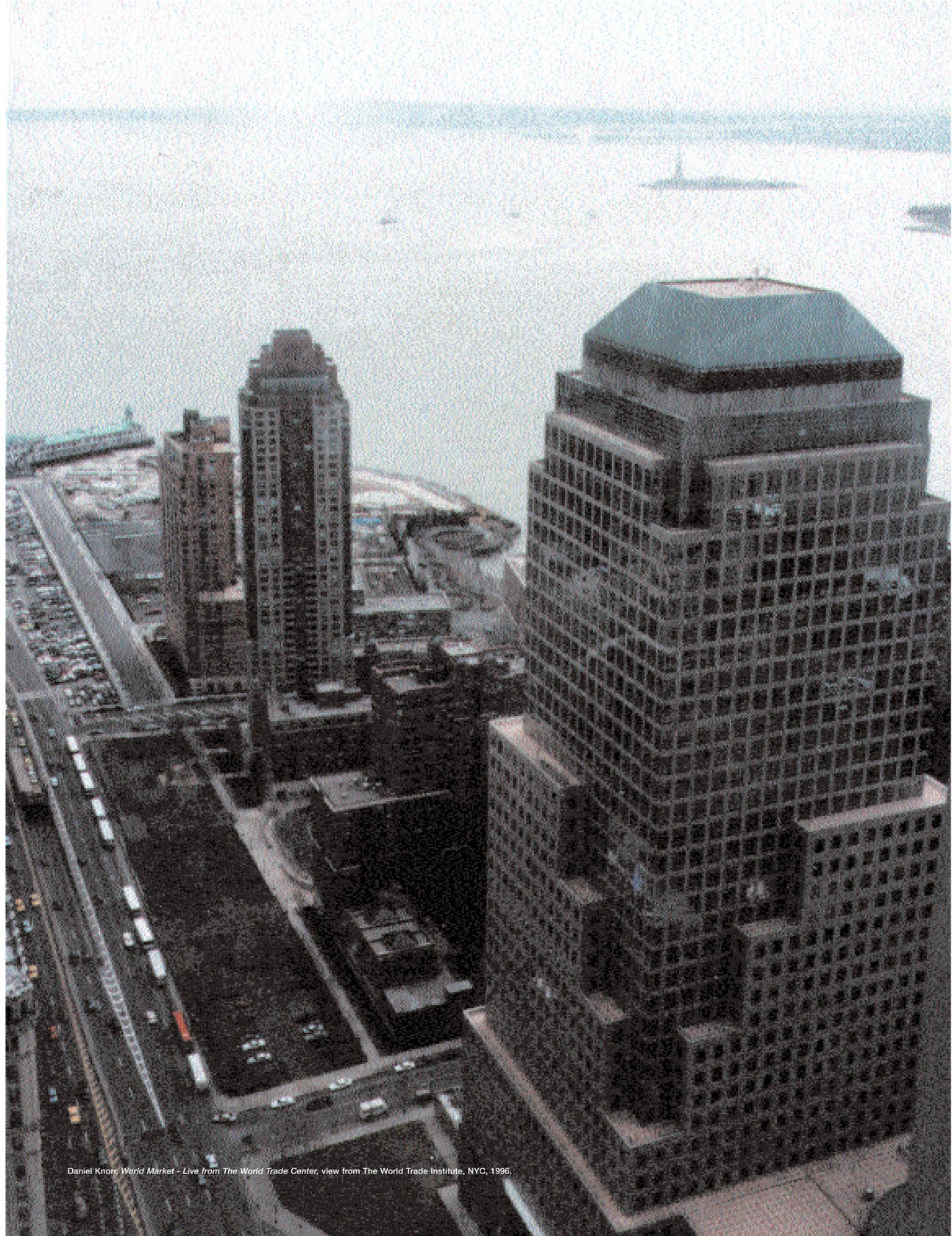
UPDATE '96 is underway. To run and organize UPDATE, the artists' fund raise money from both public and private resources. An administrative director and a press secretary are hired – but the artists throw themselves into "hands-on" production, assisting the other foreign and local artists they had invited in bringing their projects to realization. It is believed that this economy of dealing with a local environment while engaging in global relations will have a direct effect on the presentation.

FEBRUARY 23, 1996, NEW YORK

Daniel Knorr is one of such invited artists. His project *The World Market* is slated as part of UPDATE '96. Plans for *The World Market* in Copenhagen are carried out in close correspondence between one of UPDATE's organisers, Jens Haaning and Knorr, who is living in New York at the time.

FLASHBACK. FEBRUARY 26, 1993. 12:18 A.M.

On this snowy Friday afternoon, a massive explosion rocks the foundation of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan – the second tallest buildings in the world. The lives of over 100,000 workers are threatened.



Daniel Knorr, *World Market - Live from The World Trade Center,* view from The World Trade Institute, NYC, 1996.

FEBRUARY 1996, NEW YORK
Knorr has befriended a street peddler, Chris Gamble on the lower east side of Manhattan. Knorr asks him to ship his entire inventory to Copenhagen where it would be on display like any other free market. Knorr decides since Copenhagen is the Cultural Capital of Europe this year, it could use a flea market.

FEBRUARY 1996
Knorr and Haaning speak daily. Knorr's instructions: get an ISDN line, find a video telephone and somebody who can operate it. He needs some tables, etc. Haaning assembles the materials, setting them up in the two largest halls of Turbinehallerne the exhibition space that will house UPDATE '96. The exhibition center undergoes steady transformation, and over the course of the next month, it becomes a complex environment that will play host to almost 200 participants.

FLASHBACK. FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 1993
A Muslim fundamentalist is arrested in connection with the bombing of the World Trade Center that killed six people. FBI agents arrest Mohammed Salameh, 26, a Jordanian nationalist at a truck rental company in Jersey City, NJ, after tracing the charred fragments of a van found in the rubble to the company.

FEBRUARY 1996, COPENHAGEN
Every time there is an issue or question regarding the setup of *The World Market*, Haaning refers to Knorr who tells him exactly what to do. This means that Knorr, without setting foot in Copenhagen, fully orchestrates the project from New York while the organizers of UPDATE '96 incorporate his vision locally.

FLASHBACK. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1994
Police special branch teams scour Thailand for a Pakistani man with links to the World Trade Center bombing. He is also suspected of killing two US intelligence agency employees the previous year. They also investigate reports that a man found dead in a condominium was connected to deadly bomb blasts in Bombay.

FEBRUARY 1996, NEW YORK
Knorr goes about making his own arrangements at the World Trade Center. In one instance, he barters one of his drawings with a manager in exchange for rent of a video-conference room. Jens Haaning asks NY-based artist Aleksandra Mir, en route to Copenhagen to participate in UPDATE '96, to bring two extra suitcases with her. The excess luggage contains Chris Gamble's inventory. For unknown reasons, she declines. The suitcases are then shipped by freight.

FLASHBACK. MARCH 1993
One reason the FBI is able to act quickly is that an FBI informant built the bomb. The informant, Emad Salem, is paid $1 million for his testimony. Salem tape-recorded conversations with the bombing suspects. Unbeknownst to the FBI, Salem also records his conversations with them.

FEBRUARY 1996, NEW YORK
An invitation is sent out to artworld observers. It reads, "Daniel Knorr and Christopher Gamble invite you to assist in an international deal on Friday, March 22, 1996 at the World Trade Institute, located at One World Trade Center, 55th Floor West." Nine people will accept the offer, amongst them Maurizio Cattelan, Delphine Zampetti, Taketo Shimada, Andrea Frank, Miriam Erbacher Esteban, Edward Krebser, Michael Jones, Wolfgang Staehle and Mikyung Choi.

MARCH 15, 1996, COPENHAGEN
The suitcases with the goods (Gamble's inventory) arrive, only to get stuck in customs. It will take them days to sort through all the paraphernalia. The situation is risky: will the Danish Customs be done in time for *The World Market*, which is also the opening event for UPDATE '96?

FLASHBACK. MARCH 1, 1993
International investigation begins: US experts sift through intercepted global communications for any sign of a foreign hand in the bomb blast at New York's World Trade Center, a prime symbol of US commerce. So far, law enforcement authorities have not labeled the explosion a terrorist act.

MARCH 21, 1996, NEW YORK
It is uncertain whether Gamble, who keeps being arrested for street pedding in New York, will make it himself to the big event. The organizers of UPDATE '96 are nervous.

FLASHBACK. FEBRUARY 20, 1995
US authorities arrest the alleged mastermind of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and hold him in New York for trial. Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, 27, is detained by law enforcement officials in Pakistan and handed over to American authorities.

MARCH 1996, COPENHAGEN
With over 200 guest/participants slated to attend over the course of one month, and a lack of an overall concept or presentation design, UPDATE '96 will become a complex phenomenon to decipher. What is most remarkable is the high number of attendees at the show – many of whom will spend most of their efforts trying to be a part of the event on various levels, rather than spectators.

MARCH 22, 1996, 2:00 P.M., NEW YORK
Needless to say, Gamble's appearance does not pass muster with the World Trade Center security. Knorr lends him a suit and smuggles him into the building that way. The security guards are even more confused as they clear several art world observers to go up to the video conferencing room of the World Trade Institute on the 55th floor. It is here that Knorr and Gamble will conduct the New York end of the transaction.

MARCH 22, 1996, 8:00 P.M., COPENHAGEN
UPDATE '96 and Turbinehallerne open. The audience in Denmark flows through the doors as the exhibition and party begins. Will they "get it?" Or will the set up alienate them? Security guards are positioned outside.

MARCH 22, 1996, 8:10 P.M., COPENHAGEN
Daniel Knorr's *The World Market* transmits live to Turbinehallerne, Copenhagen from a conference room in the World Trade Center, New York, linked by live video-phones. Knorr, Gamble and the artworld observers are seated at a conference table with a microphone, a camera and a screen, ready to take calls from Copenhagen. At Turbinehallerne the crowd instantly adopts the format. People walk between display tables browsing through merchandise and bringing it to the video-phone to bargain with Gamble. The affair will last till 11 p.m. (European central time).

MARCH 22, 1996, 9:00 P.M., COPENHAGEN
A mostly friendly atmosphere prevails, Gamble is laid back and the customers are polite. There are some unusual reactions: a girl kisses Gamble (via the camera) with such passion it looks as though she falls through the screen. There are also embarrassing moments of rudeness towards Gamble, someone even going as far as calling him a "motherfucker" appropriating NYC slang. Perhaps this is the norm in dealing with street peddlers?


Daniel Knorr, street market at Houston and 1st Avenue, Manhattan, November, 1995.

FLASHBACK. JULY 19, 1994
Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tareq Aziz, said he would hand over information on the World Trade Center bombing if Baghdad were asked "in a proper manner" by US authorities. In response to questions at a news conference, Aziz replies, "They have not yet asked in a proper manner to get that information."

MARCH 22, 1996, 10:00 P.M., COPENHAGEN
Prices have managed to stay on a 2-20KR level (50¢–$15). Somehow there was an expectation that the prices would be inflated because of the extra value of the objects, i.e. the goods were flown in from the States and dealt over the video phone from the World Trade Center. Quickly it is realized that this is not the case: people aren't interested in exchange rates, rather they had fallen into the game of bargaining for bargaining's sake.

MARCH 22, 1996, 10:42 P.M., COPENHAGEN
Throughout the session, the long distance arrangement between the salesman and the customers influences and shapes the communication. It seems this unusual arrangement perfectly maps the format of international trade.

MARCH 22, 1996, 5:00 P.M., NEW YORK
At the end of the session, Gamble makes $200, much more than he would make on an ordinary day in the streets of New York.

FLASHBACK. 1995
The estimated damage of the World Trade Center bombing comes to over $550,000,000. The FBI manages to profit: the incident results in the proposal of the 1995 Counterterrorism Bill which greatly expands federal authorities' budgets and powers.

MARCH 29, 1996, COPENHAGEN
The event is positively received by the local press.

APRIL 1996
The most striking reaction is a commentary on the event in an Austrian magazine (*SPRINGER/IN* Heft 2/1997 Alice Creischer/ Andreas Siekmann). It calls the piece "politically irresponsible" art.

FLASHBACK. MARCH 5, 1994
Four Muslim fundamentalists are found guilty of bombing New York's World Trade Center and may face life in prison for an attack that killed six people. A federal jury forewoman reads out the verdicts in the case, pronouncing the defendants guilty on every count.

NOVEMBER 1994, NEW YORK
Rudolph Giuliani is elected Mayor of New York City. The new mayor institutes a policy which clamps down on street peddlers.

FLASHFORWARD. 2001
If street peddling in New York is threatened with extinction, stranger still is the disappearance of the formal channels of global trade. The conventions needed in setting up *The World Market* have become more or less obsolete. With the emergence of Ebay on the internet, Chris Gamble's work day at the World Trade Institute five years earlier, is pretty much everyday occurrence on the world wide web.

RECOLLECTION: JENS HAANING, COPENHAGEN, 1996/2000
RESEARCH AND RECONSTRUCTION: ONOMÉ EKEH, NYC, 2000
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL KNORR, EDWARD KREBSER

New York Report

MARCH 29, 1996, NEW YORK

The invitation read, “Daniel Knorr and Christopher Gamble invite you to assist in an international deal on Friday, March 22, 1996 at the World Trade Institute located at One World Trade Center, 55th Floor West.” After clearing several checks with rather confused security guards, I finally made my way to the 55th floor of the World Trade Center and found Knorr and Gamble in the video conferencing room of the World Trade Institute. They were connected via ISDN live video to the UPDATE exhibition space in Copenhagen. Mr. Gamble, a street peddler from the Lower East Side, was happily devouring the rest of his take-out chicken, while Mr. Knorr handed him three dollars in cash for a used coffee mug he had just sold to a Danish client. A few days later I talked with Daniel Knorr, an artist born in Bucharest, Romania, now living in New York.

Wolfgang Staehle: What was this deal about, Daniel?
Daniel Knorr: Well, I wanted to open up the market for Christopher, so I sent his inventory to this show in Copenhagen.
WS: More multi-kulti, artstuff puffery?
DK: Nope. Not really, but they are the “Cultural Capital” of Europe this year, so I thought they could use a flea market.
WS: What items did the Danes go for?
DK: An American passport went for ten bucks, an old Brooklyn streetmap for 15, and they also stole an empty Tiffany jewelry box.
WS: I saw a copy of Marshall Blonsky’s “American Mythologies” go for 5 Dollars.
DK: Semiotics still sells in Europe.
WS: The market seemed more upbeat in Copenhagen than on First Avenue and Houston. Don’t you think?
DK: Yeah, people not only offered money, but also kisses, their own pictures and other dirty stuff. I think they thought they were on TV.
WS: Did you guys make money?
DK: I didn’t, but Chris made $200 in three hours.
WS: Why didn’t you declare it an artwork and charge a premium?
DK: This comes later.

WOLFGANG STAEHLE, NEW YORK, MARCH 29, 1996

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL KNORR, EDWARD KREBSER

Wolfgang Staehle, excerpt from *ThingReviews,* NYC, 1996.







Daniel Knorr, *World Market - Live from The World Trade Center,* transmission stills, NYC, 1996.



Chris Gamble and Daniel Knorr.



Daniel Knorr, *World Market-Live from The World Trade Center,* NYC view on Copenhagen transmission, 1996.

LONG WALK

Chris Saunders

Long Walk is a walk through square miles of empty office space in the City of London (London's financial district) in 1994. This work was among a series of video works critiquing the city's legitimised economic terrorist activity which combines lavish "inward investment" within the square mile of the city, with a policy of planned underdevelopment or "inward collapse" in all areas beyond its boundaries.
Long Walk also parodies the *Land Art* of Richard Long whose squeakily pious depoliticised walks through Nature seemed an ideal way to show the natural waste of corporate space. As I walked through these offices I would collect white carpet fluff which I then exhibited in a circle of about 9 feet in diameter. The carpet fluff was reverentially moulded into lozenge shapes about the size of a large housebrick. This original work I called *White Office Carpet Fluff Circle* because Richard probably would have.
Gaining access to corporate offices can be a notoriously slow business and having spent months getting nowhere I thought I'd try using art as something these people might appreciate, especially if it seems wacky and harmless – all the real estate management companies had no problem with my catchy pitch and I was given access to several new large empty corporate office blocks that were still lying waiting for tenants – what they call "vacant possession."
CHRIS SAUNDERS, LONDON, AUGUST, 2001.

Chris Saunders video stills from 6 hours of recorded walks through vacant office space in the City of London (financial district) from the performance/video *Long Walk*, 1994.























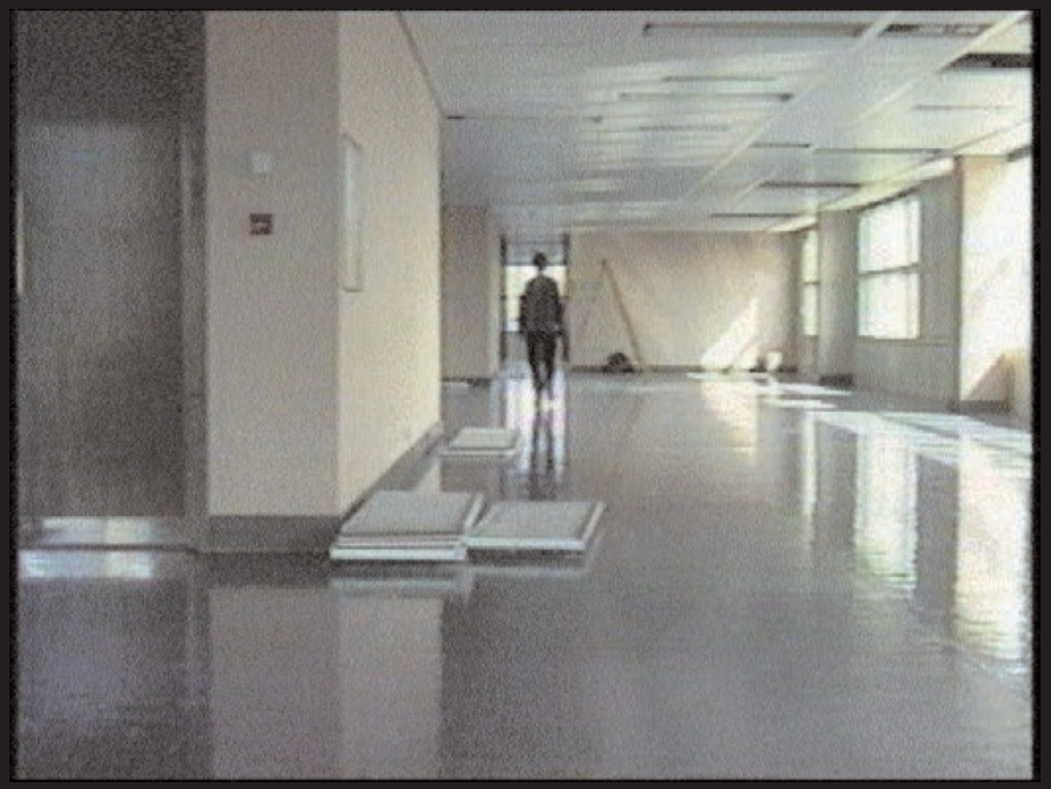





















































ART FUTURES

Anthony Davies/Simon Ford

Articles that look into the future, predict trends and propose strategies are rarely found in art journals - in the world of business it's a thriving industry and for many a matter of survival. In *Art Futures,* we speculate on what form the art world might take in the new millennium and what kind of role artists might play. As everybody knows, there is only one thing certain about predictions, they rarely come true. So a word of warning: no responsibility is accepted for any inaccuracy or error or any action taken or not taken in reliance on the contents of this article.

It's 2009 and the gallery system has been absorbed into the many consortium type structures that have emerged over the last few years. This has brought about a complete reconfiguration of the art world - with new terms and occupations (prosumers, culture-brokers, corpoculture, provisional consortiums, pro-am circuits, starists, and culturepreneurs) and new economies. These operate on many levels, from grass roots hobbyists to the professional international art stars (or starists). Signs of this new professionalism can be traced back to the late 1990s when the art world was drawn into the creative industries of fashion, design, architecture, and music. Art as a distinct and separate autonomous "world" was no longer perceived as sustainable or necessary. While many artists, cultural commentators, and public institutions were "blurring boundaries," promoting "the everyday" and "accessing broader audiences," the business community was busy assessing the economic potential of cross-sector activities and partnerships. It was the convergence of these sectors (principally business and culture), that changed the role of public institutions, the education system, and other institutions associated with art.

Companies have now moved on from the contentious sponsorship and collaborative models to an integrated partnership strategy. As predicted, the economic clout of big business is now greater than the ability of governments to enforce regulations. With rapidly increasing power and influence, many businesses have used corpocultural partnerships to appear more open, accessible, attractive, and mainstream, and thus attempt to stem the increasing flow of criticism. This strategy is often referred as Total Role in Society (TRS), where companies develop cultural missions in order to build up an ethical public image. It was TRS that shaped the many mergers and take-overs in the creative industries that led to the close synergy between banks, auction houses, advertising companies, and galleries. Perhaps most insidiously, it also opened up public institutions and the education sector as sites for further corporate influence. In the modern economy, entrepreneurship is considered the key factor in education. Culture, meanwhile, is now packaged and sold to a range of clients and is serviced by a hybrid professional – the culturepreneur.

During the initial period of European economic convergence and the introduction of the Euro, Berlin was heavily promoted as the European International Art Centre – an "it location" for doing business. With the UK outside the European Union and its cultural policies looking increasingly outdated and in conflict with European cultural and economic integration – Berlin temporarily became the symbolic cultural capital of Euroland. With no economic and strategic interest in promoting national identity, artists based in Berlin (like most companies) were primarily defined as pan-European. These new European artists (nEas) were the cultural paragon of a fully integrated European Union, defined by location rather than nationality. The nEas were linked to centres servicing the global interests of business clusters, the European parliament and regional governments. This move to redefine cultural difference was also behind the reorientation – after economic and cultural integration – of formerly national cultural institutions, which are now supported and subsidised through multi-national corporations and the Central European parliament.

The more successful nEas (the Champions' League) was not tied to any particular location (or gallery) and was able to follow capital wherever it went, tapping into local networks, setting up partnerships, and identifying trends for a variety of clients. Their bridging role, between communities working on the cutting edge of culture and business, provided the knowledge, information, and association vital to companies requiring local association for competitive global strategies. An information gap appeared, and they were early beneficiaries of a new economy.

Some nEas dispensed with the artist tag altogether and started trading information services as culture-brokers. Artists were not the only group in this category – it included many other members of the creative communities that made up the thriving inner-city cultural centres. During this period the terms artist, curator, critic and gallerist came under increasing pressure as they no longer reflected the activities and professional occupations of individuals working in these areas. For culture-brokers, art production was simply part of the package.

The music, drug, fashion, design, club, and political scenes could be brought together and mixed and matched in a range of formats, from exhibitions and websites to corporate parties and annual reports. As a result, art criticism became just one of many competing discourses and the least effective tool for unravelling the complex structures that culture-brokers inhabited.

Many galleries found it impossible to represent the range of activities that culture-brokers were engaged in (whose points of contact and exchange could be achieved elsewhere). In addition to which the client base for most galleries no longer provided the principle source of revenue or, for that matter, focus for culture-brokers. In this climate a split developed between those galleries that aligned themselves to provisional consortiums and those that continued on a traditional role of representing artists within the pro-am circuit.

The range of settings you find in the pro-am art world are broad and complementary: from night classes in draughty community halls to the glittering and glamorous openings of prestigious museum shows. In the former "prosumers" (producer/consumers) are encouraged to exercise their creativity. In the latter, the "beautiful people," including pop stars, writers, aristocrats, royalty, architects, and journalists, network furiously. The pro-am circuit embraces the wide consumer base necessary to keep the arts industry growing. In 2009, this system is underpinned by the retail, merchandising and marketing sectors, and while starists continue to work the media, public institutions service the prosumer markets.

At the turn of the century, many public institutions, with their fixed programmes, budgets and deadlines, were beginning to look vulnerable and unable to respond to the pace of change and expectations of their audience, clients and sponsors. In a broad and still largely inaccessible area like culture, where many clients are uncertain and lack knowledge, and where gauging the pace of change can be a matter of survival, culturepreneurs emerged to trade access to social networks and capitalise on programming lacunae in both the public and private sectors. As much a product of the drive to professionalise entrepreneurialism as they were of converging sectors, culturepreneurs helped create the new information supplier economies. Their key skills were communications-based and included the ability to process large amounts of information and think strategically. They discovered that knowledge was tradable. As players in the image business, they were also well aware of the value of product differentiation and branding across a range of formats and media.

Having dispensed with older models of artistic practice, these pioneers achieved sustainable professional status through either the one person consultancy or the registered limited company. Fully branded, logo'd up, and with their Certificates of Incorporation proudly displayed these companies set about establishing themselves in the emerging markets (not least of which was intellectual property). Culturepreneurs also managed the temporary link-ups between a number of sectors to exploit the cross-promotional and marketing potential of cultural presentations. These provisional consortiums brought together business and customers through communication in the media. Opportunities were to be had by those who changed the rules of the game rather than those that persevered with outmoded practises.

Culturepreneurs and the new companies operated as chameleon organisations, speeding ahead of bureaucratic dinosaurs and providing the economic and legal framework absent from older "independent" artist-run spaces and gallery systems. Artist-run was never anything more than a testing ground for the gallery system and a euphemism for "no money" collaborations with the business sector. The systematic withdrawal of public funding, sponsorship, and media interest helped cause the collapse of this area. It was not so much that artists, galleries, curators, and commentators disappeared, the system that had come to define their professional and economic relationships collapsed, and in some cases converged with other sectors.

Of course these changes have not occurred without there being some casualties – the demise of the avant-garde perhaps being the most significant. Rumours of the death of the avant-garde have haunted art criticism since the 1960s, but it was not until the turn of the century that its demise was confirmed. With the confirmation of the destruction of an idealised autonomous public culture (fully incorporated as it is with corporate culture, or the corpoculture, of the business world) the avant-garde ceased to have a function. Critical autonomy now lies within the economic structures and cross-sector games played by culturepreneurs – these are the principle battlegrounds of the future.

ANTHONY DAVIES/SIMON FORD, LONDON, 1998

coda

Art Futures was written in late 1998 and first published in *Art Monthly* in February 1999. It was the second part of a trilogy that included *Art Capital* (1998) and *Art Networks* (2000) and as such, set out to question some of the cultural developments taking place in London in the late 1990s.

The three texts were an attempt to map a changing landscape in a period characterised by the emergence of new cultural, political and economic constellations. *Art Futures* itself was intentionally ambiguous, falling somewhere between a business forecast and art polemic. In this sense, its critical coordinates were closer to Andersen Consulting's 1998 forecast "Europe the Millennium," and the Government's white paper "Our Competitive Future, Building the Knowledge Based Economy" than to the positioning of corporate-friendly artists.

That said, it would come as a surprise to us that anyone might want to adopt our dystopia (or one of its constituents, e.g. the 'culturepreneur') as a theoretical framework or model for their practice. We feel that the question then, as now, relates to a definition of knowledge and services within cultural communities and its application in other sectors.

ANTHONY DAVIES/SIMON FORD, LONDON, JUNE 2001

Fabryka Cókierków, *premiere of VOLVO S70R*, multimedia show with video, slide projections, lights, dancers and live percussion, project and direction by Cókierek and Zbyszek Olkiewicz, stage design by Roman Wozniak, slide projections by Bartek Kresa, light by Marek Sanak, music by Stas Skoczynski percussion group and dj parmezan, Warsaw, January 1999.

FABRYKA CÓKIERKÓW

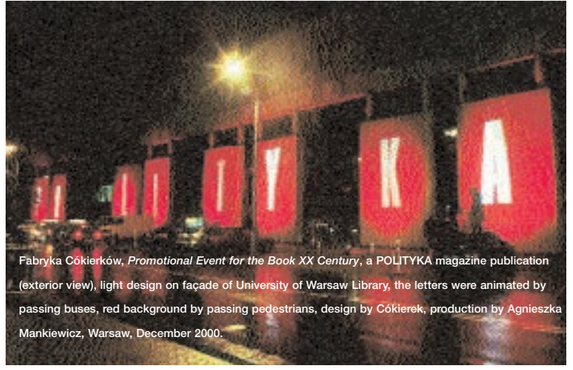
Fabryka Cókierków (Candy Factory) was founded by the art historian Darek Blaszczyk and theater director Zbyszek Olkiewicz in Warsaw in 1994. The company creates special events, such as fashion shows and product launches for leading advertising agencies, corporations and charities in Poland. Their clients include Smirnoff, Volvo, the newspaper *Polityka*, and the Red Cross. For each new production, they collaborate with numerous other artists, designers, and musicians.

Formed in the new market economy of Poland, Fabryka Cókierków has taken advantage of a context devoid of professional standards or marketing traditions to create a new Polish mass media language. Their aesthetic has developed in a not yet determined and somewhat wild zone of collaboration between client and creator.

Fabryka Cókierków have chosen the special event as an opportunity to act, both socially and professionally, directly within the corporate structures. In this way, they can influence the perceptions of editors, art directors, art buyers and corporate clients, redefining the relationship between art and popular culture, and between art and commerce. Corporate events also allow access to a mass audience unavailable to any other artists in Poland.

PIOTR UKLANSKI, WARSAW, SEPTEMBER 2000

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FABRYKA CÓKIERKÓW



Fabryka Cókierków, *Promotional Event for the Book XX Century*, a POLITYKA magazine publication (exterior view), light design on façade of University of Warsaw Library, the letters were animated by passing buses, red background by passing pedestrians, design by Cókierek, production by Agnieszka Mankiewicz, Warsaw, December 2000.



Fabryka Cókierków, *Promotional Event for the Book XX Century*, a POLITYKA magazine publication (interior view), interior slide show, the space was animated with dissolving twentieth century visuals, design by Cókierek and Sylwek Luczak, Warsaw, December 2000.



Fabryka Cókierków, *Smirnoff Fashion Awards '99*, fashion show production, water, grass, sand, fire, wood, project, direction and lighting design by Cókierek, garden stage design by Cezar Marczak, catwalk by Daniel Wnuk, music by dj Wowo Club and Damiango Congas, production by Agnieszka Mankiewicz, Warsaw, September 1999.

Fabryka Cókierków, *Red Cross Charity Action*, Polish Red Cross/Saatchi & Saatchi, charity action for victims of the earthquake in Turkey, red cross and red crescent designed with windows of the Warsaw Financial Center, design by Cókierek and Zbyszek Olkiewicz, Warsaw, October 1999.



Fabryka Cókierków, *Smirnoff Fashion Awards* '99, the winner Wojtek Dziedzic, Warsaw, September 1999.



Fabryka Cókierków, *EPSON Showroom on The Komputer-EXPO 2002*, showroom for chill-out and performance, prints and bird sounds, project and direction by Cókierek, scenohraphy and styling by Joanna Kaczynska, art performance by Piotr Mlodozeniec and Marek S obczyk/ZAFRYKI, production by Agnieszka Mankiewicz, Warsaw, January 2002.



Fabryka Cókierków, *EPSON Showroom on the Komputer-EXPO 2002, Rainbow*, four day performance, building the rainbow composition with photos of visitors and pieces of graphics created on site, by Piotr Mlodozeniec and Marek Sobczyk/ZAFRYKI, Warsaw, January 2002.

Dejanov & Heger im Dialog mit BMW seit 1999

Quite Normal Luxury

oder

Der ganz normale Luxus

Dejanov & Heger im Dialog mit BMW

seit 1999

Christiane Zentgraf, *Quite Normal Luxury,* cover of report, BMW, 1999.

DEJANOV & HEGER IM DIALOG MIT BMW

Christiane Zentgraf

Reflections on the collaboration between Plamen Dejanov & Svetlana Heger and BMW, preceded by a brief characterization of BMW KulturKommunication and the BMW Art Car Collection, in which art and a product were joined, rather spontaneously, over 25 years ago. By Christiane Zentgraf, Head of the Cultural Communications Unit, Corporate Affairs, BMW, Munich, Germany.

BMW KulturKommunikation

The BMW Group has been actively engaged in the field of culture for over a quarter of a century, both regionally and internationally. Over the course of time, BMW's experience with art led to the realization that a discursive engagement with art and culture produces inestimable surplus value for the company, and that culture, if it is used in the right way, can be employed as an outstanding medium of communication. Art and culture are highly sensitive fields. Starting from the identities and values of the company, and later from its brands (BMW and MINI), objectifiable and justifiable strategic guidelines were developed, which are open to interpretation by the most diverse cultural communities worldwide. These guidelines guarantee both the internationally consistent, synergistic communication of the BMW Group, and its sustainable continuity and effect.

Specific cultural areas are chosen which are appropriate as media or messengers for the company and its brands. Unlike banks or insurance companies, for example, the BMW Group manufactures products (cars among others) which can be visually distinguished from other products. The BMW image is already familiar, even to those who haven't examined the subject in any depth. It seemed sensible to vitalize this visual image, to engage the observer, to communicate its essentials – the character, identity and philosophy of BMW. The pre-existing, superficial appearance of BMW is modified by added depth, and an emotional dimension is reflected in the image ("imago").

Since innovation is essential for us, the company invests in new developments, the future, and young artists. It is open, ready to take risks and engage in experiments with unpredictable results. It is of prime importance that the new experience stimulates the pleasure of discovery, in keeping with our German motto, "Freude am (Er)Fahren" – expanding the "pleasure of driving" to the underlying "pleasure of experience."

The BMW Group does not regard KulturKommunikation as cultural sponsoring. Our primary focus is not on financial transactions or the cash value of goods, but rather the long-term interaction of partners who are interested in getting to know and understand each other and each other's worlds, exchanging ideas, and realizing joint projects that will, of course, need to be financed.

Over the years, the company's style of communication has also adapted itself to the medium of culture. A heightened sensitivity to the arts, and a restrained and modest approach to publicity, define KulturKommunikation. The widely-quoted motto, "Do good and talk about it," is not BMW's policy. BMW believes in "doing good and letting others talk about it." It is an art in itself to deal with culture adequately, as well as playfully and intelligently.

We are convinced that the effects of a singular cultural event, however costly it may be, tend to disappear without a trace. As a spectacle, it burns out blindingly like fireworks in the sky. The amalgamation of cultural projects with aggressive self-promotion may even recoil upon the company like a boomerang. Thus, we avoid connecting a cultural event with a BMW product, such as a car placed in the foyer or even on the stage of a concert hall. Culture should not be instrumentalized as a marketing tool. Product placement of this kind may be justified, however, if the car has a function in itself — a driving role for a concert or an exhibition — or plays a constitutive role in the art project. This has been the case in some BMW Group projects such as the BMW Art Car Collection (since 1975), the collaboration with Dejanov & Heger (since 1999), and the latest exhibition project *AutoWerke* (CarWorks) of BMW Financial Services (since 2000).

The BMW Art Car Collection

The founding of this collection was somewhat spontaneous. In 1975, when the French auctioneer and racing driver Hervé Poulain competed in the 24 Hours of Le Mans for the first time, he asked his friend Alexander Calder to design a BMW racing car (a 480 horsepower BMW 3.0 CSL), thereby fusing art and motor sports. The idea sparked enthusiasm in both Calder and BMW, and was to be the driving force behind an additional 14 Art Cars. The Pop artists Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol fashioned racing cars as well. In 1986, Robert Rauschenberg was the first to integrate a BMW serial car into the collection. With her design of the BMW V12 in 1999, Jenny Holzer returned to the origin of the Art Cars at Le Mans. Her racing car that carried the slogan "Protect me from what I want" caused a stir.

The Dream City Project

Another project also began spontaneously. In 1999, the Siemens Kulturprogramm realized *Dream City* in Munich. Artists were given the task of re-thinking the advertising slogan of the Munich tourist board. At three different locations, thirty international artists rendered their versions of the theme. BMW KulturKommunikation received a call from Siemens that the artists Dejanov & Heger would like to realize a project with our company. Evidently BMW had left its mark on this city with its architecture, the BMW four-cylinder building, the center for research and engineering, the production halls, and last but not least, its cars.

A Diary of the Dialogue between BMW and Dejanov & Heger's Dream City Project

As the person in charge, I ask the artists what they have in mind.
I receive no satisfactory answer, so I arrange a meeting.

Initial impressions are decisive. The first meeting with the artists is marked by an atmosphere of open-mindedness and curiosity. We try to get to know each other, talking about ourselves and our work. A definitive concept on the artists' part does not yet exist. The project is, rather, to be jointly developed and executed. I am asked – and challenged – to regard myself as a partner of the artists for the project. It is a purely emotional, gut decision. Somehow I just "know" that we will cooperate well in the *Dream City* project and obtain an interesting result.

Dream City: Quite Normal Luxury

As in earlier projects, the artists "rent out" their exhibition space to a third party, in this case BMW. In accordance with the agreement, the Munich representation of BMW designs an authentic BMW showroom at one of the exhibition locations, the Kunstverein. In exchange, the artists are loaned a silver Z3 Roadster 2.8. Both partners will be allowed to use the room and the car for selling and driving, respectively. The showroom is set up in accordance with our CI, so sales brochures, BMW furniture, and the BMW pylon are present. Because the showroom has to be installed on the second floor of the Kunstverein, the Z3 cannot be put on exhibition and is referred to only by its outline on the floor. Instead, the car is positioned at the front door of the building. The license plate carries the inscription "Dream City," and a sign next to the Z3 refers to the artists as "Dejanov & Heger." No changes have been made to the car. The Z3 is merely integrated into the art space.

Irritations

Shortly before the opening of the exhibition, a controversy between the curator of the Kunstverein and the artists arises. He refuses to tolerate the presence of the pylon with the BMW logo on his premises. From his point of view, the limits of what is compatible with art have been seriously transgressed, and he considers the project as a marketing activity pure and simple. So without consulting the artists, he removes the pylon. They are infuriated. As their partner, my role is to support them. What an irony! Isn't the exertion of influence on art by "the powers that be" always dreaded? And isn't it the obligation of the curator to care ("curare") for art? The curator finally gives in to our demand, provided that, as the host, he is free to dissociate himself publicly from the project. The effect of his statement of dissociation is, as we expected, the most efficient way to publicize the installation.

After the opening on March 25, 1999, the popular Munich paper Abendzeitung runs the headline, "Freude am Verfahren," alluding to the German BMW motto "Freude am Fahren" ("the pleasure of driving"), and playing on the double meaning of "Verfahren" which means both a lawsuit and losing one's way. It shows the Z3 with its *Dream City* number plate in large format. Under the headline "The Car and the Scandal," it tells of a "home-made scandal" and quotes from the curator's letter, "The exhibition critically thematizes and examines, among other topics, the persistent attempts to instrumentalize the field of art. The integration of images and emblems, which are exclusively motivated by commercial considerations, as carried out by Dejanov & Heger, in a context of works of art that oppose affirmative positions, constitutes an aggressive act which I will not tolerate."

It should be mentioned that for BMW irritations also arise. A colleague from the marketing department who is interested in contemporary art and thus not an accidental visitor at the opening, finds himself confronted by the BMW showroom and two salesmen ("living sculptures"). Aghast, he demands to know how BMW could set itself up on such a scale in an art exhibition? Clearly he attacks me as well, since I am responsible for the project. He states that he does not understand how I can preach sensitivity in relation to art, yet at the same time provide a platform for a marketing event of this type. I refer him to the artists who in a competent and well-informed way explain their project to my stunned colleague.
I will repeatedly meet with similar irritations within my company.

These first skirmishes heighten my awareness and strengthen my bond with the artists. In our fight for art we have shown solidarity. I begin to understand how subjective individual perception is, and to what degree reality, art, and economics are intertwined. I begin to realize that from an artificial and analytic standpoint, a separation of these fields may be possible and even necessary for ideological reasons. The artists' points of view and modes of transformation become more and more the focus of my interest. My curiosity increases, and I look forward to gaining further experience in this field of tension, working together with the artists as a participant and partner from the economic field, and taking as my motto, "Who dares wins."

Clarification

The media circulate the story that BMW gave the Z3 Roadster 2.8 to the artists as a kind of compensation for their work in the *Dream City* project. This does not conform to the facts, since our cooperation was defined from the outset as a partnership and not as "sponsorship." I do not know the source of the rumor or who invented it, but several authors must have bought into the same misinformation.

I decide it is necessary to point out some facts that were reported incorrectly in various articles in art magazines and exhibition catalogues.

1. There was never an agreement on the duration of the collaboration. The dialogue was planned to be open-ended.
2. The "renting out" of the artistic space to BMW for *Dream City* and its design as a showroom were the artists' idea, which BMW realized at their request. While the common impression was that BMW set itself up as an artist and designed the art space at the company's discretion, in fact the artists "seduced" BMW into joining their game and presenting itself. This feigned reversal of roles happened once only. After this, there were no further projects with a similar concept. This was the artists' decision. Against this background, one would have to discuss on a fundamental level which "rules" about what is considered an artistic production have, in fact, been demolished.
3. From the outset, the partnership was never regarded as a mutual "business transaction." The artists, who had initially been loaned the Z3 roadster for *Dream City*, bought the car at a later point in time and at a discount granted by BMW. Let me also state explicitly that BMW did not pay the artists.
4. No contract was made between BMW and the artists.

Trust Without Contract

For the BMW Group, such a project is never about art patronage. In the most concrete terms, it is a matter of consensual cooperation in which both sides – the artists and BMW – contribute ideas, know-how, and material. We have not entered into a sponsoring contract, nor has there ever been a contract between us to fix the rules of collaboration or to determine the duration of the partnership. In a way, we are working in a vacuum that is bottomless, without rules, without protection. This is decidedly unusual, especially since I don't act as a private person, but always as a representative of, and as responsible to, my company. Without mature relationships of trust involving all parties, a cooperation such as this would be unthinkable. The dialogue between the artists and BMW developed further and further without any plan behind it, apparently without fixed direction or aim. Looking back now, everything appears rather ordered and structured. Today I even ask myself if a contract might have constrained us like a corset. Perhaps our confidence in each other would have been undermined by contractually stirred mistrust. Is it possible to realize an experiment in art, for which artistic freedom is a necessary precondition, on firmly established legal ground? Has the law a place in the development and production of art, or does it apply only where copyright and sales conditions are at stake, where art is marketed as a product? In the further course of our partnership, and in a different context, this question will indeed come up.

Documentation of the Dialogue

Meanwhile, the artists realize a variety of art projects worldwide in conjunction with BMW. Even in the first stage of our dialogue, we begin to sift through and collect the material. I copy all print media – exhibition catalogues, flyers, and posters, as well as reviews and articles. Documentation develops, which by now consists of hundreds of pages of texts and images from the most diverse photographic projects, such as images of Formula 1, different types of cars, and the BMW engine. It also includes sculptures and installations, such as rims and miniature glass cars, and bicycles and hardtops on colorfully varnished platforms. Even the web address, *www.bmw.com*, is part of it, produced in precious material. This documentation has been copied in color, and I continually update it.

Communication of the Dialogue

KulturKommunikation, as a part of Corporate Communication, belongs to the press and public relations sector of the BMW Group. Since art magazines are not widely read publications in an automobile company, internal communication is all the more necessary to strengthen the reputation of the person in charge of the project and provide space to breathe. Projects justify themselves most easily by their press echo. The motto here is, "no news is bad news." No news means that one does not exist. Positive coverage is, obviously, received positively. But even negative press coverage is welcomed, showing that the event is important enough to be mentioned.

Naturally, the *Dream City* joint project is presented to customers in over 120 countries by the international BMW magazine. The artists themselves are my best messengers in external communication, as their projects communicate the company and the BMW brand with an unequalled degree of brilliance and perfection. By exhibiting their "Objects of Desire" in photographs, installations, and performances, they advertise BMW as our ambassadors all over the world.

At the same time they are the best communicators about their art. They talk about their work, which we define as ours. They are familiar with the specific art journals and editors, and are able to mediate for us. I am confident that their statements about our cooperation conform to the facts. At our meetings we not only talk about new projects, but I am also supplied with material, and learn which magazine or journalist expresses interest in our cooperation, so I can also become active in external communication.

For some time now I have been in contact with the artists' galleries in Vienna, Paris and Tokyo, as well as with collectors. They have all received our documentation. I increasingly find myself in the role of an "agent," not in terms of distributing the artists' works or sharing in the proceeds from sales, but rather – in the company's interest – advertising for the artists and their work, and thus, indirectly for BMW as well. My commitment is appreciated by my company and by the galleries as well, because I do not appear as a competitor but rather as a multiplier of their communication.

The extraordinary thing about this "advertising" of the artists' works is that it is indirectly mediated and very sophisticated, taking place on an extraordinarily high level of discourse. Both partners court and promote each other; each side addressing an audience that is alien to them. The artists find themselves in the world of automobiles; BMW is critically received in the world of art. This sometimes causes misunderstandings and misconceptions. The respective other worlds often react in an irritated, piqued or shocked way. Controversial and constructive discussion has up to now been almost exclusively restricted to the world of art. There seems to be an increasing amount of misinformation, however, and I begin to wonder about its possible source.

In public events I have often experienced my role as ambivalent. Although museum directors and curators welcome me at press conferences and exhibition openings, *coram publico* as a representative of the BMW Group and partner of the artists in the exhibited project, they obviously shy away from letting me make a statement. As I now present my position in interviews, I find myself suddenly involved in the public discourse that fuels an ongoing debate about "art and economics." It was launched by Flash Art, a magazine that in 1999 prominently showed the rear-view mirror of a Z3 Coupé on its cover and published an interview with the artists and myself under the title, "Art Incorporated," accompanied by a large picture of a BMW engine.

Since then excerpts have been reproduced in many publications, including the most recent statement in the Japanese magazine, Encounter, of Art Gallery Tokyo Opera City (2001), "BMW is open to criticism, questions, and arguments, as the dialogues and conflicts in fact create mutual understanding and sharpen people's awareness of realities."

The repeated and correct quotation of this statement is a consolation in the face of all the misinformation and consequent misunderstandings in circulation. BMW has long been widely known as a sincere partner in art projects. The dialogue between Dejanov & Heger and BMW has become a well-known and highly controversial issue in art circles.

Cooperation As the Division of Labor

I have to confess that at the beginning of the partnership for *Dream City* I felt called upon to develop "artistic" ideas myself, because I did not initially understand our cooperation as a division of labor. The artists assigned to me the only role I could play in the discourse – to contribute to making the project possible and to communicate it to the world.

In concrete terms, this means that I fulfill large and small wishes, from acquiring at the artists' request brochures, sales catalogues, photographs, car parts, etc., to procuring a black Z3 Coupé 2.8 with red leather seats. The latter is to play a role in the exhibition *Zeitwenden. Rückblick – ausblick* as *Quite Normal Luxury II 2000-2001* at the Kunsthalle Bonn, and later in Künstlerhaus Vienna at the end of 2000. The stock of every dealer in Germany is already sold out. To produce a Z3 according to individual specifications in Spartanburg, South Carolina and ship it to Germany takes no less than three months. Fortunately, the dealer in Chemnitz can supply the required car from their stock.

In the company we all depend on teamwork, and it works surprisingly well. As the artists come up with the most varied and unusual demands, I deal with departments and colleagues with whom I normally have no contact. I may not even know of their existence or function, since BMW has almost 120,000 employees worldwide, and approximately 20,000 in Munich. Thanks to the artists, I get to know my own company much better. Around 100 employees contribute to the realization of the projects. My contacts with them also help to increase the internal familiarity with the project.

The artists easily surpass me in their knowledge of my world. They are quite at home in the BMW showroom in Vienna, and soon they are so familiar with our product range and technical details that it is suggested in jest that they join the sales team.

Partnership and Sponsoring

As I have already pointed out, communication is the defining factor in distinguishing between interaction and a transaction in which money plays a primary role. In my cooperation and partnership with the artists, what becomes obvious again and again is the importance of defining my own position clearly and defending it while being open to the ambiguities that may surface.

In connection with Dejanov & Heger projects, I receive repeated requests to sponsor exhibitions by Kunsthalle Bonn and other institutions. The argument is that since a presentation platform for BMW is supplied, it would be only fair to honor this with a financial contribution. Cultural institutions are always in search of sponsors to fill gaps in their budgets, even though – unlike in the U.S. – it is the government's responsibility to support culture. Hence this type of request is not new to me. However, in the context of the Dejanov & Heger BMW projects it presents itself in a new light.

I am willing to discuss and explain why sponsoring is out of the question in this particular case. If I sponsor, even just once, an exhibition in which one of our joint projects is shown, more than just this one project will be ruined. What is at stake is our long-standing cooperation, because we would lose all trust and credibility. Our concern is art that in concrete projects truthfully thematizes and explores the relationship between economics and art. One cannot collaborate in uncovering the veiled interconnection of the two by reestablishing this very link. Our goal categorically prohibits paying for the work, and hence buying ourselves into an exhibition.

Ambiguity arises when our competitors sponsor exhibitions which show Dejanov&Heger projects, among others, as has actually happened in Bonn with Mercedes Benz and in Siena with Volkswagen AG. (*Le Repubbliche dell'Arte Germania – la Construzione di un Immagine* at the Palazzo delle Papesse Centro Arte Contemporanea). In Bonn, the BMW Z3 Coupé was, in fact, placed in a very prominent position behind the glass wall at the entrance. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung called it a "topsy-turvy practice which was enriched involuntarily and amusingly by VW's appearance as a sponsor in Siena." (April 19, 2001)

Seduction

As our dialogue develops, I ask myself again and again what role seduction plays for the artists, and what role it plays for me. The question becomes increasingly poignant for me, even though I have not discussed it until now with either the artists or the public. I follow the dialogue with great interest, not only because it advances a discussion in art which I find exciting and important, but also because the company and the BMW brand presents itself in a way that would have been impossible in a planned manner and on its own accord. No artist would have allowed us to instrumentalize her or him to that extent, and I never would have tried to. Implanting the art of communication into the project itself, speaking in the language of art instead of speaking about it, as is usually done, is presumably unique for a company. The various projects have by now granted me the most diverse insights and perspectives into art. However, I increasingly get the impression that they no longer generate fundamentally new insights. This is a consideration which is not for me to articulate, since I am not an art expert. I do express it, however, as I keep asking myself and keep being asked how long the dialogue can be sustained in a reasonable and credible way. More and more often the statement "Protect me from what I want" comes to mind.

When I consider the dialogue from the artists' side, the question of seduction also poses itself. For example, they tell me that Mercedes Benz has approached them as well as other artists to paint a car. This does not surprise me as the BMW Art Car Collection is taken as a model and often imitated. The artists did not accept the offer, as seductive as it may have been with money on the horizon. I interpret this as evidence of connectedness and "faithfulness." I do not directly influence their decision, but I do note it with pleasure. As stated above, the artists don't have an exclusive contract with BMW that would exclude competitors. To my knowledge, during our collaboration the artists have not realized any projects without BMW.

Other aspects of seduction may also continue to operate and provide a basis for the continuing partnership with BMW. (Our mutual friendships are a different story which I am explicitly omitting.) One such aspect of seduction is that the artists profit from the partnership with BMW as well. For the past few years their cooperation with BMW has been talked about all over the world. That their reputation has increased and

possibly their value for collectors is only conjecture, because I have no insight into their sales and prices. Maybe there is also the "Freude am Fahren" in BMW cars. Is it possible that the artists have succumbed to the temptation of the "Object of Desire," which they are trying to unmask in their *Quite Normal Luxury* projects? This would be another variant in the long-term discourse about economics and art, perhaps even the end-result of a long process in which we, as their partners, have always been part of the experiment, as accomplices or victims.

Purchase of the Z3 Roadster 2.8 for MAK

In 2001, the purchase of the Munich 1999 *Dream City* Z3 is proposed for the collection of the Museum für Angewandte Kunst (MAK) in Vienna. We are asked to sponsor the purchase of the Z3, because the budget of this museum has apparently decreased. The Z3 belongs to the artists (as mentioned above, they bought it in 1999), and they are now willing to sell it to the museum. The Z3 has been consecrated in many art temples, and offered up for admiration in exhibitions as a *Quite Normal Luxury* or as an "Object of Desire." It functions, if not as a cultural asset or even an *objet d'art*, then at least as an exemplary mediator between culture and economics, art and product, as well as between art and reality, deception and fact.

Several interventions by MAK strengthen my impression that this Z3 can be purchased only if BMW finances the transaction, buying the car from the artists and then donating it to MAK. The temptation is obviously enormous, since by saying no, I take the risk that the plan will be abandoned. However, when I present solid reasons for not engaging in this type of sponsorship, my position is received with respect. Possibly passing this test is necessary to remain a credible partner in a project where once again the freedom of art was at stake. I propose that we jointly look for a sponsor, and I contact a BMW supplier in Linz who, however, decides not to support our plan. Finally MAK itself purchases the Z3.

The car remains at the artists' disposal, so they are free to continue using it as a mobile art object in the collection. It now functions as a connection between the artists' other locations of activity and MAK. The Z3 Roadster also communicates their connectedness to MAK, because it now carries inscriptions of the names of the artists and MAK as an "identification tag."

No Contract, No Security

In the course of our cooperation it becomes obvious that, while trust is an absolute necessity, it does not provide sufficient protection. Limitless trust is naive, irresponsible, and even dangerous. It must be clear to everybody involved that I don't act as a private individual. Boundaries and rules need to be redefined; several issues need to be dealt with. At some point the question of insurance arises. Fortunately it is easily answered: The Z3 Roadster is insured by MAK both as a vehicle and as an art object. But what about the artists placing orders with BMW dealers without my authorization which are then billed to the company? What about their replacing the rear-view mirror of the Z3 Roadster with that of the Z3 Coupé because it had been erroneously featured on the cover of Flash Art? As their partner, is BMW automatically obliged to comply with the artists' wishes, or is it entitled to refuse and thus influence their art? What if after two years of driving the car needs a paint touch-up to remain an "Object of Desire"? The car needs winter tires. Who pays for service and repairs? A bottomless pit opens, and I fear that the process may spin out of control. Now I repeatedly make clear, orally and in writing, that without my previous consent and an advance agreement as to who bears the costs, nothing can be ordered.

Very early on, another serious issue arises – the question of BMW's copyright, especially where the white-and-blue BMW logo appears visualized in the art object or is even presented as a "sculpture," as on the pylon. Can the company trademark, with its tremendous symbolic value, this "most sacred object," be for sale? I am told that even the logo may be "sold" by the artists in the art context, and that no infringement of copyright would be involved. Correspondingly, this holds for all materials and products of BMW that have been used, changed, ennobled, or used for estrangement effects in an art production. There is, of course, never a thought about BMW sharing the proceeds from sales of the art works. And when BMW Japan and BMW Austria consider purchasing works by the artists and contact their galleries, I check the prices and note with considerable surprise that there is no discount "automatically" granted to BMW.

The Discursive Museum

In a series of discussions under the title *Das diskursive Museum* (2001), MAK focuses on the artists' work and its recent purchase of the Z3 Roadster 2.8. The museum also puts on a show. BMW Austria plans a marketing event in conjunction with the acquisition of the Z3, planning to show the car to clients of BMW at a celebratory reception. The event does not take place, presumably not because of any incompetence of the planning team, but rather the sheer impossibility of communicating this project in such a manner. Marketing and the communication of art are instruments that are clearly not in tune with each other. The experience of their shying away from each other out of mutual inhibition and disgust is quite familiar to me.

At the exhibition at MAK, the artists for the first time show two separate projects: Swetlana Heger's *Test the World*, and Plamen Dejanov's variation on *Quite Normal Luxury*. While Swetlana Heger's test includes a BMW vehicle merely as a means of getting from point A to point B – the object of the test being a luxury hotel – BMW is still the constitutive object in Plamen Dejanov's project.

The curator of this exhibition, Daniela Zyman, writes that the "relationship between art, business and trademark, as well as the redefinition of aesthetic strategies, are the essential leitmotifs characterizing the work of the Austrian team Swetlana Heger and Plamen Dejanov. *Quite Normal Luxury* is the result of a collaboration between the artists and a car manufacturer that dates from March 1999. For a period of one year, the partners swapped their roles and identities within a "transcultural synergy." A continuation of the project, *Test the World* is both an extended form of exhibition and an attempt at redefining what a contemporary art collection is. The pivot of the project is a silver Z3 2.8 BMW Roadster. While the artists continue to use the car, it figures – as a mobile sculpture of the MAK Collection of Contemporary Art – as an absent exhibition object. Taking the object out of the institutional context extends the defined framework for the production, reception, and collection of art, and opens it up to new references. Thus, *Test the World* disrupts the practice of object-oriented exhibitions." In its function as a mobile exhibit, the Z3 will add a variant to questions about the boundaries which define museums, and of art in the public space. All of us get our say in the series of discussions, although at different events. Among others, one analysis of BMW's project with Dejanov & Heger is presented in the talk "Synergy Museum" by Joshua Decter. Under the title *The Mobile Collection: Heger & Dejanov's Car Synergy*, Dejanov & Heger and Decter afterwards conduct a conversation. I am somewhat surprised not to have been invited to participate, especially because I had been impressed with MAK's liberal open-mindedness towards BMW as well as with its art historian and curator, Joshua Decter. The artists do not try to include me either. I sit in the audience thinking *tua res agitur* (it's your case that's being discussed here). Maybe I still do not fully understand our cooperation, and perhaps I will never understand it; maybe the barriers that prevent a public discussion of the cooperation are still too high, even here.

I am invited to participate in a discussion titled, "Art Meets Business – New Ways in Sponsoring," about art and its tremendous power to challenge fixed opinions as we experienced it in our joint projects. But it is a *déjà vu*, another round of the old discussion about art sponsoring and new ways of surface communication. It is noteworthy that the Austrian TV channel ORF later encounters no problems when for its Kunststücke program it interviews the curator, the artists, and myself about our cooperation, and probes somewhat deeper with their questions.

The Gift

In the summer of 2001, after the silver Z3 has been integrated into the collection of MAK, and the Z3 Coupé 2.8 – red interior, black exterior – has played its role in Bonn and Vienna, the car is given to the artists as a present. After the exhibition in the Kunsthalle Vienna it had been taken off the road and stored in a garage in Vienna. Now the artists can use the black-and-red Z3 to their heart's content, as they had initially wished. Finally the owners of a Z3 Coupé, they will be able to utilize it for future art projects. The silver Z3 will be used primarily for driving to art institutions. The artists now have two Z3's at their disposal, for joint or separate journeys.

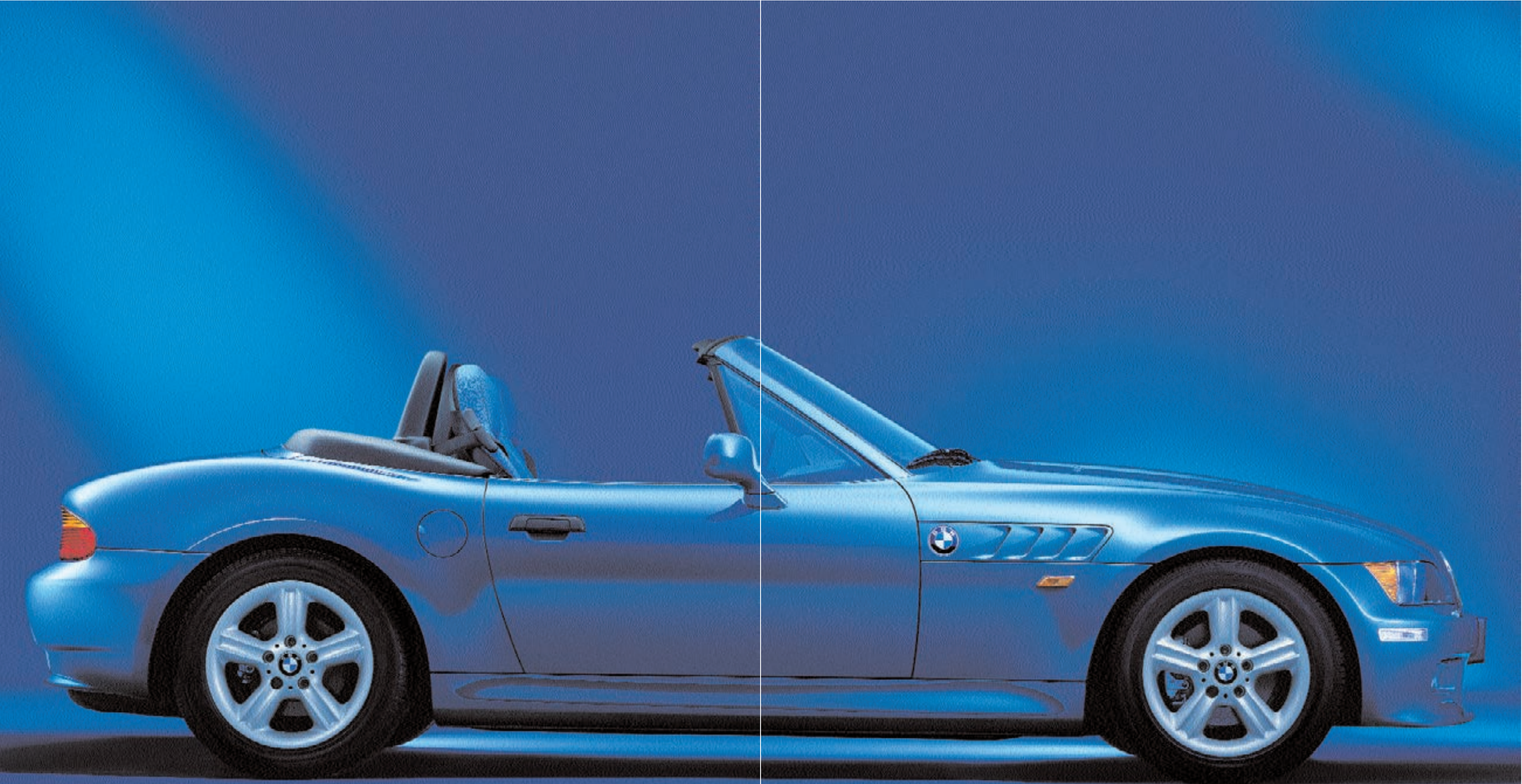
CHRISTIANE ZENTGRAF, MUNICH, SEPTEMBER 2001

Coda

Some time has passed since I wrote this essay, and several opportunities have arisen to discuss this project with authors and curators. What emerged again and again was that pieces of information my discussion partners had were disparate and didn't correspond to my knowledge or to the facts. The source of this information was invariably traced back to the artists themselves. Therefore, I can only conclude that the artists must have intentionally disseminated different versions of the facts. If that is the case, then our joint project appears in a different light.

Is it possible that the artists' communications were part of the project itself? If so, what was the discourse between art and economics really about? Was the artists' goal to uncover the veiled interconnection of art and economics by reestablishing this very link? In other words, who created a smokescreen around a highly complex relationship, who exposed it, and above all what smokescreen are we talking about?

CHRISTIANE ZENTGRAF, MUNICH, NOVEMBER 2001



Swetlana Heger & Plamen Dejanov, *Quite Normal Luxury (www.bmw.com)*, 1999-2000, Collection MAK, Vienna.

CLAUDE CLOSKY

A Conversation with John Kelsey

John Kelsey: You never disturb the beauty and power of a corporate surface.
Claude Closky: How could I when it is the subject of my work?



Claude Closky, *Untitled* (Benetton), collage, 60 x 80 cm, 1998.
COURTESY: GALLERY JENNIFER FLAY, PARIS

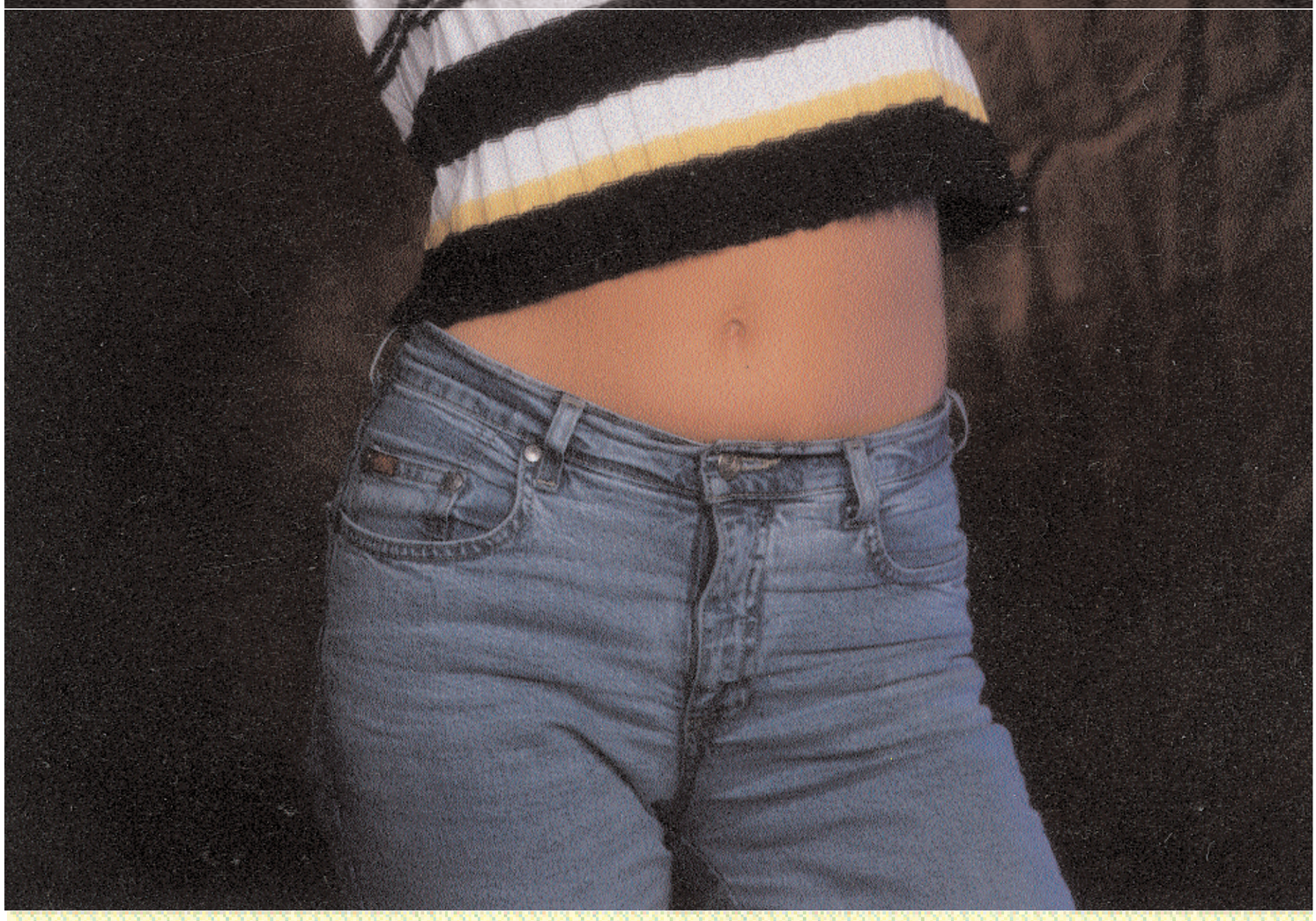
The Riga Dating Agency started in June 1999 by Gints Gabrans and Monika Ines Pormale. About 120 people have gone through RDA, mostly women and a few men (there have only been 10-15 men in all). Gints Gabrans and I are the "owners, founders and directors" — as in a real agency. The project began as *The Riga Acquaintance Office*, a pseudo dating agency, modeled after the style of a "real" dating agency — of which there are (according to statistics), at least 200 in Latvia. Most of these are semi-functional offices with databases covered in dust for years and with no real feedback. We offered a "CHANCE"...
This is how we operate: first we put an ad in the papers, stick up posters around the city, then wait for people to call in. We meet and greet each person individually, talk to them and offer to display their picture in international exibitions — Stockholm, Berlin etc. Then we arrange a photo shoot, bring in a make-up artist and stylist, and the session usually lasts two hours. The clients get to choose one picture and then fill out the questionnaire: What are their interests? Who is their dream partner? Fantasy location? Their wish, if they could make one. Some write poetry, their own or Shakespeare. Some have simple wishes like, "Let's all be nicer to each other," and so on. Then we get a contact address or e-mail, name or nickname, and phone number. The pictures are printed — in the early shows they were small, passport size photos, in more recent shows we made them life size. The photographs corresponded to actual measurements — if a person was 5 feet 5 inches tall then the picture was too.
A lady comes in with a plastic bag of costumes: feather boas, sparklers, sequins, etc. She used to be a circus artist. She brings her own make-up — huge boxes with brushes and insists on doing it herself. Rouged cheeks and huge black doe circles around her eyes. We try to tone it down with some powder. Out comes a white cape and she insists on reciting poetry while having her picture taken — for the ambience, so to speak. Her pitch is short, "I like to cook and receive guests. Will travel." — Stella (her stage name).
Another lady, 50-ish and wealthy (a real estate owner), has many men but is fed up with them. She says at her age, there are three types of men: those her age but with a marital or professional crisis (these ones end up living at her expense); the young ones who move in and exploit her (but at least they are romantic and full of idealized visions of the future) then there are the older men with their own means, established but boring and old. She wants excitement. She practices yoga, and would like someone into healthy living to spend quality time with. She does not want to leave Riga, but wants a romantic partner who would send her flowers, someone she could visit once in a while.
A young guy, 25 (all men are young — eighty percent of the clients are in their 20's and 30's) — arrives. He's a musician and writes poetry in German. Goethe's "dream mermaid" is his pitch line. He calls himself "Leonid Bernstein" — "bernstein" being German for "amber."
Another guy is hilarious. His pitch line goes, "According to an old Moroccan saying, the most beautiful and intelligent girls turn into oranges. I want such an orange to fall in my lap." He looks working-class and describes himself only in metaphorical terms, "tall, blonde with a black shoe" (a reference to a French comedy). Funny man, but he promises to respond to all serious proposals.
A programmer, or "webmaster," comes in. His pitch is precise, like his profession: he is looking for a self-sufficient, smart and educated girl who would share an interest in internet. He describes himself in statistical dimensions; height, weight, shoe size, hair color. Nothing personal.
Our idea is also to do a "live" show with the participants themselves, giving them an opportunity to "match make" directly. The show would include extra features like wedding videos, because some of our couples are already married.
When we created a website, we renamed the project *The Riga Dating Agency*, offering "chat" possiblities through the web. It was designed like hundreds of similar dating sites, except we didn't mention it was an art project. There was a thought to make it a commercial site where we would charge for our services, but we dropped it. The complications didn't appeal to us. It would mean stuff with passwords and credit card security issues.
About ninety-five percent of our clients are Russian. We'd also like to explore other cities of the world. People usually mention standard locations — Paris, London, New York. Right now we are offering Berlin, Stockholm, Athens, and Rome, but the rest of the world is still up for grabs. We don't follow up on our clients. For one thing, it's too much of a hassle (and not that interesting or ethical). Unlike a real agency which handles all the correspondence between people, we act only as a medium. The fact that we know about some of these people has to do with the fact that Riga is a rather small city (population: 900,000). Even though this is an art project, it's also the real thing so we remain *incognito*. We never have our pictures in catalogues and we are described as co-ordinators not artists. This construction is different from other agencies, being a non-commercial as well as an art project. The result is an exciting process which is always interesting, amazing and real.

MONIKA INES PORMALE, RIGA, MAY 2000



The Riga Dating Agency, *Advertisements,* 1999-2000.





RIGA DATING AGENCY

NAME - JULIA
DATE OF BIRTH - 1977
I AM 170 CM TALL
INTERESTS - INTERESTING INTERESTS
WISHES - LET'S LIVE IN PEACE !
ADDRESS - K.DAINAS STR., APT. 5,
RIGA , LATVIA
E-MAIL - poligonss@parks.lv

LIFE IS SWEET IN SWEDEN

Lars Bang Larsen on a work by Aleksandra Mir

Gothenburg, August 8-16, 1995, Sweden's second largest city is turned upside down. During the final countdown to the eagerly awaited World Athletic Championships, which the Swedish port city will be hosting, there is an atmosphere of self-conscious activity: this urban waterfront environment is subjected to a series of "beautification" projects ranging from the architectural remodeling of the inner city to the injection of a host of new commercial venues. Greenery, colorful advertising and "fresh paint" signs sprout everywhere. The east-bound highway leading into the city is newly lined with trees and a giant "Snickers" billboard graces the largest dock in the harbor at its western entry point. A new black market for apartment sublets is on the rise, while the restaurant classifieds are unabashedly seeking "young blonde female staff."

With world media eyes on Gothenburg and the largest planned tourist invasion in the city's history, the air is charged with entrepreneurial excitement. But the day-to-day adjustments to all this "newness" are wearing on the locals. With the novelty comes disenchantment: people are slowly losing their sense of belonging to the beloved city they are so proud to represent. By the time the tourists begin to arrive, commencing their prescribed search for "authentic folk" and "local spirit," the distinction between guests and hosts has long fizzled into abstraction. Not even a guide uniform guarantees distinction: everyone is new to this place and to each other.

Amidst the turbulence, Aleksandra Mir opens the *Life is Sweet in Sweden* Guest Bureau – a fictional tourist office located in the center of Gothenburg. The Guest Bureau is installed in the bohemian Trixter Theater, which is cleaned out – its illusionist black cube painted white for a new reality effect. With only two summer months left until the games, the project's economy is based fundamentally on a continuation of Trixter's DIY wisdom, including an on/off the dole scheduling of labor and the favors of friends, family & lovers. But to rise above these traditional standards and to match the developments of the city itself, a new tactic is also introduced: corporate sponsorship. Compared to the slow and ambiguous bureaucracy of dealing with any art funding body, a corporate marketing director can be reached at a turnaround time of less than 24 hours and, if positive to the proposal, can instantly offer not only financial support but a complete and ready-made aesthetic of products.

The sponsored renovations of the old theater combine private bourgeois coziness and the neutral look of a public business space – a familiar ambiance that makes everybody feel naturally welcome as they step through the doors. Furnished with Asian wickerwork furniture (which Swedes have long adopted as their own), plastic greenery, a leased corporate lobby aquarium, dim lights, soft Muzak, electric footbaths, a television with shopping channels, and a new, freshly scented lavatory, the Guest Bureau is freely available to everybody and anybody. But what is its function? What information, exactly, does it offer?

Here at *Life is Sweet in Sweden*, the "host" happens to be anyone who chooses to wear the hostess uniforms hanging on the clothes rack, regardless of whether they have any connection to Gothenburg or not. The uniform is a snappy little dress number: blue and yellow (for Sweden) with the "firm" logo embroidered in silver on the breast pocket – a look reminiscent of airline stewardesses and checkout cashiers. There are twelve uniforms available and, by the end of the enterprise, forty-six persons will have stepped in to hostess.

The ambiguous visibility of the uniforms provokes widely divergent interpretations of the hostess role. The Guest Bureau is an open invitation to experimental role-playing, and many hostesses explore and manipulate their new status in female servitude. They spend their time no differently than their guests: reading magazines, watching TV, studying, sleeping, chatting and sometimes engaging in tasks (as if to "play house") for incoming guests. With several hundred guests passing by over the 10-day duration of the games, the Guest Bureau becomes a social limbo where random constellations of people interact in varying roles at different times, effectively eliminating any authoritative representation of "life in this city."

One striking aspect of the hostess uniform is its reference to prostitution. The short, sexy cut (with national colors) alludes to the world-wide "nymphomaniac" reputation that Swedish women have held abroad for three generations. Allusions to traditional female service industries (i.e., the nurse, the stewardess, the waitress) are parodied by the Guest Bureau logo – a bed. And when the actual prostitutes of Esperantoplatsen begin to utilize the Guest Bureau to relax in between "tricks," the more conservatively inclined visitors suddenly find themselves keeping company with women of "suspect" reputation. But no one can really tell who is who anymore since the hookers have also taken to sporting the hostess uniforms when in the space. Every night, a motley crew of hostesses leave together and promenade through town to whichever bar is providing the sponsored drinks that evening. For each night of the games, a different bar or restaurant has been approached to sponsor the Guest Bureau. In the general sponsorship frenzy, the bars and restaurants are delighted to play host to the "World Championship Hostessing Troupe." The confusion is total as the media simultaneously spotlights the World Championship medal girls – the games' official hostess troupe. Coinciding with the careful handpicking of that elite crew was the resurgence of the myth that Queen Sylvia (of Sweden) had met the King during the Olympic Games in Munich where she was Chief Hostess. With such good marriage prospects potentially looming on the horizon, the official hostesses decline the traditional blue and yellow folk dress (too gauche) in favor of a more classically "chic" lavender suit – effectively rendering them invisible.

In stark contrast, the self-appointed hostesses of *Life is Sweet in Sweden* are all too visible. New hostesses are recruited on the spot, uniforms stripped and swapped and photos snapped. The new superstar hostesses are recognized on the street and offer guidance and interviews about everything and nothing. There are school teachers, rock stars, hairy men, Somalian immigrants and Swedish skinheads roaming around town together, representing the fluctuating and destabilized demography of Gothenburg, Sweden, summer 1995.

LARS BANG LARSEN, COPENHAGEN, FEBRUARY 1996/2001

RECOLLECTION: ALEKSANDRA MIR, GOTHENBURG, 1995/2001

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SÖREN HÅKANLIND, JONNY LATTSON, JACKY LEISSNER, BENGHT CHRISTIAN FOR GP/KAMERAREPORTAGE AND ALEKSANDRA MIR FOR *LIFE IS SWEET IN SWEDEN*














MEN'S MARATHON
START LIST
VISA
SNICKERS


ETHIOPIA
TDK
445


FARGKALLAN


USA
SNICKERS
434


adidas
SNICKERS
252
GÖTEBORG '95





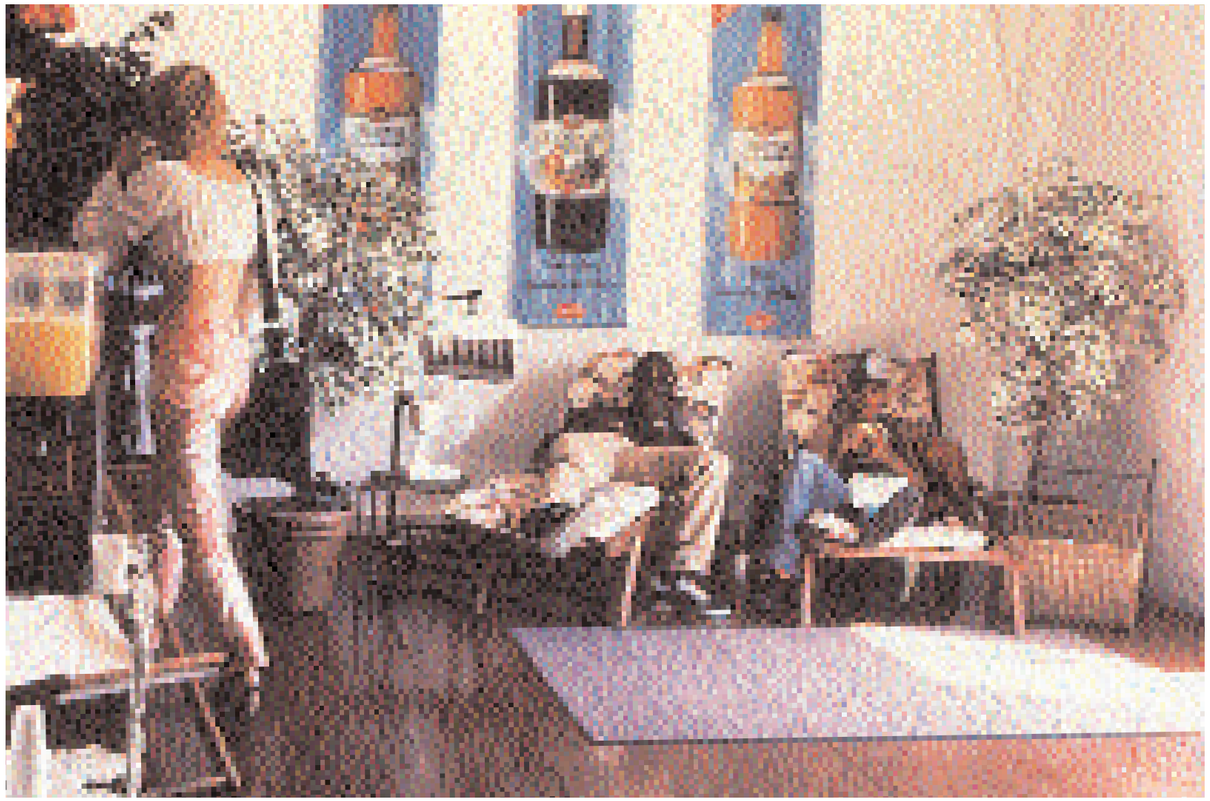
















Aleksandra Mir, *Life is Sweet in Sweden,* reporter Anders Bostedt interviewing Pedro, a Spanish tourist on vacation in Gothenburg, live transmission on Channel P4, August 8, 1995.

What do you think about this Pedro?
I think that is great. I think there should be more places like this all over Gothenburg and Stockholm and Sweden. I mean, it is so different from any place that I have visited before. Usually you know, when you go to a place, they charge you for everything but here everything is free… and the people are so nice. I mean, you can get to know people. It is not normal. This is different.
I wonder how everything can be free. What do you think?
That it's free? I think it's great!
I think I need to ask the hostess. How can it be possible that everything in here is free?
Well, it is obviously sponsored. Everything you see around you comes from our sponsors. We have over 40 sponsors and we have offered them a place to advertise in return so there is lots of advertising in between the furniture and the plants and the aquarium and…without them, it would never have been possible.
Aha, so it's all taken care of by advertising then. Well, Pedro, everything is sponsored here, that's why they can have it for free.
Aha. Yes, I was wondering, for all of this, it can cost money. I mean the massage, the machines, the drinks...but the people who are here, I think they volunteer.
Yes, the girls are nodding. They work for free. Well, have you seen anything of the games yet, Pedro?
Yes, I was on Sunday in the games and I saw the 20 km walk and the finals of the 400m. It was good, but I am more interested to see the city and the people. The games are a part of my visit here, but I am more interested to see how people live.
So, what do you think about us Swedes?
I think that...eeeeh…you are…very…nice (laughter)… no really! Compared to other countries that I have visited. You have here a very good and high standard of life. I like how you manage to live with the nature and how everything is good taken care of, and how, eeeh, how kind the people are that live here.
And the bad sides?
The bad sides? How everything is so expensive here! I think it really is a place where everything is so expensive, so to find a place like this, it is really amazing!
Well, let's lie back and relax.
Thank you very much.
(Nick Kershaw fades in)
I won't let the sun go down on me. I won't let sun go down. I won't let the sun go down on me. I won't let sun go down…

TAPESTRIES FOR QUEEN MARGRETHE

Bjørn Nørgaard in conversation with Lars Bang Larsen



Bjørn Nørgaard, *Horse Sacrifice,* performance, 1970.



Queen Margrethe receives her gift.

In 1988, Bjørn Nørgaard was invited by the court of Queen Margrethe II of Denmark to create tapestries of Danish history as a birthday present for the regent's 50th birthday in 1990. The tapestries were inaugurated for the Queen's 60th birthday exactly ten years later, and were a tribute to the sovereign that replaced the Court's 400 year-old tapestries. The tapestries were sponsored by a significant part of the Danish business community. In Denmark, Nørgaard is famous beyond art circles for his scandalous 1970 performance *Horse Sacrifice*, in which a horse was killed in something akin to a heathen ritual, in order to mirror the formal shooting and mutilation of people in Indochina that happened every day. In the 60s and 70s, he also participated in experimental artistic activities such as EKS-Skolen (The Experimental Art School, an extra-academic initiative that positioned art production in a sociopolitical field and a printing house) and Arme & Ben (Arms & Legs, an artists' collective, "an attempt to create a new Bauhaus"). Lars Bang Larsen met Bjørn Nørgaard in his Copenhagen studio one rainy afternoon in early October 2000, and in the following transcript of their discussion, Mr. Nørgaard talks about the changing of the artist's role from 60s radicalism and collective identities to more entrepreneurial positions in the 70s and 80s, about the moral involvement that penetrates all the years, and about his view on his royal tapestries' role in the cultural sphere.

Lars Bang Larsen: The unveiling ceremony of the tapestries to Queen Margrethe was covered by a veritable media storm, and the tapestries themselves have achieved record-high popularity among the Danes, with daily queues outside of Christiansborg Castle where they are on display in the representational chambers. Art critics have also been swept away by the tapestries and have surrendered critical acclaim for your work, along the lines of "Nørgaard, the great pictorialistic storyteller." It is interesting that you told me you also see the tapestries as an integral part of the discussion of the relationship of art to the business life.

Bjørn Nørgaard: I am happy that I get a chance to talk about this, because this aspect of the tapestries hasn't really been covered yet by the media. When this issue of business life into art calls for attention, it is first of all because it isn't something we are used to in Denmark. The artistic economy in Denmark has been dominated by the artists' associations. We have had the Carlsberg Foundation and the Augustinus Foundation, and other big foundations, but we aren't accustomed to the situation where the business life is the very precondition for art. And immediately we are on guard, at least the older ones of us, because we are still stuck in the notion that you have to be very careful with linking art and money, and especially with money from the business life.

So when we started the tapestry project and what later became known as the "tapestry-conspiracy," one of the problems was where on earth we would get the funds for this. The former Lord Stewart Hans Sølvhøj proposed a national collection, but the time horizon made this completely unrealizable. This only left us one possibility: to get hold of some corporations. So a fundraising body was established which works away on private corporations while we are negotiating – penniless – with Le Gobelin, the tapestry workshop in Paris.

The second stage in an enterprise like this is that the recipients – which in this case is the Queen but also the donors – have to make sure that what is produced is fit to go on the wall. Conversely, I have to make sure that when I have submitted my, what would you call it, concept, and they have accepted it, then I don't want them to interfere. I think it is of capital importance in such cooperative processes that you fully realize these demarcation lines: what possibilities can they offer me when I have developed a concept that in my opinion is artistically coherent, and on top of that, can press some issues out into some areas they haven't occupied before within that professional domain? In this way you may avoid conflicts.

I don't mind conflicts, but conflicts have to be constructive to be worth while.

LBL: What unexplored territory does the tapestries challenge?

BN: I usually employ the image that if you take modernism, which is something like one hundred years old, then it has traditionally legitimized itself by confronting tradition. This is most radically expressed by Malevich who intended to create the object-less and unconditional art. But when this has been there for one hundred years, it has itself become tradition. You can't avoid that. I don't think that there is only one tradition of modernism, I think there are many, interwoven with one another. To put it roughly, you can say that there is Duchamp who leads to Conceptual Art and context art and what have you, but conceptual art is a mixture of Malevich and the Bauhaus tradition, and interestingly also has a degree of idealism to its name. Malevich represents the Utopian tradition, and Bauhaus represents the Pre-Raphaelite tradition; that is, the notion that art enters society's very production relations and there exercises its aesthetic norms and influences the physical evolution of society. And the last in the line is Picasso. The ultimate subject-oriented art.

If you take those four traditions, then up through modernism each one of them has been emphasized differently in different periods. You may say that in the 60s, our point of departure was a mixture of Duchamp and Malevich, a quite conceptually-inspired, as well as a Utopian, conception of art. And that comes to its conclusion when we make the printing house and the other corporations, and basically stop making art. When we start with taking up the image again, it is in connection with architecture. And in this regard it is the Pre-Raphaelite tradition we engage; because when you have abandoned the category of the art work and return to a physical object, then you obviously take the craftsman as the one who actually creates the physical object. That is, it is no longer me personally as an artist who necessarily creates this object, but I do it through another person, which basically represents a form of production that embodies a critique of the kind of suburban housing projects-type architecture that you will find in Høje Gladsaxe and Vollsmose. This thereby, points towards some qualities in ways of experiencing your surroundings as a way of tilting out the 60s programme into the 70s.

At that point I come up with a plan for a sculpture catalogue which contains all styles – also abstract and modern. This catalogue was supposed to list not only styles, but also materials, surface treatments and formats. The user would then

mark out different possibilities in the style catalogue with the purpose of a personalized combination – Gothic pillars, a romantic arc, abstract relief in the background, whatever you would like – and then the artist gathers these different stylistic characters to what the heck kind of product you would want – environment, sculpture, whatever. And the artist would have the connections to the relevant craftsmen who would then produce the different parts.

What lay in that notion was a strong belief in the fact that our culture historically has accumulated some common images and image principles that you meet again and again. These common principles would give a common art created together with engineers and property developers. That was what we called popular classicism [folkeklassicisme]. Now, around that time, the 60s generation began to be employed as professors at art academies and, of course, taught their own art. That way we got a new academism, for better or worse. Folk classicism became an academism too, by dint of my professorship at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen. And I very consciously sought out that discussion of folk classicism as a new academism, because I wanted to ask the question as pointedly as possible: do we want art to be part of society or do we want it to be isolated in its own institutions? So when I got the opportunity in '88 to make the tapestries, it was on that background that I considered it possible to get funds from those companies.

And naturally the tapestries, considered as a method, are retrospective, but exactly by being retrospective they accumulate some values it is necessary to carry along with you. And when you consider that these tapestries are so slowly produced – the weavers have only seen 30 cm at a time, the rest is rolled up – and that when they are finished they can easily hang there for three or four hundred years, then you have to take a wholly different time horizon into perspective. My claim is that it is necessary to have images of different velocity and that point in different directions in order to understand where images are headed today. If you only have one-directional images that move with the same velocity, you end up losing your orientation. So what I meant with unexplored territory is this insisting on the Pre-Raphaelite Bauhaus tradition that univocally points towards the human body and its capacities for perception and production, which made it paramount to realize the project exactly in that scale. I can hardly see any other way to push the boundaries further in this respect.

LBL: You have always been a believer in self-organized structures together with colleagues in EKS-Skolen and Arme & Ben. What happens with your self-image as artists in the late 70s, when you give up the ambition of collaborating with the unions, for example?

BN: In a lot of ways we wanted too much too soon, which everybody wasn't mentally prepared for. Apart from Jorn and the Situationists, the Danish art scene was quite traditional. That was our background. Everybody was more or less socially oriented back then, you had to be honest to your thing, not sell out, etc. Your style was an expression of the surrounding world mediated through yourself. The other thing was that the 50s were the only time when the nuclear family has ever really existed in Danish history. It was a very closed family pattern we developed from. I am born in '47, and when I grew up on the Northern Borough, I remember that things simply were that way that we didn't have any thing at all. There was no money. We rented a vacuum cleaner from the grocer's on the corner for 25 øre. Most people got their larger meals prepared at the baker's because they didn't have a gas oven at home. It was tight all right. Then all of a sudden, in the early 60s the welfare boom happened very quickly.

Head over heels, I entered these collective experiments. And in five years, from when I entered EKS-Skolen in 64 till the *Horse Sacrifice* in 1970, we have abolished art, right! Then in the 70s we organised the printing house and others instigated production collectives, and on top of that there were political actions. At that point we tried to enter a dialogue with the unions about EKS-Skolen's printing house as to make a model for a self-organised corporation. The problem was that the unions traditionally only want to deal with big corporations. They didn't listen to us. We were also in touch with Joseph Beuys and his international firm, you know, but they weren't interested in creating jobs, they had higher goals. We were too profane for them. We had this sort of Maoist idea that you should work half the year, and then do all the other stuff the other half. We wanted to be self-funding, which proved to be a big mistake. This is where we banged our heads against the brick wall: we wanted to be self-organized and self-funded. So, in 1978-1979, quite a few typographers started to work in the printing house. They were not artists, which means that they wanted proper wages and vacations. It made no sense that we tried to worry them to death any more with our phantasms. It has been a while since I was there, but the last time I visited them they still owned the whole thing themselves.

Artistically speaking, there was noone to follow up on the activities in the 70s, no institutions or writers. A lot of things disappeared into thin air. Plus, on the personal level, these collective situations were immensely tough on you. So on the artistic, the personal, and the economic level, it all went to hell. This necessitated the development of new strategies.

LBL: So you re-invented yourself more like developers?

BN: Yes, developers and "architects."

LBL: On several occasions in the 60s, you worked together with Joseph Beuys. Beuys's production notoriously harbors tensions between his notions of creativity and a generalised economy, and the relations of production outside of his work. For example, when he participated in a Japanese whisky commercial for fundraising purposes in connection with his documenta 7 project, "7000 Oaks," he dryly replied to the comments of his supposed selling out, "My whole life has been advertising, but one ought to consider what I have advertised." Can you in any sense recognize yourself in that quotation?

BN: Well, Joseph could get grumpy, you know. I remember us sitting in a bar in Düsseldorf at a point when he had begun to sell his work at good prices. He said, "Let those pay for the revolution who can afford to!" Another thing was that his project wasn't to let the artwork disappear. I remember sitting at the Venice Biennial in 1980 – where he also participated – and I was carving granite figures, but not too sure of myself. After all, this might be too close to sculpture. But Joseph said, "The struggle against capitalism isn't in the stone." For him the work was a given, whether it is a rostrum or something that gives the author a special authority in society. For him neither the artwork nor the art institution should be eliminated, and that is also the conclusion we arrived at in the late 70s. His project was that art should enter society and affect the way society was arranged, and he deeply believed that those mandates that you established within image structures were possible to transfer positively to societal structures. To liberate the creative energies in the societal production at large.

LBL: In 1970, you are jailed in Oslo after a tumultuous exhibition opening at Kunsternes Hus. Here you write an open letter to the Danish Minister of Culture in order to persuade him to get you home. Funnily enough, you write in the letter, "I have a fine view from my cell, though, I can see the royal castle." Speaking of revisions, your old colleague Per Kirkeby – with whom you also worked in EKS-Skolen – declared that he had always been an aristocrat when he took up painting again...

BN: An aristocrat? He has always been a boor.

LBL: …er, how do you see the tapestries in the perspective of your politically motivated activities back then?

BN: As a contrast to Per, I have never had the urge to distance myself from what we did back then. I see the tapestries in many ways as an optimizing of some of the ideas we had back then. A test of whether the old ideas could hold on that level. You can easily build a model ship in your basement, so to speak, but if you want to sail on the great big ocean you are suddenly involved in trying out on a real scale to what extent your ideas can hold water. I have always worked with the motivation that you are in a context, and that what you create can't be separated from the circumstance under which it is produced. To be present in negotiations with technicians and bureaucrats is to me the same as drawing sketches or dealing with weavers and ceramists, not just collateral circumstance. To me that is an integrated part of creating a public artwork. The process affects the artwork just as much as the artwork affects the social process. It works both ways. And where this pressure lies is exactly where something socially relevant can happen.

I haven't abandoned those statements from the jail in Oslo. But with age and with experiences over the years I have chosen some other strategies for making artistic discussions a part of societal discussions.

I don't consider myself as an aristocrat now, because the fundamental structures are the same: I place a forceful image in a social context where it creates new energies. As a professor at the Royal Danish Art Academy, as the highest ranking authority in the field vis-a-vis the state, you have an obligation to point at tradition. You are paid to be reactionary. And I don't care whether they make videos or biogas plants, as long as they know the profession that has lead to what they are producing. I happen to know Bjørnstjerne [Bjørnstjerne Christiansen from Superflex, ed.] very well, and the difference between his biogas plant and the one produced by third world organizations is that Bjørnstjerne's biogas plant contains a language that isn't alone the language of the biogas plant but also that of society. That social system refers to Beuys' social sculpture as well as to Michelangelo's slaves, because it is inherent in this that you are able to develop common forms that are of public utility. And this is exactly what the tapestries do: the function of the work is taken to an extreme. In classical modernism you can't be representative and you can't be decorative. That is taboo. So what I have done must be seen in a conceptual tradition, because unlike classical modernism, I haven't developed a personal idiom, but I have elevated eclecticism to a principle. I step back as author, and act as an organizer of a large array of pictorial elements, collocated so as to produce this historical expression that stems from a deeply moral involvement with society. The tapestries are getting on for what we did in the 60s, with the exception that I emphasize the category of the artwork. And that is a major difference from our visions back then, because we had never imagined that you would see a painting in the year 2000…we thought that would be over and done with by then!

LBL: And the Queen still likes her present?

BN: Oh, yes!

LBL: Mr. Nørgaard, thank you for this conversation.

LARS BANG LARSEN, COPENHAGEN, OCTOBER 2000



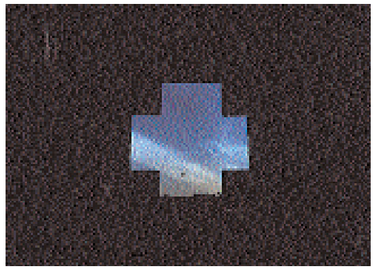
Bjørn Nørgaard, *Horse Sacrifice,* performance, 1970.

LANDFILL

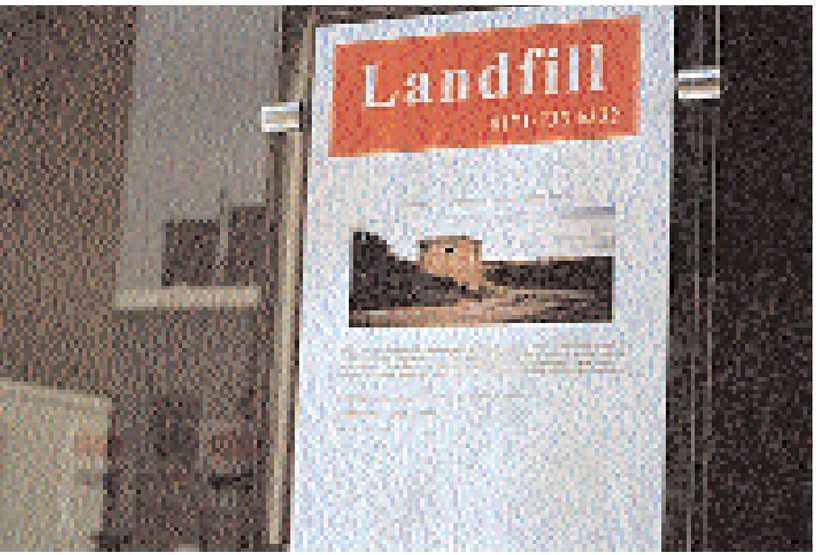
Andrea + Philippe



Glazed *Pillbox Ref: A47*, Morcott, detail through window.



View from inside glazed *Pillbox* at Harwich, cross-shaped aperture.

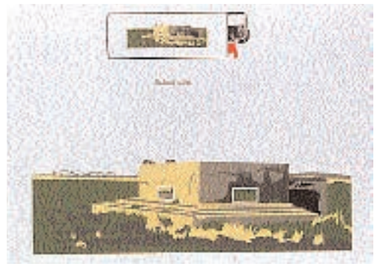


Landfill, sheet, *Ref: 016*, in window.

Ironically, Landfill was born from a piece of work that was so un-commercial as to be almost invisible. In May 1993, Andrea + Philippe completed the first act of that work which was to glaze – in 6mm toughened glass – a wartime concrete pillbox, which sat in the middle of a Leicestershire farmer's field, on the A47, Morcott. In essence it was an act of (a) trespass, as no permission was sought to enter the field, and (b) defamation, as the pillbox was made as it was, without the apertures being glazed. And yet the result was a place of absolute serenity – an enclosed place with no links to the outside world with perfect views of trees and sky, in praise of folly. The pillboxes, originally planned as part of a strategic WW2 defense programme, became, in their redundancy, little more than tiffin houses for the Dad's Army, an agreeable retirement pursuit for them, and a salve to the nation in general. They provided further entertainment in the 50s when farmers and landowners were offered cash incentives to destroy them. Proving indestructible, they remain dotted about the countryside, an infrastructure sheltering all manner of illicit pursuits. One Landfill description reads: LLANSAINT, KIDWELLY, DYFED, SOUTH WALES. This brick-rendered hexagonal pillbox has a flat concrete roof with jutting corners. It is easily accessible via a brick porch entrance. Inside the Welsh graffiti reads "NIMPHYWL," and two pairs of pink panties have been casually tossed into the corner. The work itself was so slight an adjustment of the existing structure as to be virtually undetectable. However, whilst the work was available to the public at large (for as long as it lasted – on returning to the original glazed pillbox some two years on, the ownership of the field had changed hands, and Andrea + Philippe found that their windows had been carefully removed leaving no trace), as artists, Andrea + Philippe sought to communicate it within the contemporary art world. Inevitably, all chosen methods pertained to the corporate/commercial landscape. Andrea + Philippe's first act of communication was to take out a half-page colour advert in *frieze,* an international contemporary art magazine. It showed an image of the glazed pillbox, taken on a wide-angle disposable camera. Set within the black band that framed the photograph top and bottom was their telephone number. This produced a flurry of phone calls from a disparate band of people – from a New York gallerist to two Japanese girls unable to speak English, to local pillbox enthusiasts with further sightings. Many more pillboxes, from Wiltshire to Dorset, were documented and sized up for glazing. With all the resultant images, an idea was hit upon to make up books of pillbox vouchers, which the pair proceeded to sell at private views. They also had a full set of pillbox magnets on offer, plus pillbox placemats. They became the travelling salespeople of the London art world. In April of the following year, all purchasers of vouchers were invited to attend an event which Andrea + Philippe were staging as part of a show in a run-down Rotherhithe flat. Having taken over the kitchen, and plastered all available magnetic space with pillbox magnets, they were to be found cooking Sri Lankan egg hoppers, washed down with a splash of Arrack, in return for a voucher. Later that year Andrea + Philippe were invited to participate in the first Sarah Stanton *Supastore*, an art store dedicated to artists' multiples. Andrea + Philippe offered a shop within a shop – the vending machine. Using a machine normally used to sell Tampax, mini-packages were created selling "pillbox" ephemera – scaled down sets of windows, pillbox fridge magnets, things collected on their travels, etc. Ideally, Andrea + Philippe hoped to be able to site their machines on the outside walls of shops or wherever, in order that they be accessible to the public at all times. There was also an idea to franchise the machines plus contents to interested parties, as indeed is the normal practice in vending machine commerce. The machine was sited at various art venues, including the ICA, where Andrea + Philippe were keen to have it sited in the toilets. The ICA chose to put it up in the bar, where it subsequently got vandalised, apparently on account of the fact that it cost four pounds for a package, people being used to exchanging no more than a one pound coin for a condom, for instance! Having by now incorporated other artists' works into the "range" of products on sale, original works by Tracey Emin, Angus Fairhurst, Gavin Turk, Jeremy Deller had all been available. Between 1993 and 1996, eight pillboxes were glazed around the countryside, and in May 1994, a pillbox in a field near Reading was "dressed" with red flags and parachute silk, creating a shrine, not unlike those often seen in roadside fields in Pakistan. This particular installation was titled the *Anniversary Pillbox*, being a year on from the glazing of the first pillbox. A second advert was taken out using this image in *Flash Art*. At this stage, Andrea + Philippe hooked into the ideal logo space, in the form of *Advertising Lighters*. 500 lighters were produced bearing the image of a sunken beach pillbox in Norfolk. An *Anniversary Lighter* was also produced, a third one bearing the image of a pillbox they had glazed in Harwich, and the fourth was of a pillbox glazed near Southampton (the windows of which were smashed within days of being installed). The "salesman's" coat was getting heavy, and a vestibule was required from which to sell the ever-increasing number of items. Mostly the lighters were sold at private views for beer money, often they were given away, exchanged or lost. Sometimes Philippe would sell someone a lighter, sit drinking, ask for a light and end up pocketing the just-sold lighter. Those lighters did make their own travels and would turn up all over the place. By now they had added miniature clay pillbox key-fobs, pillbox T-shirts and pillbox walking sticks, which had hand-painted shields of the glazed pillboxes. Purchasers of the walking sticks could return to "the store" and buy new shields as more pillboxes were glazed. Having been invited to take part in a gallery show *Co-operators*, at the Southampton City Art



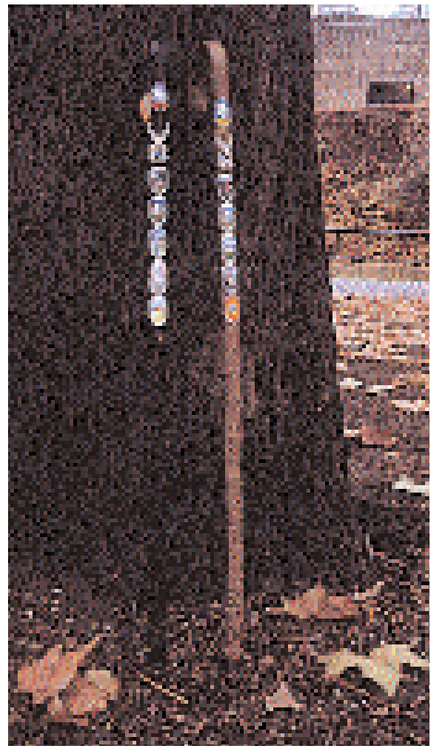
Anniversary Pillbox dressed with flags.



Computer artwork for Harwich lighter, pillbox set in green field.



Computer artwork for Westfield Common, Southampton lighter.



Two walking sticks.

IAS

ANDREA & PHILIPPE

LANDFILL

27 March - 26 April 1997



New work by Andrea & Philippe will be presented at IAS 28a Saxon St London W1 ...

This is a short press release for a big idea. (We would like this in snippets.)
Andrea & Philippe seek franchisees in the launch of Landfill.
You will be able to see the beginning and the end, but not the middle.
Correct and concise directions will be available.
Knowing their specialities previous rendition
of planning to an unrecognisable form
you may be tempted into the funeral realisation of fruitcakes.
leading to the hypothesis the next bit after four years of a
a dream. a new
(Landfill represents the end/phase (or not) of a four year long
project which has occurred existed for the main part, outside of the gallery system, via various manifestations. Andrea + Philippe will
[illegible] a Back Room as part of the exhibition allowing
for various representations of the project, and also provide a
to future projects.)



why not give

They will not be bringing the kitchen sink.

Potted plant Wild plums Flowering cherry Tulip tree

PLUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

G.L. Warner — Clerk to the Parish Council

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER
PLUCKLEY (0233) [illegible]

Shiplands Farm,
Egerton Road,
Pluckley.
Kent TN27 0PD.

26th. July 1993.

Ms. P. Bradshaw.
5/194 Brixton Road,
London SW9 6AP.

Dear Ms. Bradshaw (I hope I have the correct gender!)

Mr. Highwood has passed to me your letter dated 5th. July concerning pillboxes located in Pluckley. I much regret the delay in replying.

To answer your question there was only one box at the site you mention although there was another on the road approximately 100 yards South of the Crossroads.

It is true that there is a minor road modification scheme for the crossroads in the planning stage however as at present drawn it in no way effects the box, there is certainly no demolition plan. There are problems in the financing of the scheme as it is, to have to remove the box would make these costs prohibitive.

I have checked with possible sources and I regret to say that there are no relevant photographs to be found. As far as I can discover the box was built in 1940, when it was manned by the Home Guard but soon fell into disuse when the Invasion scare subsided.

I trust that this gives you the information which you require.

Yours Sincerely

G.L. Warner.



Kiosk sited at Lambeth Pier.

Gallery, Andrea + Philippe once more offered the shop within the shop. They had already started work on a kiosk piece, which in fact metamorphosed into an odd rocket-like affair, made out of found materials around the scrap yard studio that they inhabited at that time. (For the most part, they worked out of the back of their Peugeot pickup). Their intention had been for the kiosk to be a working thing, but of course once inside a gallery this becomes complex, and instead it became an exhibit. Subsequently, a fair amount of the "merchandise" was stolen from the kiosk during the course of the exhibition. The notion of branding for visibility, and staging events within commercial public spheres for the purpose of communication continued. In 1994, Andrea + Philippe were invited to participate in *SupaStore Boutique*, this time being housed in a gallery. Andrea + Philippe had set up a salon in one room of their home, Andrea being a City & Guilds Manicurist, and Philippe being a City & Guilds Creative Headonist. They created a set of Salon cards, *Chez Andre-Philippe*, to be on the salescounter at *Supastore*. Clients could book an appointment at *The Salon* where they would be pampered and manicured (or creatively headonised). Various pillbox-related items were strategically placed within the room – trays of lighters, the magazines which had their adverts, and a vending machine. Andrea + Philippe had created a new series of vending boxes called *Weekenders*, prompting the phrase at the end of the treatment "Something for the Weekend…?" With the work now widely disseminated, via these various commercial means, it was time to return to the original concept, the glazing of the pillboxes. In 1997, Andrea + Philippe secured a venue in Chelsea, with a double-shop front, and installed faux estate agents, *Landfill*. A feng-shui expert was called in, and rooms and furniture were laid out accordingly to optimise the success of the venture. An estate agent was engaged. By now over 100 pillboxes had been visited and documented, and these were all made up into sheets – along with a photo, description, the proposal to glaze, and price – to fit the hanging window display. A catalogue showing ten of the "top" sites was produced. For the cover of the catalogue, Andrea + Philippe replaced all the sheets in the window of Stirling Ackroyd Estate Agents on Clerkenwell Road. After the photoshoot, two of the sheets were left in place, which prompted Stirling Akroyd's PR to write their own press release concerning the venture, which they sent out to the press. Adverts, for *Landfill*, appeared in *Dazed & Confused, Zing* and *Metronome*. Several people came in asking if we had any castles for sale. One night a drunken couple came in and bought a pillbox to be glazed. Their cheque subsequently bounced! You know who you are! Mostly, people missed the point that what was on offer was not the actual pillbox, but the glazing of the pillbox, but sales were made and pillboxes accordingly glazed. One sale was of the sunken Cromer pillbox, whose image had appeared on the first lighter. By the time Andrea + Philippe returned to glaze it, it had virtually sunk, and it was necessary to dig out the sand to get the windows in. Andrea + Philippe did, however, go so far as to offer the *Landfill* franchise to Charles Saatchi, who, having visited, declared that it was great but he didn't know what he could do with it. A 100-sheet *Landfill* franchise for 15,000 pounds would include the 30-sheet window display system, 4 A4 display Perspex frames, one 8' x 5' colour ink-jet depicting the glazing of the *Westfield Common Pillbox*, one framed C-type colour print, a framed 74" x 31.5" of "A47 Glazed" pillbox, a stock of 100 pillbox "properties" to be rotated, SOLD stickers, one planning map and pins, *Landfill* logo stencil and red paint. Furniture, plants, lighting, water, estate agent & fresh flowers all to be bought/rented/hired under approval of Andrea + Philippe. Office layout to be executed under guidance. Office accessories supplied as required. Andrea + Philippe were to receive 50% of the "properties" asking price per pillbox, which they would glaze and provide a signed framed copy of the *Landfill* sheet. The offer was unacknowledged. Later that year a touring *Landfill: Caravan* was created. This became the ideal solution for the whole piece. The caravan was taken on further trips to Wales and Cornwall to source out more pillboxes, which meant that the corporate identity was constantly visible, and the shop could be opened up at any time. The *Landfill: Caravan* housed not only the *Landfill* estate agents, but all the Kiosk items as well. Also, the caravan provided living accommodation whilst travelling. In the summer of 1997, Andrea + Philippe crashed Documenta X, parking up in the middle of Kassel. It also graced the forecourt of De Fabrik gallery in Eindhoven, as part of the *Peripheral Visionaries* exhibition. Later that year, having been invited to participate once more in a *Supastore* at Norwich, the *Landfill: Caravan*" parked up outside the gallery in Norwich. Two days later, it had been burned out. An act of arson. In the course of four years, 1993 to 1997, Andrea + Philippe covered some 69,000 miles across England and Wales, crashing one recently purchased Fiat van (whilst snapping a pillbox as they drove by) and smashing out the windscreen of a borrowed car in the process. They were towed by recovery vehicles for some 500 miles of it. On the whole no challenge was raised, except on one occasion in Wales when a farmer gave them half an hour to vacate his field. Luckily, the gourmet picnic had just been devoured. There was a narrow escape with a bull on one trip, and endless conversations in and around pubs with locals. Strangely the pillboxes were usually just around the corner.

ANDREA MASON, LONDON, MAY 2001

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREA + PHILIPPE



Philippe glazing *Pillbox Ref: 007*, Cley-Next-The–Sea, Norfolk.



Cromer Pillbox glazed, almost sunk into beach.



Detail shot inside IAS of the *Westfield Common Pillbox*, inkjet vase of flowers in foreground.



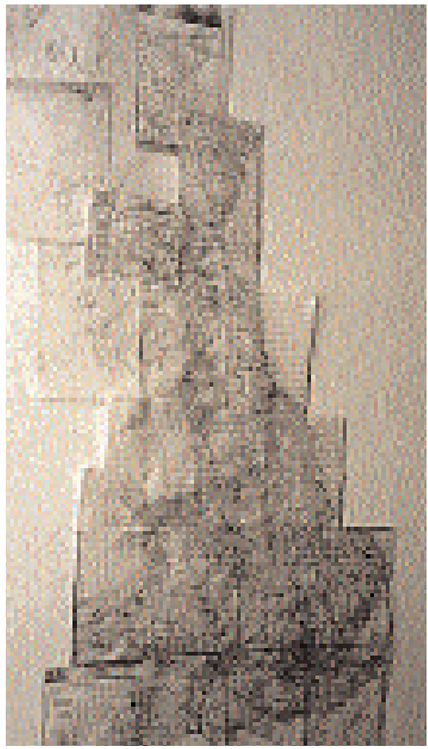
Installation, *Landfill* IAS, desktop.



Detail of *Landfill: Caravan*, 2 Landfill sheets in window.



Landfill catalogue.



Photocopied map, *Landfill* at IAS.



Installation view, *Landfill* at IAS showing red painted logo.

BONK BUSINESS INC.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux on Bonk



Bonk Anchovy Oil greased the wheels of Nordic industry and gave birth to a business empire – until over-fishing caused the Great Oil Crisis of 1883.

1880

Hot Oil Applicator, 1883.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLLI LEHTINEN



Pär Bonk founded P. Bonk & Co. in 1893 with the prophetic words "I will make machines that make Man happy". Soon a cornucopia of mechanical miracles spilled upon the market.

At the Workshop, 1910.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS WECKSTRÖM



Russia was a major market for the anchovy condiment – Bonk Garum. However, a fight for control of the distribution of this "Opiate of the People" was a principle cause of the Russian Revolution.

Garum Waiter, 1910.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLLI LEHTINEN



Following the death of his father in the Anchovy Dynamo explosion of 1908 in Tunguska, Siberia, Pärre Bonk (1885-1943) lived on Hogland, a lawless island close to St. Petersburg, and dabbled in a vast variety of scientific theories, principles and inventions.

1920

Lenin's Gift, 1917.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS WECKSTRÖM



The interaction of cosmic rays with radon-charged enochite dust created a magnetic field differential which provided the "lift" for the balloon ascent.

BK-50 Electromagnetic Balloon, 1928.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLLI LEHTINEN

This essay explores and relates two Finnish narratives of very different sorts. The first comes from TV, but not from the artefact that diffuses shows or clips. The TV of this narration is rather commenting on the clips. This TV stands for Tiina Vainio, author of a doctoral thesis in 1997 at the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration on "Managing Design."

The second one is a piece of performance art, or better a set of events, perhaps more appropriately called a class of objects. It was born in 1993, but claimed to be 100 years old. The procreation of this narrative took place on sheets of paper. A text was born; a publication by the prestigious Finnish publisher Otava. The book, however, burst its bindings to become a very physical artefactual phenomenon – Bonk Business Inc.

The complementarity of the two narratives is due to the fact that the genealogy of the one is an inversion of the other. Bonk Business Inc. was first a book published in 1993, presenting the history of an old Finnish firm that then became incarnated or, as the nominalist Nelson Goodman would have written, "projected into physical reality" by its founders Alvar Gullichsen and Richard Stanley. According to Gullichsen, the contract with Otava triggered the initial creative activity that resulted in a show at the Björneborg Museum of Modern Art that same year. Other shows, TV films, lectures and performances followed, concretising the existence of Bonk Business Inc. over the past century "...during which the Bonk family and business have proven their significance not only in the economic life of Finland and the entire world, but also in industrial and social history."

Vainio's dissertation, on the other hand, started in "real life." She was a marketing manager for design in both Finland and the U.S. between 1986 and 1990. She taught marketing at the Finnish University of Design and the Finnish Design Forum. In 1994, she conducted a series of case studies, and interviewed 17 people – making up, what she anthropologically calls, her "dissertation people." Her scientific aim is, according to the first line of the book, "to reveal the truth on design and its management in the business collaboration of Finnish furniture industry and freelance Finnish Interior Architects".

Reading this highly-stimulating marketing study reminded me of Richard Stanley's explication of Bonk Business Inc.'s artistic *raison-d'être*. After having seduced me and a number of businessmen attending a management seminar on Art and Enterprise held at Nice University in the spring of 1997 – in conjunction with the European Center for Art and Management (ECAM), Richard remarked, "Bonk Business Inc. is not at all poking fun at business and marketing. We want to materialise business that today tends to be like 'black-boxes' to ordinary people. Less than criticism, this is more like an 'homage' to good old industry. Alvar and I like old machinery, old advertising and especially the kind of sales material you find in industrial marketing. Bonk's is actually 'business-to-business' aesthetics."

As a professor of general management with a background in industrial marketing research, I had already suspected this on my first encounter with the Bonk universe. It was at an art show in Stockholm in 1995. Here, for the first time, I found cases I had struggled to animate during years of teaching in the classroom world of management. By watching the Bonk machines on show, looking at the old ads and reading the company history in the catalogue, I found a robust "ideal type" of firm of the sort that makes up the Scandinavian phantasmagoria of economic growth and welfare. Most visitors to the House of Culture thought they had come to a trade show and not an art exhibition. The visit to the Bonk show, and a chat with Alvar or Richard, provided a level of insight and visual experience that marketing textbook cases never could dream of attaining. Yet it was all invented, constructed, represented. The toughly-artificial quite naturally posing as reality, and accepted as such by the students and the professors of marketing management, at least. Therefore, it was logical for me and Richard Stanley to found the Bonk Business School in 1997.

Tiina Vainio's thesis performs two tasks. First she puts her field study on show. However, she does not limit herself to an empirical study of her "tribe," the nine Interior Architects and eight managers from Finnish furniture industry. Driven by a hunger for questioning the conditions of the material, she embarks on a second exercise that transcends the limits of ethnography. She wants to go beyond the words and jargon of marketing and management because she feels they are but images, representations or metaphorical analogies trapping us. If the job of projecting business worlds is best done in art museums, written representation by TV can hardly compete with the three-dimensional sculpted verticality of a Bonk Business Inc. Tiina Vainio prefers deconstruction and goes for its Derridian form of scholarly writing/questioning/being in texts. Bonk Business Inc. goes the opposite way making worlds by artistic construction.

Before I expand on the complementarity for truth-seeking of an artwork such as Bonk Business Inc. and a text like Doctor Vainio's, you may wonder what I mean with research. Let me restrict my utterly compressed answer to my own field; research into management and marketing.

In European academia, marketing is a post WW II import from America while earlier northern European management education was firmly rooted in the German Betriebwirtschaftslehre. German BWL in turn draws both on Kamerlism, the bookkeeping scholasticism of German feudality, and later impulses from the operationalization of microeconomic theory; e.g., the Gutenberg legacy. During the sixties, the MBA influence through, for example, operations research, somewhat kept up the link to economics. But other American impulses-oriented management research toward the social sciences. Psychology came to management, often through marketing. Social psychology first provided the foundations for organizational studies that were soon to absorb ideas from anthropology and ethnology as well. In the late seventies, there was a growing interest in the epistemological foundations of management. After Marxian attempts to grasp economic organization on the managerial level, other philosophical schools inspired the reflection on how modes of economic thought interacted with economic action. Interest in symbolism and language increased in the eighties. Philip Kotler, former student of the economist Paul Samuelsson, and his decision-making marketing management paradigm (that won the race in the late sixties against Georg Fisk's much more socially utopian macro-marketing doctrine), still dominate the world of under-grad textbook market for marketing. But today there are post-mods and late-mods like Alladi Venkatesh, Stephen Brown, Dominique Bouchet, Romain Laufer or Fuat Firat. All of them are highly-reflective and aware of marketing management as ways of "world-making." Internationally, read in North America, many managerial scholars surely welcome Dr. Sokal's attack on the French philosophers, while few would deny that social constructivism might be fruitful for studying the practices of management.

Nationally, in Sweden, business practices have been studied as language and rhetoric for at least two decades. While earlier management, the traditional "företagsekonomi," constructed the models by which firms might be organized and run, later studies tended to become "critical." In Sweden, again those constructivist practices were probably looked upon as means of co-ordinating businesses into the national economy. Not until the sixties did individual corporations slowly replace industries as conventional units of analysis in business administration. The first doctorate in business administration was given to Folke Kristensson for a thesis on "Branschrationalisation." During the good old days of the Swedish model, management was mostly considered the study of motivation by other than monetary means, as salaries were centrally negotiated and settled. But on the outside, on the export markets, the Vikings sailed their long ships to barter and market for the welfare state.

What saga does Bonk Business Inc. tell? Is it the story of fisherman Bönken grinding his anchovy into this Roman Garum treat and oiling Lenin's wheels of



The “Flying Pig” wave transformer played a significant role in the energy-consuming industrial expansion of the post-war period, especially in the USA, where almost 50,000 '45's were sold in 1949.



ATM was a communication system for nuclear families to pass feelings along a national plasma tube network. A fusion engine detects and removes any bad feelings from an emotional transmission, converting them into “Canned Hate” barbecue briquettes.



Surf Scooters were a California craze following the success of Barry Bonk's movie *Creatures from Beyond Tomorrow* in which they first appeared.



Defunctioned machines utilise advanced photon radiation technology. Without need for manuals, training, a power supply, spare parts and low maintenance, Raba Hiff works your bottom line.



Every Raba Hiff model is fully tested in the most arduous environments.

1950

Gnagg Booster '45, 1948.

Atomic Telemotion, 1959.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS WECKSTRÖM

1960

Surf Scooter, 1957.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLLI LEHTINEN

1970

Raba-Hiff Blo-Jet, 1974.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS WECKSTRÖM

1980

Man at work, 1989.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS WECKSTRÖM

Soviet Industry? Is it the story of natural discoveries after anchovy oil comes electromagnetic energy generated by the small Baltic fish? Is it the story of industrial innovation where freakwave technology gives birth to a successful line of products? Or is it the story of industrial workplace happiness where sloppy workers nibble hot dogs while consuming gallons of Finnish beer? Maybe the story of marketing – as when Bonk launches its Repackaging division that sells junk at a high price thanks to nice labels? And finally it might be the story of virtual organizations when Bonk Business Inc. discovers that even non-working machines can be sold as nice objects according to their splendid “defunct” marketing philosophy? A defunct product has high aesthetic value but no utility. It's just there to be looked at – no manuals, no skills and no energy are needed to make it work. Is there really any difference between a complex industrial gear that seldom is operational and a beautiful sculpture? What is art anyway, but something pretending to be something else? Just a form without functioning content? The narration of Bonk Business Inc. makes us travel from fishy nature to defunct culture, from the hunting over manufacturing into the pure marketing era, from Tsarist to Leninist. Is this the story of a company, of a family or of a nation? Or is it the story of art, perhaps even design? Reminded of his family with many artists and architects, one of the founding fathers of Bonk Business Inc., Alvar Gullichsen, has been educated in the traditions of modern art by a cultivated capitalist family which is the sole proprietor of the Ahlström Corporation, one of Finland's most important engineering firms. Some claim Alvar Gullichsens is named after Alvar Aalto who was close to Marie Gullichsen, grand dame of the Finish art world and grandmother of the founder of Bonk Business Inc. Indeed, this fictional firm is even closer to its field than a regular ethnographer.

Richard Stanley is text manager, a language manipulator with hands-on skills in advertising, filmmaking and music production. Alvar Gullichsen graduated in art from the Finnish Art Academy Atheneum. Richard performs verbal Bonk as star lecturer while Alvar gets his physical Bonk kicks welding odd metal parts into those extraordinary pieces of odd machinery. Richard paints with words, Alvar sculpts form. Both have taken art a step further into the business world. Objects inspired the Pop art of Andy Warhol, the merchandise of economies. So called “business art,” a term definitely minted by an art show in Groningen, Holland in 1993, plays with commercial labels and managerial jargon. In Bonk Business Inc., those “mots et choses” are firmly imbedded in a whole business organization. This social construction, itself labeled rather than signed by the artists, seems to confirm a “Mecca of Design;” Finland the young northern Republic where merry dreams materialize.

Precisely at this point, Vainio's research into the reality of design management sets in. By means of 71 quotes presented under 11 headings, her field observations are patched together into a complex map. While Bonk Business Inc. reports their investigations in the concrete form of stuff and matter, Vainio is juggling with words and utterances of her “dissertation people.” Bonk offers ideas in the shape of incredible hardness, ideas in steel, and on pictures of people in flesh and blood. While the artists work *in natura*, the researcher Vainio is operating *in cultura* by means of the Derridean approach. Derrida claims that a poetical unit or piece of institutional artefact is given its hardness by “closures” that “monumentalize” a name. The poet is manager, offering a poem as if it were about something presenting itself. Deconstruction opens up this hermetical artefact by smoothing up the logics of such administrative poetics. Derrida implies that institutions can be subject to deconstruction, that this is what philosophical politics may be about. Management researchers – let us just mention two working in Scandinavia; professors Barbara Czarniawska and Kaj Sköldberg – have expanded on this, and Vainio follows the path in her field of independent interior designers and the Finnish furniture industry firms. In the firm-designer interaction it seems that monumentalization occurs immediately. Designers and managers talk about something before it has been materialized. One of the interesting feelings about strolling along in a Bonk show is, of course, its physicality. This is real. It is not only a narrative. The texts on show all have the documentary yellowish historical patina. Objects are three dimensional as in Disneyworld, and you may even run into Alvar and Richard in flesh and blood – better than masked cast just playing Mickey and Donald on Main Street parades. In the process of making Bonk Business Inc. it seems as if Alvar Gullichsen has turned real, no longer an artist as he strolls along in a business suit and talks business with potential sponsors of Bonk shows to come. He does so with a definite triumphant look on his nice face. The co-owner of Ahlström is no longer just a wealthy artist but a manager too, belonging to this world where real deals are made out of nothing. No one could stop him.

Vainio quotes a designer defining what power means; “Somebody in the organization has the possibility to ruin somebody's thinking.” It seems this is easily done in the world of design – much more so than in the world of philosophy where Derrida's attacks on Foucault and others demands both smartness and clever strategy. Maybe the propensity to dream is higher in business than in philosophy. Is this what Alvar and Richard are saying when they claim to “love” business? Is Alvar really a manager, or is he just presenting a public image of his factual economic self to Bonk Business Inc. fans? Richard Stanley once said: “In Bonk Business Inc., we try to bring back the joy of enterprise that goes lost when ownership becomes scattered between anonymous shareholders. This often happens in businesses whose stocks are traded publicly on an exchange. But it might also be the case in a family firm where the family grows big or splits due to conflicts. Bonk wants to unite the owners in good old business. Light the flame of enterprise again.”

Vainio reports on such an ethos with Mr. Meltovaara of Asko in the 1930s and the jolly days of Finnish design in Milano Triennale fairs of the fifties and sixties. Alvar Gullichsen proudly welcomes visitors to his Bonk factory where the machinery is created. This is a workshop studio far from artists' lofts. Alvar the Athenum sculptor happy as a Dutchman on a cocoa box in this noisy, greasy place because as a designer in Vainio's study says, “The most important thing is to see my own object materialize itself...after this my enthusiasm will cease....” Designers as well as artists “pour their heads on the table” at which negotiations are pretty impossible. Vainio identifies the act of creation as a physical shaping of a *kyttyrä*, an object knocking on the door of industry as the coming piece of a company's collection.

A firm, from the designer's point of view, is like a museum, acquiring new pieces and staging its own shows. While one of Vainio's designers confesses never to have thought of himself helping to design, “some frame, some stage for the launching event,” Gullichsen and Stanley, the two Bonk artists, engulf themselves wholeheartedly in such activities. Not only are the Bonk shows organized in their layout, they are often accompanied by well-rehearsed performances. The Bonk texts also tell a lot of detailed stories that make up the whole event – narrations about both products and members of the famous Bonk dynasty. Bonk Business Inc. speaks, chatters and shouts like enthusiastic fishmongers to the crowd on a sunny market day. In Bonk Business Inc., artists have shaped their own firm where they are the kings of commerce, but in reality, as Vainio is showing, designers do not belong to the industrial population and in-house industrial designers are thought of as another kind by the interior designers.

The real hero is a lone wolf architect belonging to the tribes or clans called “club of cups.” He is the heir of Aalto doing his utmost to shut himself off using furniture industry to shield his little kinship. Industry is non-design, the abusers of those pseudo-rational methods of technological representation “from the approved academic principles framing the notion of business management.” On one hand the “software” designers, on the other the “hardware” only interested in “press design” – i.e., the use of design as another marketing technology of representation.

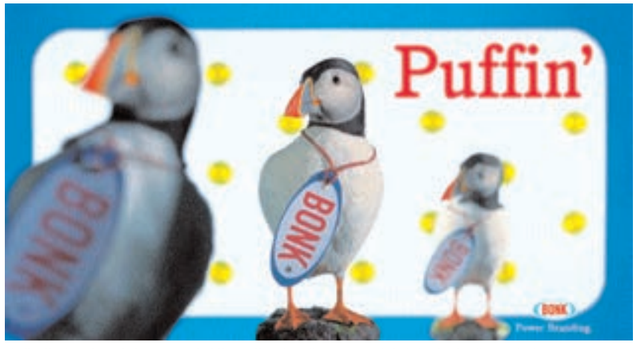


RABA HIFF Power Machinery. Raba Hiff is a range of fully defunctioned machinery incorporating leading edge technology. Raba Hiff machines are designed as a presence – on the shop floor, in offices or any working area. Their true function is this presence, which has been proved to increase job satisfaction – leading to better work motivation and thus to greater profits.

1990

Power Presence poster

PHOTOGRAHY BY OLAF CARDELUS



In the Bonk metamarketing concept of Power Branding, the consumer's belief activates the product.

"If you don't believe, it won't work."

Puffin'

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS SCHARMANOFF



Major exhibitions (1993-2001) in Helsinki, Ålborg, Stockholm, Faroe Isles, Arles, Bradford, Toronto, Washington DC, Brussels.

2000

Bonk Expo 1996.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAGNUS SCHARMANOFF



2002

What do these designing heirs of Aalto have in common with the joyful artwork of young Alvar? Is Bonk Business Inc. just another way of pulling the leg of a rigid industry? In the sandbox of Bonk there are two entrepreneurs, Alvar and Richard. This team, the artist and the marketing man, seems to contradict the picture Vainio gives of Finnish interior designers. Happy partnership between marketing and creation is, if one should believe Vainio, retro-nostalgia of Asko, Isku or Juvart Oy. The teaming up of Alvar and Richard in their professional roles as Bonk's product development manager and the genial inventor Sven Triloqvist would, in Vainio's jargon, signal a *main manqué* in Finnish industry. The manqué of marketing imagination.

The Finnish designers keep telling us how disappointed they are with marketing. But what kind of marketing do they encounter? A bureaucratic marketing following some German Tsarist bureaucratic procedures suppressing all inspiration under corporate vocabulary if unprotected by some enlightened grand duke with flesh-and-blood authority like Mr. Meltovaara. On one hand, complaints about bureaucracy of product planning and market research, on the other, a longing for an alert well-trained army of salesmen concentrating their efforts to bring new items to the front as "...they do not have to consume extra energy on thinking. All their energy is supposed to be used for selling the items." One designer longs to go to Italy where they sell the most bizarre items, while Finns tend to want to understand what they do first. In doing so, they blow up pictures and representations of the judge to settle the dispute between designer and business, which in the case of marketing, is the customer. Marketing becomes just another technology of representation where "The market is forced to or suppressed to act as a reactionary audience programmed by the needs and wants imposed by the marketing tools of a corporation."

Back to Bonk again, what an imagination, what fun and what a joy. But note how Richard has compared Bonk to a football game. To him this is what good business should be about – having fun. To him democracy is also basically to enjoy yourself, also perhaps being fooled but well knowing of it. Bonk is imagination but of rather concrete kind. This sort of farting and feasting firm actually corresponds to the kind of idea of industry as the earthy 'illiterate' contrasted to the real creative genius – the Finnish designer. However earth and nature are also part of the genius world and Vainio remarks that for Italians 'mobili finlandesa' means furniture out Finnish wood.
The emphasis on the physical kyttyri enforces the nature-bound mythology of Finnish design. The Bonk Business Inc. history provides us with lots of burlesque input to that the nature of business. Remember how old Bönken caught his wealth from the deep waters of the Baltic, how Pierre Bonk II, married to Chinese jazz singer Yang-Tung known as The Singing Lotus, based his innovations on scientific research into electromagnetism and how the Raba Hiff, another late hit product line of Bonk's, was founded not on abstract intellectual argumentation but assumed 'visual illiteracy' in consumers. To Bonk the slogan for design management to visual illiterates is 'form follows factory workers'. The secret of Bonks design success, claims Alvar and Richard, is that it all is done, not by design management but on the shop floor. It is there on the greasy floor that concreteness and naturality fuse thus metamorphosing *Kyttyri* into that horn of wealth of the Kalevala-saga called the Sampo. Alvar Gullichsen and Richard Stanley, alias doctor Sven Triloqvist, use to deliver this strategy when lecturing practitioners from industry. They put on funny hats and in one voice shout, like hooligans on a football arena, "We recommend that you close your design management department and instead install sausage and beer vending machines on the shop floor cause there's no business like Bonk business."

So what is there to conclude in the case of Bonk? This sort of business art is simply another form of management research, and in order to bring it to the business students, I joined forces with friends of Bonkers and Bonkers themselves. The result is the following course outline:

THE BONK BUSINESS SCHOOL

At European Center for Art and Management (ECAM)

An aesthetic approach to creative management with Bonk Business Inc.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, Stockholm University

Richard Stanley, Helsinki

Alvar Gullichsen, Helsinki

Bert Mulder, University of Utrecht

Marc Markowski, University of Witten-Herdecke

Katja Lindqvist, Stockholm University

The paradigmatic changes in business today require radical thinking. Why is the future not what it used to be, and how can we learn to deal with it? This course combats business boredom by stimulating your brain during an intensive confrontation with a business case beyond your imagination. Bonk Business Inc. is a company at the cutting edge of business development in Europe. Its creativity and power to innovate resulted in the most advanced products, services and marketing methodologies in its field.
Thanks to its essential connection to the art world, Bonk Business Inc. has developed a new way to understand the opportunities using three principal perspectives to deal with the world: the aesthetic, the narrative and the organizational. It centers on an action-oriented method that allows it to shape the future in concrete optimism. The course will examine the history, development, methods of operation and future prospects of the technologies that will shape the next millennium. Senior managers of the company will share their most successful strategies and personally work with participants to identify those methodologies that are basic to successfully tackle the opportunities that still baffle business today. Participants will redesign and redefine the way business is created. They will analyze and then apply the essential new methods and technologies of organization, product design and development, financial structure, production, logistics, infrastructure and use information technology. The 10-week course will have 3 intensive workshops, and participants will work together in small teams to develop
Interested? Just sign up for our first run in December 2001, Haus am Lutzowplatz, Berlin, Germany.
PIERRE GUILLET DE MONTHOUX, STOCKHOLM, JULY 2001

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux is the Chair of General Management Stockholm University, Sweden and Director of ECAM (European Centre for Art and Management)

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Ibid, p. 186.

Ibid, p 184.

Ibid, p 182

Gullichsen, Alvar et. al. 1993. *Bonk 100 – Suomalainen Menestystarina.* Helsinki: Otava Publishing Company Ltd..

Bonk Business TV program sent in SvTV 1995.

ARKACIA

Headquarter

Headquarter and initial organisational structure

Headquarter

- Finland of course!
- All companies needs an origin and Finland is perfect.
- The definition of origin is that the headquarter needs to be in Finland, but the actual work can to a high degree be done around the world.

Initially a virtual organisation

- Especially in the beginning will the organisation be more virtual than physically located to a specific place.

ARKACIA

Organisational Needs

To get Bonk flying and lay the long term ground for the future

Background

- Huge potential
  - World wide
  - All product categories
- Complex strategy
  - The price for having a strategy designed to 1) protect the brand from exploitation and 2) create a visionary new breed of corporations, is a very complex and labour intensive build up phase.
- Right now…
  - Huge potential but no cash!

What we need

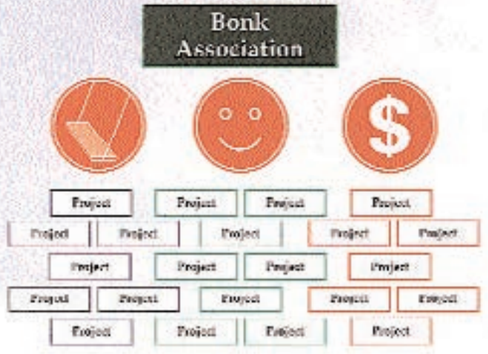
- Initially a number of extremely competent people able to get Bonk flying.
- A flexible, non-bureaucratic organisation at the same time as a very rigid control over the brand and different activities can be up held.
  - 1. We can't afford to act like an asshole by mistake.
  - 2. Normal companies have the mutual goal of maximising profit only, Bonk is different and the organisation needs therefore to be different.

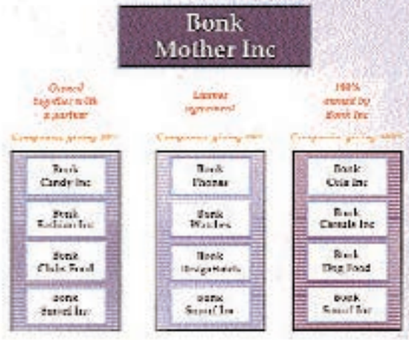
Appendix

Branding Strategy for Bonk Business Inc. provided by the advertising agency ARKACIA, Stockholm, June, 2000.

ARKACIA

External organization





ARKACIA

Strategy in very few symbols…



In 1995, Joep van Lieshout founded Atelier van Lieshout (AVL). The name emphasises that the artworks are produced by a close team rather than a single creative mind. In the meantime, AVL has developed into a flourishing company with approximately 15 employees. Most of the artworks are practical and of a simple, but sturdy nature. They vary from polyester furniture, bathrooms and mobile living units to complete architectural refurbishing. Some of the many applications that have become AVL's trademark are the fiberglass constructions in bright, conspicuous colours such as red, yellow and orange. The most well-known examples are the large mobile living units such as the *Mobile Home* for Kröller Müller.

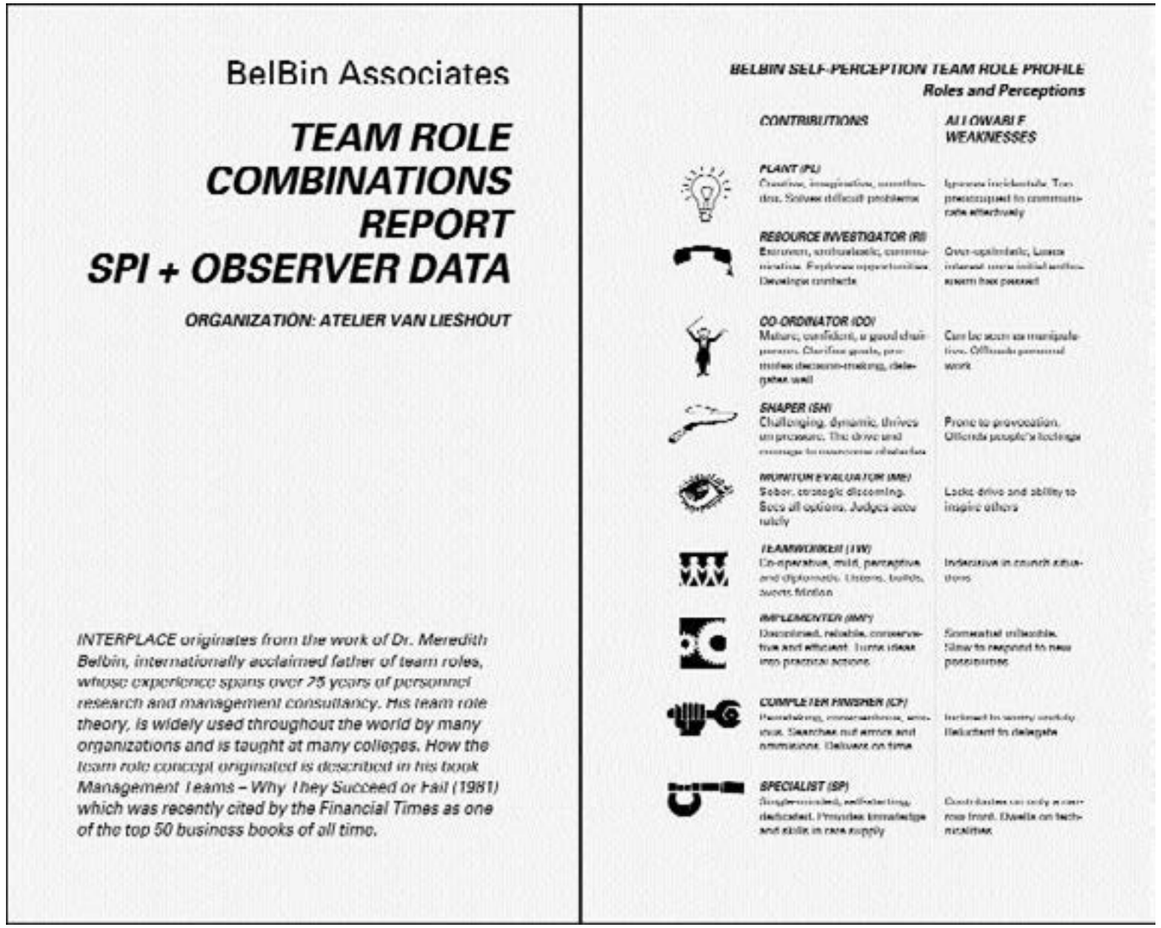
For a couple of years, the focus has shifted from standardised furniture made-to-order, to artworks that can be used to live a self-sufficient and independent life. Recent plans to build an actual town, *AVL-Ville*, are becoming more and more tangible. *AVL-Ville* can be considered a utopian village, a free state one might say, that has all the facilities that are necessary for man to live and work in. For example, a power plant, working and living units, agricultural facilities and artworks such as a *Sawing Machine* for lumbering trees, a Still to produce alcohol, a *Canteen*, an emergency *Hospital* and an *Alfa Romeo* that has been transformed into a chicken run.

AVL, ROTTERDAM, SEPTEMBER 2000

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DERK JAN WOOLDRIK

The AVL team in 1998.





BelBin Associates

TEAM ROLE COMBINATIONS REPORT
SPI + OBSERVER DATA

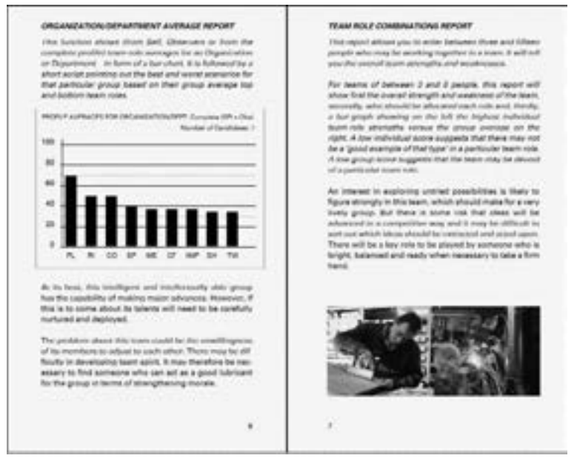
ORGANIZATION: ATELIER VAN LIESHOUT

INTERPLACE originates from the work of Dr. Meredith Belbin, internationally acclaimed father of team roles, whose experience spans over 25 years of personnel research and management consultancy. His team role theory, is widely used throughout the world by many organizations and is taught at many colleges. How the team role concept originated is described in his book Management Teams – Why They Succeed or Fail (1981) which was recently cited by the Financial Times as one of the top 50 business books of all time.

BELBIN SELF-PERCEPTION TEAM ROLE PROFILE
Roles and Perceptions

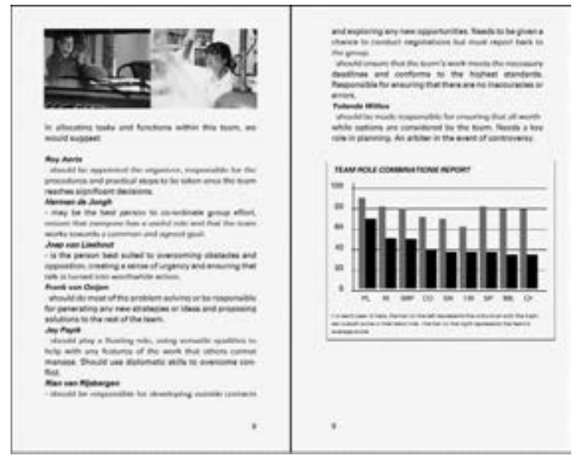
	CONTRIBUTIONS	ALLOWABLE WEAKNESSES
	PLANT (PL) Creative, imaginative, unorthodox. Solves difficult problems	Ignores incidentals. Too preoccupied to communicate effectively
	RESOURCE INVESTIGATOR (RI) Extrovert, enthusiastic, communicative. Explores opportunities. Develops contacts	Over-optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed
	CO-ORDINATOR (CO) Mature, confident, a good chairperson. Clarifies goals, promotes decision-making, delegates well	Can be seen as manipulative. Offloads personal work
	SHAPER (SH) Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles	Prone to provocation. Offends people's feelings
	MONITOR EVALUATOR (ME) Sober, strategic discerning. Sees all options. Judges accurately	Lacks drive and ability to inspire others
	TEAMWORKER (TW) Co-operative, mild, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens, builds, averts friction	Indecisive in crunch situations
	IMPLEMENTER (IMP) Disciplined, reliable, conservative and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities
	COMPLETER FINISHER (CF) Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors and omissions. Delivers on time	Inclined to worry unduly. Reluctant to delegate
	SPECIALIST (SP) Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply	Contributes on only a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities

AVL, excerpt from *The Good, The Bad + The Ugly,* NAi Publishers, Rotterdam, 1998.



ORGANIZATION/DEPARTMENT AVERAGE REPORT

TEAM ROLE COMBINATIONS REPORT



DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTER PROFILE

This report can be printed either from SPI details alone or on the Overall profile (SPI plus any Observers). Sentences are constructed within Interplace if certain team roles lie above or below specified percentages. Combinations of team role highs and lows form the basis of this report. It may not altogether be complimentary in its output if certain team roles fall below a certain percentage. A rather bland complete profile will get a short report whilst an exaggerated profile will produce a much longer one. If a less direct report is required, then the Counseling report may be more appreciated.

Roy Aerts



• Generally regarded as an individual who is co-operative, disciplined, encouraging of others, loyal, practical, professionally dedicated, and realistic.
• Should be in a job where he can use his acquired knowledge. Keen to follow a professional career path. Above average in terms of self-organization and control.
• Could have problems adapting to a supportive and subordinate role when necessary.
• Should not be involved in work where tolerance of other people's shortcomings is essential.

Herman de Jongh

• Generally regarded as an individual who is adaptable, caring, co operative, creative, and encouraging of others.
• Has innovative tendencies and needs to work in a mentally challenging environment. Could be good at solving complex problems or at introducing new ideas. Likely to be drawn to work that exercises his mind. Requires some



form of intellectual stimulation. Has an interest in drawing out contributions from others and making the best use of a team. Someone who thinks before acting. A discriminating mind valuable at the planning stages of an operation. Inclined to lack a sense of urgency.
• Uncomfortable when having to deal with pressure.
• Should not be involved in work where dealing with sensitive people is important.

Joep van Lieshout



• Generally regarded as an individual who is competitive, creative, enterprising, hard driving, knowledgeable, opportunistic, persistent, and professionally dedicated.
• Has innovative tendencies, needs to work in a mentally challenging environment. Could be good at solving complex problems or at introducing new ideas. Needs to be in a job where he can use his outgoing nature. Likes to use personal initiative. Dynamic and entrepreneurial. A developer of new ventures. Likes to be in a job where he has some authority. Has a capacity for self motivation. Prefers to lead rather than to support. Keen to explore and develop new ideas. Needs to work in an environment, which offers scope for personal expression.
• Could have problems adapting to a supportive and subordinate role when necessary.
• Should not be involved in work where tolerance of other people's shortcomings is essential.



Frank van Duijkeren

• Generally regarded as an individual who is creative, and technically skilful.
• Has innovative tendencies, needs to work in a mentally challenging environment. Someone who may have difficulty in establishing his best contributing role.
• Could have problems adapting to a supportive and subordinate role when necessary. Needs to develop more in helping people to achieve their work goals.
• Should not be involved in work where careful planning is required.

Jay Papik

• Generally regarded as an individual who is adaptable, co-operative, and loyal.
• Has innovative tendencies, needs to work in a mentally challenging environment. Has a pleasant and accommodating attitude. Keen to get on well with colleagues.
• Uncomfortable when having to deal with pressure.
• Should not be in work where there is a need for considerable.

Alan van Rijsbergen

• Generally regarded as an individual who is caring, conscious of priorities, consultative, and professionally dedicated.
• Needs to be in a job where she can use her outgoing nature. Likes to use personal initiative.

• Has an interest in drawing out contributions from others and making the best use of a team.
• Should not be involved in work where dealing with sensitive people is important.

Yolande Wilkie

• Generally regarded as an individual who is caring, co-operative, and loyal.
• Has innovative tendencies, needs to work in a mentally challenging environment. Someone who may have difficulty in establishing her best contributing role.
• Poor at dealing with practical issues.
• Should not be involved in work where dealing with sensitive people is important.



MOST HIGHLY RATED RESPONSES

This list shows words from Observers Assessments and their scores in descending order of popularity.

WORD	SCORE		
creative	54	original	12
co-operative	34	innovative	12
loyal	33	tough	12
caring	30	opportunistic	12
professionally dedicated	30	independent	12
enterprising	27	shrewd	11
adaptable	24	inquisitive	11
knowledgeable	23	analytical/critical	11
trustworthy	22	dependable	10
practical	22	organised	9
conscientious/ of others	22	fluent	8
self-reliant	21	persuasive	8
broad-minded	21	diligent	8
conscious of priorities	21	assertive	8
consultative	20	forceful	7
realistic	19	preservative	7
mature	18	territorial	7
competitive	17	hard-hitting	7
good at/action-through	16	single minded	6
persistent	15	reluctant to delegate	6
critical	15	disciplined	6
imaginative	15	up to the minute	6
dedicated	14	perfectionist	5
outgoing	13	manipulative	5
calm & confident	13	aggressive	5
challenging	12	rarely found	5
efficient	11	frightened of failure	4
unorthodox	10	fearful of conflict	4
analytical	10	attention-seeking	4
accurate	10	malevolent	4
inventive	10	inflexible	3
hard-driving	10	unsatisfactory	3
observant	10	touchy	3
logical	10	over sensitive	2
self-organised	10	resistant to change	2
communicative	10	not interested in others	1

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Since 1998, when the *Belbin Team Role Combinations Report* was made, AVL has continued to develop more and more towards a company structure. The number of employees has increased over the past few years and is still growing. At the moment there are about 20 people working at AVL. Part of the AVL team works in the workshop. They range from artists, architects, industrial designers, to carpenters and metal workers. Besides the workshop team, there are a number of people working in the office: a PR manager and secretary, a bookkeeper and, more recently, even a general director. So Joep is no longer "the big boss," but has turned the business part over to the director. This way Joep himself has more time to spend designing and making art. In the near future AVL will probably grow bigger and into an even more professional structure.

AVL, ROTTERDAM, OCTOBER 2000



AVL-Ville, design by Floor Houben, 2000.

OSCULUM IMFAME

Gardar Eine Einarsson/Matias Faldbakken



Notes On Ass-Kissing
(OSCULUM IMFAME)

The term “ass-kissing” originates in the Latin "Osculum Infame" – the Kiss of Shame

Among Middle eastern people it was believed that the entire body could be regenerated from the Sancum, or The Wholy Bone, located at the base of the spine, and its potency may account for the Kiss of Shame.

During the Middle Ages, many Templars and Witches confessed – whilst subjected to torture – to be practicing Osculum Infame during the Black Sabbath.

The ritual involved the Sabbath Master being kissed upon:
- the lower back
- the navel
- the buttocks
- the anus

The Indecent Kiss could also be bestowed on the person directly above the kisser in rank.

Osculum Infame had four special functions:

1. It was intended to test the loyalty and the fitness of both initiates and more experienced Sabbath-participants.

2. The kiss served as a bond of intimacy between the participants (Templars, Witches, Monks or Heretics).

3. It was intended to both exalt the body and to dispel the participants in-bred sense of decency and decorum.

4. Kissing the anus of the Master was a sign of humility and perfect submission (as seen in the animal kingdom).

5. The buttocks of the Sabbath master – who was a representative of Satan, or at best, Satan himself – were said to be "cold as ice."

THE MAXMARA COAT PROJECT

Volker Eichelmann/Ruth Maclennan

While we were studying Fine Art at Goldsmiths' College in London, the Italian fashion label MaxMara approached the MA department to commission works of art. For its fiftieth anniversary, MaxMara was looking for art projects that would respond to its cashmere camel coat. MaxMara gave a coat to each of the successful artists to incorporate in the final work. We decided to open up the question of the coat's value to a wide audience by swapping it for something else. MaxMara accepted our idea and we placed ads in magazines and newspapers, and publicised our offer on the Internet.

As we were given two coats, we chose two swaps. Josh Lacey wrote a play inspired by the coat, and Michael Wimmer traded a miniature version of Marx's *Capital.*

We decided to turn our project into a book because the reactions to our offer and the chosen exchanges were text-based. We worked with the graphic designer Nicole Kapitza to produce the book *Style/Substance – The MaxMara Coat Project,* which featured all of the responses, an extract from *Capital,* Josh Lacey's play *Coat,* two new essays by Antonia Ulrich and Nicholas Noyes, and graphic works by Nicole and Petra Kapitza, James Bolton, Dominic Murphy and Anthony Drumm. The book was distributed through the MaxMara shop on Sloane Street in September 1999.

VOLKER EICHELMANN/RUTH MACLENNAN, LONDON, JULY 2001

Capital (excerpt) by Karl Marx in a minature version by Michael Wimmer.

At first sight a commodity presented itself to us as a complex of two things – use-value and exchange-value. Later on, we saw also that labour, too, possesses the same two-fold nature; for, so far as it finds expression in value, it does not possess the same characteristics that belong to it as a creator of use-values. I was the first to point out and to examine critically this two-fold nature of the labour contained in commodities. As this point is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of Political Economy turns, we must go more into detail.
Let us take two commodities such as a coat and 10 yards of linen, and let the former be double the value of the latter, so that, if 10 yards of linen = W, the coat = 2W. The coat is a use value that satisfies a particular want. Its existence is the result of a special sort of productive activity, the nature of which is determined by its aim, mode of operation, subject, means, and result. The labour, whose utility is thus represented by the value in use of its product, or which manifests itself by making its product a use value, we call useful labour. In this connection we consider only its useful effect.
As the coat and the linen are two qualitatively different use values, so also are the two forms of labour that produce them, tailoring and weaving. Were these two objects not qualitatively different, not produced respectively by labour of different quality, they could not stand to each other in the relation of commodities. Coats are not exchanged for coats, one use-value is not exchanged for another of the same kind.
Anyhow, whether the coat be worn by the tailor or by

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his customer, in either case it operates as a use value. Nor is the relation between the coat and the labour that produced it altered by the circumstance that tailoring may have become a special trade, an independent branch of the social division of labour. Wherever the want of clothing forced them to it, the human race made clothes for thousands of years, without a single man becoming a tailor. But coats and linen, like every other element of material wealth that is not the spontaneous produce of Nature, must invariably owe their existence to a special productive activity, exercised with a definite aim, an activity that appropriates particular nature given materials to particular human wants. So far therefore as labour is a creator of use value, is useful labour, it is a necessary condition, independent of all forms of society, for the existence of the human race; it is an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no material exchanges between man and Nature, and therefore no life.
The use values, coat, linen, etc., i.e., the bodies of commodities, are combinations of two elements – matter and labour. If we take away the useful labour expended upon them, a material substratum is always left, which is furnished by Nature without the help of man. The latter can work only as Nature does, that is by changing the form of matter. Nay more, in this work of changing the form he is constantly helped by natural forces. We see, then, that labour is not the only source of material wealth, of use-values produced by labour. As William Petty puts it, labour is its father and the earth its mother.

2

By our assumption, the coat is worth twice as much as the linen. But this is a mere quantitative difference, which for the present does not concern us. We bear in mind, however, that if the value of the coat is double that of 10 yds. of linen, 20 yds. of linen must have the same value as one coat. So far as they are values, the coat and the linen are things of a like substance, objective expressions of essentially identical labour. But tailoring and weaving are, qualitatively, different kinds of labour. There are, however, states of society in which one and the same man does tailoring and weaving alternately, in which case these two forms of labour are mere modifications of the labour of the same individual, and no special and fixed functions of different persons; just as the coat which our tailor makes one day, and the trousers which he makes another day, imply only a variations in the labour of one and the same individual.
Coats and linen, however, are not merely values, but values of definite magnitude, and according to our assumption, the coat is worth twice as much as the ten yards of linen. Whence this difference in their values? It is owing to the fact that the linen contains only half as much labour as the coat, and consequently, that in the production of the latter, labour-power must have been expended during twice the time necessary for the production of the former.
Whether 20 yards of linen = 1 coat, or = 20 coats or = x coats – that is, whether a given quantity of linen is worth few or many coats, every such statement implies that the linen and coats, as magnitudes of value, are

3

expressions of the same unit, things of the same kind. Linen = coat is the basis of the equation. But the two commodities whose identity of quality is thus assumed, do not play the same part. It is only the value of the linen that is expressed. And how? By its reference to the coat as its equivalent, as something that can be exchanged for it. In this relation the coat is the mode of existence of value, is value embodied, for only as such is it the same as the linen. On the other hand, the linen's own value comes to the front, receives independent expression, for it is only as being value that it is comparable with the coat as a thing of equal value, or exchangeable with the coat. To borrow an illustration from chemistry, butyric acid is a different substance from propyl formate. Yet both are made up of the same chemical substances, carbon (C), hydrogen (H), and oxygen (O), and that, too, in like proportions – namely, C H O. If now we equate butyric acid to propyl formate, then, in the first place, propyl formate would be, in this relation, merely a form of existence of C H O; and in the second place, we should be stating that butyric acid also consists of C H O. Therefore, by thus equating the two substances, expression would be given to their chemical composition, while their different physical forms would be neglected.
If we say that, as values, commodities are mere congelations of human labour, we reduce them by our analysis, it is true, to the abstraction, value; but we ascribe to this value no form apart from their bodily form.

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Volker Eichelmann/Ruth Maclennan, excerpt from *Style/Substance – The Max Mara Coat Project,* London, 1999.

>>
>>From: Barbara
>>
>>Unfortunately I haven't the time to think about the coat.
Best wishes and good luck for the project.

>>
>>From: Bea
>>
>>Hi,
not everybody wants or can "afford" a Max Mara coat! In case of quality I would do it, if the style is the right way to my own fashion-line!

>>
>>From: Ben
>>
>>I do not want the coat. Don't make me have the coat. Please.
Someone else deserves the coat.
Nothing I have is similar in value or fashion sense.
I used to swap football 79 stickers but never for a coat.
Sorry.
Good luck finding someone who wants the coat, but I'm afraid it's not me.
Love and peace!

>>
>>From: Catherine
>>
>>Well, I can't think of much I'd being willing to part with just for a coat (and camel hair, to boot). I guess I'd trade the coat I've now worn down to shabbiness. It's from Les Coupins & I got it for $90 at a discount house. It's a short coat, which is imperative for walking, which one does a lot of in NY. It's navy blue, and used to be fairly smart: double-breasted with elaborate buttons. It's also got lots of memories ground into its fabric, and I'd be sad to see it go. But one mustn't get too sentimental about clothes.

>>
>>From: Christina
>>
>>Hi, you asked me to participate in your project. My answer might not be what you expect to hear from female cashmere camel coat users. I would swap a boring lover for this designer classic. The coat will protect me, warm me, give me an extra-dose of self-confidence and good looks. It will take over some aspects of a man's job. And if it suits me well, it will help me find a better lover. A most profitable swap.
But not useful in an advertising jingle.
Greetings

>>
>>From: Cornelia
>>
>>I find it rather peculiar to receive such e-mails. I'm a political journalist, not a bimbo who spends her time thinking about the price of coats.

>>
>>From: Ed
>>
>>This is too wonderfully bizarre. I have such a love-in/hate-on for the fashion industry, it stirs up some very conflicting emotions...
For your MaxMara cashmere coat, I would give you the many memories I have of socializing with the fashion elite while I was living with a fashion buyer for a prominent high-end US department store...
I'll gladly give you the hours of bullshit they exchanged, the biting comments, the judgmental looks, the ridiculous outfits deemed "totally cool" because some prima donna designer didn't have a happy childhood and the rest of us have to wear the consequences; the sex-obsession they all seem to have - but never actually partake of (a little too animalistic, one might muss up one's hair); the ridiculous attention to detail; the self-importance ("Ed, around this table are the five people who dictate what America will be wearing next season!"); the self-love; their complete insecurity; the fear of being spied "au naturel" (jeans and T-shirt to us mere mortals); the two hours to get dressed to do anything; the fascination with the perfect, genetically impossible body (and their inability to get even remotely close); the one topic of conversation (two if you count sex) and the drink, so much alcohol.
In return, the coat will be generously donated to a homeless shelter where it can either be worn by a deserving individual or sold to another idiot who believes in the hype (a female version of me).
In terms of a practical, tangible exchange, you will receive a photographic montage of the coat being enjoyed by as many people as I can fit into a snowy, Saturday afternoon in Toronto (probably early January, 2000).

>>
>>From: Eveline
>>
>>I would swap an evening in Spilimbergo, Friuli, Italy for the MaxMara coat.
I would invite the owner of the coat to a nice dinner at Darios Osteria called "Da Afro." We would sit outside under a roof of twiners beside the Boccia-court, where a few old men are devotedly playing, sometimes quarreling a little bit. Dario would offer us a good bottle of white wine, bring us the menu but then take it away after three seconds, telling us "facio io," which means, "I will create you some specials." The sun would slowly go down and we would become easy and relaxed while waiting for the Antipasto. After maybe two hours and some excellent dishes we would walk the short way through the center of Spilimbergo to the "Enoteca" in the old tower. Toni would be there behind the bar and we would probably drink a light friulese red wine, a Merlot maybe. And while standing there and chatting the photographer would come in or the man who runs the printing-company or the doctor or Alberto or one of the many I know there. And they would join us, inviting us to another glass of wine and chat with us about important and unimportant things and become friends. Maybe even Renato would come, start to play the piano and sing with his wunderful passionate voice. And we would enjoy ourselves and the others and we would feel, that life is great and wonderful.
>>
>>From: Florian
>>
>>Hi,
I'd give away the following for this coat!
All my little toys that I have been collecting over the years, including about 8 different Duracell Rabbits, ET, Michelin Man,

a giant Calimero, Barbapapas, several Robots.
Those are things that have a great personal value that increases or decreases in a different way than coats do.
A coat, I guess, you'd give away more easily in a way...

>>
>>From: Franz
>>
>>Thanks, I have a coat. Who needs old shirts (no brand)?

>>
>>From: Ingrid
>>
>>My exchange has already taken place: I swapped email addresses at some point in the past, and now understand that everything, everything apparently freely exchanged and circulating aimlessly, has been in fact directed at my object of desire, to possess this coat.

>>
>>From: Ingrid G.
>>
>>First of all, I would like to know how you got my address. Then I suppose the coat you´re writing about might be expensive. Then I do not know much about fashion icons. I know the label MaraMax well, but I do not meet people who need those status symbols and I do not understand this thinking.
Sometimes I think expensive clothes have good shapes. This could be a reason to buy them if someone can afford it. What would I like to have instead of this coat?
A camera. A journey. A chair.
Or a new TV set.
Something that is to buy. Like good food. Or new teeth.
So long.

>>
>>From: Karin
>>
>>A classic camel-hair coat embodies most of the same ideals and fantasies as Rudyard Kipling's novel "Kim". If you have forgotten or never read it, I recommend it highly. It's about a boy in colonial India who transcends all the barriers of a very stratified world...
While I can certainly live without the imperialist sentiment underlying that story, I believe the ability to look "right" anywhere is of great value; to present an appearance that is appropriate and flattering regardless of the class, race or financial circumstances of one's surroundings; to look fine without seeming out of place or making others feel uncomfortable. True classics in fashion have this quality, and Audrey Hepburn embodied it. The essence of a style icon is that it looks good and right in any setting.

>>
>>From: Kate
>>
>>Couldn't really think of anything witty as fashion icons are far from my mind in Tbilisi, as well as far from my experience. To me the fashion icon of the moment is the speed of communication and ability to travel almost anywhere in the world, so it would either be a mobile phone or e-mail connection to link you to the rest of the world or a trip to a country like Cuba or Georgia to experience things first-hand.
>>
>>From: Kate F.
>>
>>Sorry - can't imagine where you got my name from - I'm a total NON-fashion person!
The only thing I could think of to do with a fashion icon would be sell it and buy something useful!
Good luck with it!

For a size 10 Maxmara coat, I would swap a clean conscience and a sense of moral superiority. Morality is cold comfort in winter temperatures of minus 30 in Moscow. And for camel cashmere I would sacrifice my Achilles heel too.....
Kelly

>>
>>From: Michael Wimmer
>>
>>to whom it may concern
When I had my 30th birthday, a friend of mine gave me a gift: a very small version of "Das Kapital" by Karl Marx (as big as a matchbox). And there are reasons why it is so valuable to me. When I studied law, at the University of Vienna, there were severe & big cuts in the university and in student-related social budgets. Some colleagues and I decided to resist, and we founded a Communist student section on our law faculty. We were the underdogs on the conservative faculty, and, following Lenin, we decided to found a leftist juridical newsletter.
In the beginning, we never thought that it could work, but as time passed by, the newsletter became quite famous. Several members of our Parliament, lawyers and human rights organisations wrote for us, and, maybe most astonishingly: nobody earned a cent. We all did it, because we were convinced of its necessity. Finally we had to stop the project, because we all had to do "real" work.
Now I´m working for the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, and every time I take the little book into my hands, there is a feeling of lost dreams, ideals and youth.
So now you know about my valuable little book; and the thing I want to know is: do we have a deal?
Sincerely yours

>>
>>From: Monica
>>
>>MaxMara camel coat - somewhere to the edge of my vision the light slow swing of cloth seen from the side as he rises from the table, black hair, a white shirt, a belt hanging loosely and a buckle perhaps made of bone, covered leather buttons with one golden eye...the lingering moment that comes just before leaving....
These are notes from a memory that i would be willing to swap for the MaxMara camel coat.

>>
>>From: Ned
>>
>>Forgive my being out of touch, but a MaxMara brand coat doesn't as such set bells ringing. Might be that I am not so much a clothes person, orit might be a question of age, not being tuned into the fashion world, living in an out of the way place, or a combination of any of the above.
I like your idea and you have caught me at a sensitive time.

To someone for whom such a coat would have enormous value I will offer something that has enormous value to me.
Appreciating this helps to have endured a light-less winter and to be thrown suddenly into the grip of a spring which doesn't creep up on you the way it does in more southern climes, but appears suddenly, out of nowhere.

My offer:
An evening in late May early June on the terrace of our sauna where you look out over the sea enclosed by tight islands of the archipelago. The light is filtered through a canopy of tiny new birch leaves the size of a fingernail. The leaves are still translucent and will be this way for only about a week or at the most two if you are lucky/unlucky enough to have cold spells.
The evening and water are still, and the sounds that dominate are the wooing sounds of the eiders and grebes. If you are lucky you may witness the fantastic mating dance of the great horned grebes as they bow back and forth and seem momentarily to stand on the water. The sun which you have been missing all winter is still up at ten at night and having been in the sauna in and out in an unhurried manner, a physical sense of well-being overtakes you...
If the deal is that I have to offer this in exchange for the coat, I am definitely on thin ice as far as being able to deliver the goods. My collateral is very fragile and susceptable to the whims of nature.
Hope that this is something of interest.

>>
>>From: Shiptip
>>
>>I will offer free Salsa Dancing lessons, the gift that lasts a life time.
Vaya Con Dios,

>>
>>From: Will
>>
>>It doesn't mean anything to me. I've always thought it was a con that a shirt could cost more than a fiver and a pair of trousers more than a tenner. How come all that stuff from 20 years is back in vogue. Why does eighties stuff look shit and seventies stuff look trendy again? I'll be under pressure to get a perm soon. Why is it that I'll pay £10 for a book but bridle when charged £40 for a pair of trousers? Why have I always hated clothes shopping so much?
I've always dreamt that one day when I'm rich I'll dress better, have a batman to lay my clothes for the day on my bed in the morning.
I don't want the coat. I want my health, my friends, success at work. I'd swap the coat for a David Byrne CD I never play.

>>
>>From: Josh Lacey
>>
>>Thank you for your offer of a coat, which couldn't come at a worse time: it arrived on Monday morning, when I was trying to start the week's work. Instead, I have been worrying over the idea of this coat, which has assumed magnificent proportions in my imagination. I don't know anything about fashion icons; Maxmara means nothing to me; I couldn't even identify a cashmere coat in a line-up of jackets and macintoshes. Therefore, this coat only has meaning for me in that it has meaning for other people. I understand that this is a coat of great value. I would not want it for myself, but I understand the value that it would have for someone else. If I wanted this coat, I would want it in order to use it as a gift. In fact, I would want it as a gift for the woman I love. Her gratitude would give value to the coat. Unfortunately, I don't love any woman at the moment. Therefore, I would have to give this coat to a woman whom I have loved, and she would have to be my ex-girlfriend, Andrea. I know that Andrea would love this coat. She would cherish it. She would wear it with affection and enthusiasm. She would see the value in it, and, through her eyes, so would I.
However, there are complex layers of meaning surrounding a gift to an ex-lover. A loving gift will arouse unwanted emotions, rekindle old antagonisms, plant new seeds on barren ground. Perhaps the gift is actually intended to convey anger or hatred, to act as revenge, to sow doubt, to confuse. This fashion icon, which has no meaning to me, will become saturated with meaning through the role that it will play in my life. Perhaps the gift will lead my ex-lover and myself to fall in love again. After all, I must still care about her if I want to give this expensive coat to her. Perhaps the gift will simply arouse the memory of old anger, and she will return it with the arms cut off and some stab-wounds around the chest. Perhaps I should send this gift without a note, and allow her to wonder which of her current admirers has splashed out on this extravagant coat.
I have a better idea: I won't sent the coat to Andrea. Instead, I shall allow the coat to inhabit my imagination - after all, I don't even know what it looks like; I have no visual image of a Maxmara coat; I can't even imagine what cashmere looks like when it is made into a coat - and I shall create a dramatic situation from it.
It is a play. A man has acquired an expensive cashmere coat. We don't know how he has acquired the coat. Perhaps a woman left it in his flat. Perhaps he found it in the street, or stole it. Perhaps he was given it by a generous artist. Anyway, he decides to give this coat to his ex-girlfriend. He sends it anonymously. His ex-girlfriend receives it. Although she is surprised by this anonymous gift, she falls in love with it. The coat is the most beautiful thing that she has ever seen. She wears it every day. Every night, she lovingly brushes it before hanging it in her wardrobe. She doesn't know who has given it to her. Although she wears it in the company of each new man who professes that he has fallen in love with her, none of them claim the gift as his own. One evening, as she is putting on the coat, preparing to leave the house, the doorbell rings. She assumes that this is her date for the evening. Instead, it is her ex-boyfriend. They haven't seen one another for months. They have an awkward, suspicious conversation.
He compliments her on the coat, and she thanks him. The doorbell rings again. Her date has arrived. As she is going to answer the door, her ex-boyfriend reveals that he sent the coat. At first, she doesn't believe him. Then, she is shocked, wounded, angry, confused. She dismisses her date, pretending to have a stomach ache, and returns to her ex-boyfriend...What happens next? I don't know yet.

I will give you this play - I will write it for you - in exchange for the coat.

Coat
A play by Josh Lacey

There are four characters.
ADAM LOCK
30 years old.

WILLIAM GOETZ
30 years old.

CHRISTINA CAFFYN
28 years old.

TARA DOYLE
23 years old.

The play is set in London and Somerset during January.

Selected Excerpt

Silence.
William You could come with me.
Tara No, thanks.
William We don't have to have sex if you don't want to.
Tara I'm going to watch a video.
William It's one o'clock. Don't you ever sleep?
Tara No. Where are the vids?
William You'll find them. I'm going to bed.
Tara Night.
Silence.
William Goodnight.
Silence.
William Come with me.
Tara No.
William Okay. Night. Shall I call you a cab?
Tara No.
William Even if it snows, you're not going to catch cold in a cab, are you?
Silence.
William What was he like? Adam.
Tara Very nice.
William In bed.
Tara I'm not going to tell you that.
William Was he better than me?
Tara I'm not going to talk about that.
William It's not a big question. You've had sex with both of us within the space of a week, and I'd like to hear your comments. Maybe you have some criticisms. They might be useful for me. My technique. Can you suggest any improvements?
Tara No.
William He's not as fit as I am, is he?
Tara I'm not going to talk about that.
William He's gained some weight around the middle. Thirty. Difficult age. People often get depressed when they turn thirty. Eat more. How old are you?
Tara You know how old I am.
Silence.
William I don't like leaving you here. Either come to bed with me, or go home.
Tara Don't be so paranoid.
William I am not paranoid.
Tara I'll sit here. Watch a vid. I'm not tired. Do you think I'll steal the silver spoons?
William Probably. If I had any. Fuck. I've got so much to do tomorrow. I have to sleep. Will you still be here in the morning?
Tara Maybe.
Silence.
William Okay. Goodnight.
Tara Night.
Silence.
William Come with me.
Tara No. I'm going to watch a vid. What do you recommend?
William What sort of film do you like?
Tara Anything. What's your favourite film?
William I told you.
Tara Oh, yes. *Lawrence of Arabia.* I'll watch that.
The doorbell rings.
William Do you want to get that?
Tara No.
William Please.
Tara It's your house.
William I'm going to bed.
Silence.
William Are you going to get the door?
Tara No.
William It might be important.
Tara So?
William Okay. Okay.
He goes.
Tara waits.
William returns, followed by Christina. She is wearing the coat.
William Tara, Christina.
Christina Hi.
Tara Hello.
William Let's have a party. I've got so much to do tomorrow. I've got a meeting at seven-thirty. A power breakfast. Fuck that.
Tara I love your coat.
Christina Thanks.
Tara Where did you get it?
William Do you want a drink?
Christina No, I'm not staying.
William I've got a bottle of champagne. Let's open that.
Christina I just wanted to say hello.
William Stay. Champagne. You're not interrupting.
Christina Aren't I?
Tara No.
William Let's have a drink.
Tara Actually, I'm leaving. Will you ring a cab for me?
William Okay. Do you know a number?
Tara No.
William I'll look one up. Where's the phonebook? I have to get a cleaner. Will someone remind me to get a cleaner?
Tara I'll find a black cab on the street. Nice to meet you.
Christina And you.
Tara Look after the coat.
Christina I will. Thanks.
Tara If you ever get tired of it, I wouldn't mind it back.
Christina Excuse me?
Tara Only when you're bored of it. Because you do look lovely in it. Better than me.
Christina This coat is yours?
Tara Yes.
Christina Is this true?
William No.
Tara I left it here last week. After making the mistake of spending a night with him. When I asked him to give it back, he said he'd thrown it away.
William I told you where I got the coat. I was AD on a commercial, and they used ten of them. At the end of the shoot, they were handing them out. First come, first served. I took one. I tried it on. I looked like a prick. It's been lying around the flat for weeks.
Tara Who do you want to believe?
Christina I think I'd better go.
William No. Stay. We'll have a drink together.
Tara I'm leaving. With my coat.
William If you're so desperate for a coat, I'll buy you one.
Tara I don't want you to buy me one.
William I'll give you the money now. I'll write you a cheque.
Christina She can have it. Here.
Tara Keep it. I don't want it. And keep him. Your boyfriend is a lovely man. You should be with him, not this shit. Goodnight.
Tara goes.
William Sorry.
Christina Don't worry.
Silence.
Christina Has she gone?
William Yes.
Silence.
Christina What did she mean about Adam?
William She talks a lot of rubbish.
Christina Has she met him?
William Yes, with me. The other day. Don't worry about it. She's fallen in love with me, and she just talks rubbish. Not really love. She doesn't know me. We hardly talk. But she sees something in me that she finds attractive. Obsessively. She keeps calling. Coming round. I don't know what to do.
Christina Have you slept with her?
William Yes.
Christina Do you like her?
William Yes. Quite.
Christina Then what's the problem?
William You don't want to know.
Christina I do.
William I used wicked methods to seduce her, and they're threatening to rebound on me.
Christina Tell.
William I told her about my movie. I might even have offered her a part in it. I did. Drunkenly. I said there was a role perfectly suited to her. A passionate woman. Beautiful. Angry. Young. Fierce. You'd be perfect, I said. Then I asked her to jump into bed with me, and she jumped. Now she wants to read the screenplay.
Christina Let her read it. You can always blame the producers for not casting her.
William Good plan.
Christina You could make a big song and dance about how much you fought with the producers, but they refused to have her in the movie. You're not going to lose anything by letting her read it.
William There's just one problem. I haven't written it. I've had ideas. I've got twenty notebooks filled with ideas. I just haven't managed to put them on paper. I'm waiting till I buy a new computer. When I get the money through for this video, I'm going to spend it on a computer.
Silence.
William Is he dead?
Christina Probably.
William What's the plan?
Christina There's no plan.
William Will you find his body?
Christina I guess.
William And a note?
Christina We didn't discuss it.
William He should leave a note. Seriously. Do you want to ring him?
Christina No.
William If he doesn't leave a note, there might be complications. They might think you killed him.
Christina Maybe I did.
William You didn't. You tried to stop him.
Christina Maybe I tried in such a way that I simply convinced him of the need to kill himself.
Silence.
Christina Will you have sex with me?
William Okay.
Christina I want to forget today. I don't want anything more to do with it. That means sex or a bottle of Skotch, and you're cheaper.
William I've got a bottle of Laphroaig.
Christina Sex first.
William Take that off.
Christina takes off the coat.
William I've missed you.
Christina You don't have to say that. I've already agreed to have sex with you.
William But I really have missed you.
Christina Okay.
William You look great. The coat suits you, but you look even better without it.

Christina Thanks.
Christina goes to William, and kisses him.
William Christina, can I say something?
Christina No.
William I love you. You know that, don't you?
Christina No talking.
She kisses him again.

Ten

Heaven.
Adam is alone.
He speaks directly to the audience.

Adam I'm in Heaven. Yes. This is Heaven. It's good. I don't know what else to say. It's very good. Clean air. Great views. Angels everywhere. You know the image of angels that we have? Wings. A harp. Lots of white. It's all true. That's the thing about Heaven. It's all true. Everything is true. That was what upset me about life on earth. Some things were true, and other things were false, but you never knew which was which. Some things were good. Some things were bad. Which was which? No one knew. People tried to distinguish, without much success. Philosophers. Politicians. Poets. I always had an uneasy feeling that they knew they were talking bollocks. Heaven is different. Everything is good. Everything is true. This could get boring, but I've only been here for a few hours. So far, it seems perfect.

Eleven

Adam and Christina's flat. Early morning.
Adam is slumped in a chair.
The empty bottle of pills is lying on the floor beside him.
The front door slams.
Footsteps.
Christina and William walk into the room.
Christina is wearing the coat.
They stare at Adam's body.

Christina Oh, God.
William Shit.
Silence.
William Should I call the police?
Christina Please.
William Do you know the number for the local copshop? If not, I can just dial 999.
Christina Yes. Do. Oh, God.
Christina starts to cry.
William Christina.
Christina Don't touch me.
William Sorry.
Christina cries.
William approaches Adam.
William Christina? I think he might be breathing.
Christina Don't.
William He is. Look at him. Look. He's breathing, isn't he?
Christina Don't touch him.
William Why not?
Christina Call an ambulance. Quick.
William Where's the phone?
Christina Oh, God. I'll do it.
As she is hurrying towards the phone, Adam wakes up. He stretches and yawns.
Christina and William stare at him in amazement.
Adam What time is it? Don't look at me like that. Will you stop looking at me like that?
William You're not dead.
Adam I don't think so.
Christina What happened?
Adam I didn't take the pills. You'll have to get some more. I flushed them down the loo.
William No problem. How do you feel?
Adam Hungry. Starving. I didn't eat last night. Shall we go out for breakfast? Bacon and eggs. Yes?
Christina I'm not hungry.
William I'm supposed to be in a meeting right now. Power breakfast.
Adam Can we come? What do you eat at a power breakfast?
William One another.
Silence.
Christina They were your pills?
William Yes.
Christina You gave them to him?
William He asked. I couldn't refuse him. If I hadn't, he'd just have found another way. Anyway, it doesn't matter now, does it?
Christina Of course it matters.
Silence.
William Well. I should go to my meeting.
Christina Stay here.
William I'm late already.
Christina Please.
William Do you want me to get fired?
Christina No.
Adam I'll come too. I need some fresh air.
Christina How are you feeling?
Adam Good. Cramp in this shoulder. From sleeping in the chair.
Christina Do you want a massage?
Adam No, thanks.
Silence.
Adam You spent last night together.
Christina Yes.
Adam Did you sleep together?
Christina No.
Adam Don't worry about hurting my feelings. I'm not fragile anymore. You don't even have to feel sorry for me. I'm alive. I'm happy. I had one of the best nights of my life. When you'd gone, I sat with the pills, and counted them into my hand. I got a glass of water. I was ready to do it. I wanted to do it. I sat here with the glass of water in one hand and the pills in the other, looking at them, thinking, "These are the last thoughts that are ever going to go through my mind." I've spent years engineering my brain. Thirty years of thinking. Twenty-five years of education. Books. Conversation. Hours and hours of refinement. Creating this machine. A thinking machine. So I wanted my last thoughts to be brilliant. I sat here trying to think a great thought. Not just a really good thought. A great thought. You know what happened? I fell asleep. I had an amazing dream. I was in Heaven. Literally Heaven.
Christina What was it like?
Adam Indescribable.
Christina Try.
Adam I can't. It looked great. It felt great. It tasted great. It smelt great. It was great in every way. Then I woke up. It was the middle of the night. Total silence. I'd spilt the water on my trousers. The pills were all over the floor. And I realised I don't want to die. I have a reason to live. I want to go back to Heaven.
William So you're still going to kill yourself?
Adam No.
William How are you intending to reach Heaven without dying?
Adam I don't believe in Heaven. I don't believe in God. There is no life after death. If I kill myself, that's it. Finito. I'm going to have to find Heaven on Earth. I don't know how, but I'm going to try.
William You're mad.
Christina William.
Adam I feel happy for the first time in years. Since I was a kid, I've been feeling dissatisfied. Life has been a series of disappointments. You know why? Because I've never known what I want. Now I do.
Christina Can I come with you?
Adam If I find it, I'll give you a call.
Christina I want to come with you.
Adam I don't think we could go back to that.
Christina Of course we could. We still love one another.
Adam You slept with him, didn't you?
Christina You slept with Tara.
Adam I didn't.
Christina William told me everything.
Adam He's lying. [To William] What did you tell her?
William What Tara told me.
Christina I don't mind. She's pretty. Available. An actress. You don't love her, do you?
Adam Why would I?
Christina So why should I mind?
Adam I didn't sleep with her.
Christina I don't care what you did. Adam, I love you. I've behaved badly. You've behaved badly. Forget it. I want to be with you.
Adam I don't want to be with you.
Christina As simple as that?
Adam Yes. I'm going for a walk. See you later.
He walks to the door.
Christina Adam?
Adam Yes?
Christina Would you mind doing me a favour?
Adam I can try.
Christina Buy a pint of milk. Semi-skimmed.
Adam I know.
Christina And...
She hands the coat to Adam.
Christina Give this to someone.
Adam Who?
Christina Anyone.
Adam Like who?
Christina You choose.
Adam Okay. I will. See you later.
He goes.
Christina and William stand in silence until Adam has gone.
William What are we going to do now?
Christina We're never going to see one another again.
William Christina.
Christina Don't even try.
William I love you.
Christina Go to your meeting.
William Fuck my meeting. I want you. Don't you understand how I feel about you? I don't care about very much - I have strong feelings about almost nothing - but I'd be willing to give my life for you. Let me have one chance.
Christina Goodbye, William.
William You can't dismiss me like this. I love you. Give me one chance.
Christina No.
William That's it?
Christina Yes.
William Well, fuck you.
Christina Have a good breakfast.

Twelve

Wells Cathedral
Adam and Tara are standing in the middle of the nave.
Tara is wearing the coat.

Adam Shall we go?
Tara Do you want to?
Adam Do you?
Tara Not yet.
Adam You like it here?
Tara Yes.
Adam Good.
Tara You do?
Adam Of course. I can stand here for hours. I often have.
Tara I can understand that.
Adam Staring at these stones. Like the pages of a book. This is the meaning of their lives. That is what they meant by life. That shape. That shadow. The angle at which that stone is placed on top of this one.
Silence.
Adam Is this serious?
Tara What?
Adam Us.
Tara No. Don't look like that. Adam. I like you.
Adam I like you too.
Tara I'm really enjoying this weekend.
Adam Good.
Tara I love the hotel. I love the cathedral. I love hearing you talk about it. Let's just have a great weekend. Okay?
Adam Okay.
Silence.
Adam Look up there.
Tara Where?
Adam Do you see the statue on the top of that pillar? The head.
Tara Yes.
Adam Follow the line of his eyes. What do you see?

End

MIDDELBURG, SUMMER 1996

Lars Bang Larsen on a work by Jens Haaning

In 1996, the Danish artist, Jens Haaning, was invited to produce a solo show at the Kunsthalle De Vleeshal in Middelburg, The Netherlands. His project consisted of inviting the Turkish owned textile factory Maras Confectije from the neighboring city of Vlissingen to relocate its production to De Vleeshal during the entire period of the exhibition. *Middelburg, Summer 1996,* as the project was titled, consisted in the refurbishing of the gallery according to the needs of Maras Confectije and its twelve immigrant workers, with impromptu canteen and office by the entrance, sewing machines, strip lights, heaps of tea towels and an enormous football banner from an Istanbul F.C. covering the end wall. The real and symbolic space conjured by the installation was weightless but charged, setting your identity adrift among "aliens."
If this radical deconstruction of the established spatial and cultural coordinates of the art gallery wasn't bewildering enough, Maras Confectije was in fact a thriving enterprise. Despite appearances, maybe: *Middelburg, Summer 1996* is still sometimes referred to as "the sweatshop." In my eyes this is a too critically correct description of the project's ambiguous representation of cultural, economic and symbolic hierarchies in post-industrial production.
In opposition to other large ethnic groups in Europe, who are predominantly part of post-colonial migrations, the Turkish diasporas consist of workers recruited by European industry in the 70s, and their descendants. Traditionally, the Turks are an underprivileged group caught in between European and Arabic cultures. In addition to this, they became gradually superfluous as a work force due to the economic recession of the late 70s and the 80s. But in *Middelburg, Summer 1996,* appearances proved deceptive. Mr. Maras's 500-series Mercedes was parked in the back, and during the exhibition the textile factory certainly churned out more profit than its host institution De Vleeshal. Alienation is passed on as if the project were a machine to produce peripheries wherever identities were thought to be closed and safe.

The project's economic displacement effects go all the way through the food chain of artistic and art institutional production. Like any artwork *Middelburg, Summer 1996* is naturally for sale. The original terms of purchase states that the sale of the work concerns the acquisition of Maras Confectije. The contract stipulates that the buyer give Maras Confectije appropriate space to continue its production. That is, if a museum decides to acquire *Middelburg, Summer 1996,* the museum has to provide suitable premises for the factory in order for it to pursue its production without any economical loss that its relocation may cause. Moreover, Maras Confectije should be given ownership of the space in which it is installed as an artwork. Here it is potentially a space on the loose, inside the museum's regulated space: what if Maras Confectije didn't use the space to relocate its production or opening up a Maras branch, but resold their allotted space? To a bank, a Turkish coffee club, The Body Shop, a bingo hall. As a fleeting and complex figure spanning a variety of public economies it seems that *Middelburg, Summer 1996* can't be controlled: it is at the same time abstract and imaginary space, material production and artwork for sale.
Middelburg, Summer 1996 is strung out between material and immaterial interpretations. How do the workers and management of Maras Confectije interpret the idea of being for sale as an artwork? What would they do with their new space if they were "sold" to a museum? And what happens with the afterlife and potential collectibility of the work, if Maras Confectije ceases to exist? All efforts to track down Mr. Maras or his factory proved fruitless. Big questions tend to go unanswered when tarrying with the real.
Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, informs that *Middelburg, Summer 1996* is still for sale. With the purchase of the work comes the right to stage an equivalent production. With the purchase follows documentation of the original installation.

LARS BANG LARSEN, COPENHAGEN 2001

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENS HAANING





MAKING MY ART IN CHINA

Paola Pivi

I have traveled China in every possible way: by air, by train, by boat, by bus, by taxi, by bicycle and by foot. I went there for the first time in 1998 to assist Armin Linke, and then again on numerous occasions to live in Shanghai and make my own work.

In 1998, I settled in Shanghai for several months to produce a new body of work for my gallery in Milan. It was to become a series of sculptures, each consisting of 500,000 beads attached to strings which in turn were attached to masonite boards. I began by stringing the beads myself, sitting in bed in my rented room. It went very slowly, so I asked a friend to help out. After a few weeks I still needed more help and hired my first employees for $1 per hour. At that stage, the production was broken down into tasks: one guy was making holes, home-worker women made strings, boys and girls came to my place to attach the strings to the masonite. My best girlfriend and I were also attaching the strings to the masonite.

After one year, a team of 19 people were working in my bedroom and one guy was working downstairs drilling holes in the boards. At this point I could have installed a clock with time cards to measure my workers' time, just like in a small factory. And I knew that to improve the efficiency of my little factory I would need a larger space with lots of tables and chairs, a time control machine and a supervisor, but it never worked out. Nobody would take on the job of supervisor, no matter how much I could offer.

When I began this work, I had a dozen students working for me and I was paying them by the hour. Working with them for a month, I calculated that they could do so many lines of pearls per hour. I made this calculation on the very last day, for the last bit of work. I counted the missing lines and said, "I will be back in two hours, and I will bring you your final money," and they said, "Come back in half an hour." I said, "Why? This work takes two hours." They finished it in half an hour.

One night (very late at night) I was going around Shanghai with a friend. We were close to the flat that I used as my studio, so I invited him to come over and see my work. It was on the ground floor and we saw light in the window. I could see four boys playing cards in there, drinking and smoking. I went in. Only one of the boys was one of my workers, the others were complete strangers. I asked, "What are you doing here? Who let you in?" And he said, "I never left."

Another time we had a big house with three floors. The kitchen was at the bottom, very close to the staircase. The boy who made the holes with a drill worked in the kitchen (he made 120,000 holes) and the girls worked upstairs. One day it was raining like hell. Everybody came in in the morning, totally wet, and we started working. I went down to the kitchen to get something to eat and suddenly I see the boy using his super low technology drill with a pair of completely wet running shoes on his feet. I got really scared that he would get electrocuted. He couldn't work with bare feet either because the floor was so wet. So I gave him a hair dryer to dry his shoes before continuing with the holes. Unfortunately, the kitchen was at the bottom of the staircase and everybody had to work that day in a horrible smell.

Another time we gave all our pearls to Chen Yena so that she could distribute them among her acquaintances to string them. I had hired 20 boys and girls to come in every morning at 9 a.m., ready to fix the strings to the wood. This time of day was like dawn for me, but I woke up early to receive them. But each day Chen Yena only brought back a tiny box of strings. We would open the box and she would say, "Today it's pink." And only the pink pearls people would stay and work, and everybody else had to come back the next day.

Another time we had a residential flat (typical American one bedroom with American furniture) so there was no room for anyone to work. I thought, "Why don't I let them work at home?" so I distributed all the materials among my employees. A few days later I went to check the work: in one house a little kid was eating on my work, in another the man had broken all the drill points after making two holes and couldn't work anymore, and so on. Another time I got a full delivery of pearls from the pearl shop. They were completely pealing off because the company had changed its employees and they still needed to learn how to do the job.

One day we went with a taxi-van to the train station to pick up some pearls coming in from Hong Kong. About 100 peasants and workers gathered laughing around our taxi-van, which had fallen from the platform into the railway tracks because it was raining so hard that the tracks and the platforms were all below water. The van was stuck at a 45 degree angle with its front end in the water. Then some of the workers came over – about eight of them, and jumped in the water and started pushing the van up with their hands and their deformed faces pressed against the windshield in front of me (I was still sitting inside in the car with the driver). The driver was accelerating, making a huge noise to move back. I was terribly scared that somebody would die because from time to time the van fell deeper into the water and the workers had to jump out of the way at the last moment. One even lost his boot. Everybody was screaming and I couldn't even talk. Then they stopped and the translator girl screamed, "They want cigarettes, they want cigarettes!" So I started handing out cigarettes as fast as I could. And again they tried, stopped, wanted cigarettes, tried, stopped, wanted cigarettes, always with their faces pressed against the glass, completely deformed with their open mouths and their teeth out. Eventually the translator girl and I got out of the van and they were able to pull it out. Then we left.

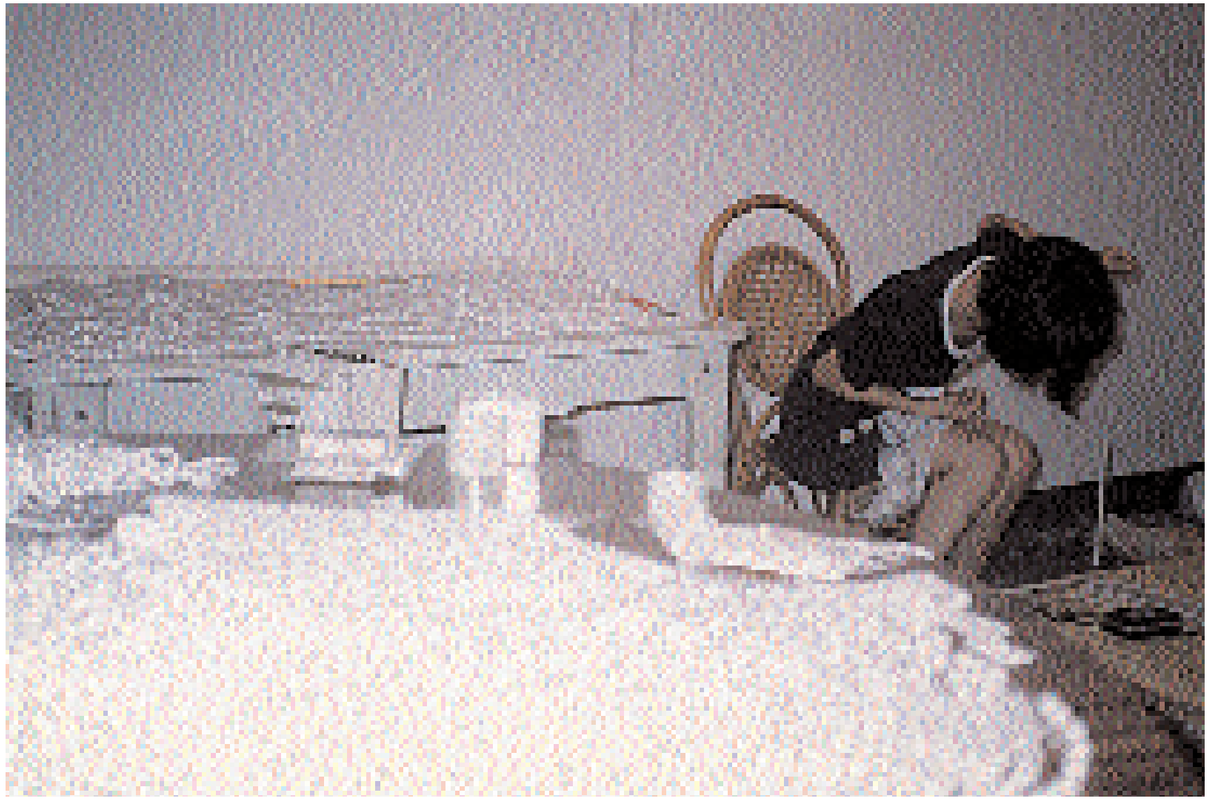
PAOLA PIVI, MILAN, MAY 2000

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAOLA PIVI

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CORPORATE MUSE

Laird Borrelli on ChanSchatz

Richard Avedon has a lot to do with it, really. The starting point for the design of ChanSchatz's amazing Technicolor embroideries was a sixties black and white photograph by Richard Avedon of a model girl – possibly Penelope Tree or the then newly married Diane Von Furstenberg, probably showing some skin, and wearing a pair of sophisticated and groovy chandelier-like drop earrings. But we're getting ahead of the story, which is that MM-AA.07.3 is an artwork of nuanced process and methods of production.

Approaching the piece MM-AA.07.3 you see a series of sliding white doors, each with a hole with which to draw them back. These sliding doors recall the minimal interiors of exclusive fashion and design boutiques where single objects are on display and stock is kept behind eye-pleasing storage units. From beneath the seven veils, as it were, emerges a luminescent, shimmering, layered, textured piece of embroidery in the shape of a dangling earring, though this might not be the first shape the viewer sees, the many combined materials and shapes are at once totemic and sexual. Throbbing proboscises thrust upwards into openings that recall feminine recesses as well as ancient and tribal shapes, and from a distance, a single chandelier earring resplendent with all of its tiers and drops and spangles.

Drawing closer, the textures and surfaces of materials, shiny, matte, and holographic – come into focus as do the various stitches and styles of embroidery. The most familiar of which recall those common to mass-produced athletic wear (think baseball caps and team jerseys) and logos such as the stitched Polo Ralph Lauren horseman or the Nike swoosh. Yet this über-stitchery, if familiar, is a hundredfold more intricate and complex than that seen in mass fashion production. ChanSchatz's artwork is a luxury piece, a one-off, a couture-like production.

The death of couture is often proclaimed, yet a knoll has not yet tolled on this most rarified and high form of fashion. Twice each year a number of designers working within the definitions and regulations set by the governing body of French fashion, the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne, produce couture fashion shows. Couture garments are produced almost exclusively by hand, by seamstresses and tailors, and by embroiderers sometimes referred to as les petites mains. Exorbitantly expensive to purchase, couture keeps ancient arts alive and serves as a training ground for ideas – some of which will surface later in the ready-to-wear collections. It is fashion's highest flourish. The price of a couture gown is rarely uttered, but the hours of hand production involved in making a dress are eagerly pronounced. Thus a magazine might run a photograph of a couture client wearing a gown that required 300 hours of work to complete.

Couture is decidedly elite, individual, and rare. It is considered the most extravagant expression of a designer's endeavor and despite the fact that corporations back almost all couture designers, couture is likened to art not commerce. With *MM-AA.07.3* and their other artworks, ChanSchatz have juxtaposed the concepts of couture, luxury, and corporate identity to create something unique and fashionable via technological means of production.

It is interesting that ChanSchatz have highlighted embroidery as a means of their expression because the identity of the embroiderer is typically invisible and because, as digital artists, they have embraced what is traditionally a handcraft. Beatrix Potter's little mice worked overnight, tailoring and embroidering; grande dames like Madame de Pompadour would have been taught embroidery as a ladies' art, a feminine accomplishment; and others earned their livings sitting at embroiderer's frames, literally stitching their lives away.

While museums frequently exhibit magnificent eighteenth century embroideries (often menswear as the peacock male-predominated fashion of those times), it is during the machine-mad nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the technology to make embroidery, such as the Schiffli machine (invented in 1873), became widely popular. I mention this because of the ironic circumstance ChanSchatz encountered in the midst of this artistic endeavor. Although *MM-AA.07.3* was designed and programmed digitally using advanced computer software, the artists found that the more complex their patterns became the more on-demand handwork they performed (interchanging threads, making thread counts, manipulating appliqué, etc.).

The *MM-AA* (Multimedia Architectural Accessories) series was inspired in part by the mediaeval tapestries the artists viewed at The Cloisters in New York City. These works led them to examine the complex medieval guild system that enabled the production of these impressive narrative and pictorial tapestries. ChanSchatz found this system to be as multi-layered and trenchant as any contemporary production or digital system today. To execute the *MM-AA* pieces, ChanSchatz subverted fundamental corporate-sponsor conventions. The artists systematically researched and established on-going relationships with 121 corporations from whom all materials, machinery and technology were acquired to produce the artworks, in effect creating a guild of corporate sponsors working with another "corporate" entity – ChanSchatz.

Heather Schatz and Eric Chan are artists, incorporated, who work under the name ChanSchatz. Even as their professional moniker evokes corporate naming conventions, they approach their work with a methodology that corporations would envy. While the *MM-AA* series addresses the subject of identity and practice of digital production, it also considers fashion. ChanSchatz achieve this less through embroidery than what their artworks draw and consider of the system of fashion.

Elite, individual and rare, ChanSchatz's Multimedia Architectural Accessories are truly couture creations. Although the digital template for each *MM-AA* can be re-used, the tangible artwork can never be exactly recreated. The surprising factors contributing to this are not a result of its capacity for digital reproduction, but instead function as a result of the complex accumulation of exclusive materials and technology required for the artwork's custom production. The permanence of art is often contrasted with fickle and fast-changing fashion, however, this series posits instead that the obsolescence of all things technological mirrors the tempo of fashion and the system which sustains its relentless consumerist drive.

LAIRD BORRELLI, NEW YORK, JULY 2001

Laird Borrelli is a fashion historian and curator and a writer, the author of *Stylishly Drawn: Contemporary Fashion Illustration,* and is the co-author of *Handbags: A Lexicon of Style* with Valerie Steele.

opposite: MM-AA.07.3, 2000-1, overleaf left: MM-AA.08.1, 2000-1, overleaf right: MM-AA.07.4, 2000-1. Multi-toned in synthetic and metallic embroidery with appliqué detail (64 x 73 x 4 in. overall) by ChanSchatz. Embroidery Co-ordination: Steven Blanks for Brother International, George Brecht For Softeam USA, Rich Hirsh for ARC, Linda Rosenberger for Coats American, Sue Silva for Gunold + Stickma, Colleen Hartigan for Madeira, Geoff Taylor for Hollingsworth & Vose, Dan Pezold for Veratic, Michelina Centofanti for National Nonwovens. Appliqué Co-ordination: Richard Moule for Ioline, Fred Schecter for Sommers Plastics, Michael Carter for Dalco Athletic, Carleen Gray for Stahls' Set: John Butler for Alusuisse, Mike Hwang for Inteplast, Gerry Forman for Encad, George Klein for Techno-Isel. Material Engineering: Brian Dean for Lord Corporation, Ron Warenkiewicz for INSTA, Larry Bauman for Crescent, Clint Joiner for Jiffy Steamer, Sandra Cashman for Fiskars, Michael Grant for Brooklyn Hardware, Ratif Sullivan for Elmer's, Gary Abney for Mim Industries.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY OREN SLOR. MODEL: EARRINGS ER.0002 AT SECRETS OF LIFE. ART & PRODUCTION: CHANSCHATZ. DIGITAL SCANS: MARK WENGER FOR THE COLOR WHEEL. DIGITAL CONSULTING: STEVE LAJOS AND JOHN SANTORO FOR APPLE COMPUTER, ERIC HANSON FOR AMIABLE TECHNOLOGIES. SPECIAL THANKS TO LAIRD BORRELLI, JAMES SHENTON, AND CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS.





From Bernadette Corporation business proposal, 2000.

BERNADETTE CORPORATION

Bennett Simpson

Corporate enterprise is dependent on the management of abstractions: organizational structures, products sold or moved, unifying self-images or brands, clientele and demand. Usually the motive is making money, but it can also be less specific than this. Corporations might be more invested in creating desire or in persuading a public of an idea or a style (and then making money). Often the most we know about a corporation is its name. It's behind a name or the visual equivalent, a logo, that the undisclosed activity of a corporation takes place: the organizing, the producing, the distributing, the confabulating of markets. The public rarely sees what happens behind a name like Beatrice (the agricultural services giant) or Haliburton (the manufacturer of oil rigs) or Baron and Baron (the trendy design and art direction group). Names give license. They're trusts. In this way, corporations are able to cloud the social landscape like fog banks: acknowledged but generally left alone.

Bernadette Corporation (BC) started in 1994. They began by working in the nightclub business, being paid to throw parties: pick a theme, call everybody, dress up, look great. The most obvious use for young people in a city like New York was to provide the human decor/atmosphere that makes a business center look exciting. The art market was dead. Art discourse was dominated by identity politics and exit strategy. "Art-and-Fashion" was a phenomenon from Paris, or from the Netherlands. This was the time of heroin-chic, post-grunge, and early Wu-Tang Clan (kids in the projects were remapping their language by the hour, turning infrastructural decay into code). Bernadette Corporation was a revolving-door cast of friends living down on the Bowery, with backgrounds in clothing design, economics and film. People were just starting to get a sense of how the 90s would work. Around this time, Tom Frank coined the term "the commodification of dissent" to describe the way that youth agitation had been co-opted by corporate interest, or, moreover, to describe the way that corporate interest was inventing youth agitation out of marketing data to sell back to kids and their parents. Bernadette Corporation were intuitive. They sensed their exchange value. And they decided, in a loose process of tactical self-fashioning, to see if they could mimic the moment and make it mean something different.

In 1995, Bernadette Corporation began designing their own line of women's fashion: an amalgam of street wear, conceptual branding, and DIY haute couture. Their first show embraced the banality of the crowd: mass-produced looks, sportswear, an excess of Puerto Rican-ness and black-ness. It was a situation that confronted the vulgarity of the common classes with codes of bourgeois glamour. BC chose not to present a privileged vision of design, but instead invoked the masses in a space (the fashion runway) usually reserved for spectacles of individuality and rarefication.

The BC thought a lot about style. As an abstraction, style is the opposite of immanence; it's artificial, programmable, a surface for projections. Style is also something free and available to everybody. And it can be a space for waging war, passing judgement, or subverting the dominant languages of a society.

By the mid-90s lots of people – especially in big international markets like New York, Los Angeles, Paris, London, and Tokyo – had become aware of the pervasiveness of corporate models of style and culture production. The 60s idealism of Us vs. Them, The People vs. The Man, Outside vs. Inside were vexed at best – if not totally collapsed – and artists, designers, and cultural producers were looking for better, more contemporary strategies of differentiation. Bernadette Corporation knew it was time to get over the old dichotomies. It made no sense to speak of critique from Outside, not when critique was the hottest commodity going. BC began modeling itself after the secret stars of business – the producers, agents, and captains of the worldwide image machines. They gave each other responsibilities; designer, communications, image control and made their loft into a functioning HQ for who knows what. In no time, Bernadette Corporation had launched out into the art and fashion markets with a calculated recklessness.

Bernadette Corporation held fashion shows in 1995, 1996, and 1997. Their shows exhibited a kind of Situationist disregard for commodity-purpose, often combining runways and top models with rock show or stadium sports theatricalities like dancing bear mascots, free-floating propaganda and, for one show, an all black high-school cheerleading troupe from Brooklyn who danced during intermission. The discursive and especially vernacular nature of the group's productions can not be overstated. From the very beginning, BC's output was riddled with mis-signification, hybridized styles, and local puns. The group created "loaded" products or looks, like a street bought Tommy-style shirt with a Tommy knock-off logo and their own BC logo added alongside. Vernacular styles and signs are the opposite of high-fashion classicism. The vernacular is where transgression happens, where people inscribe their own local or private usages of language onto the generic and official idiom. Vernacular cultures, hip-hop and fanzines, for example, thrive through mix-and-match, unheard-of juxtapositions, and theatrical re-stagings of accepted styles. Certainly more than any other fashion label of the 90s, Bernadette Corporation used the potential of the vernacular to excavate the sediment of corporate style and establish new possibilities where before cliché had reigned.

The corporate mythology adopted by the BC goes far beyond the logo-mania and posturing of their first productions. They knew that corporations are like families, clans, and organized mobs. Affiliation and strategic partnership are crucial elements to corporate life. For their part, Bernadette Corporation had made alliances with numerous other groups throughout fashion and art. Colin de Land's American Fine Art gallery and the French "image magazine," *Purple Prose,* were especially instrumental in supporting the BC, giving it places to sign its activities. The BC were successful at baffling the mainstream fashion world. Their identity was nebulous, but very in your face. They made clothes, obviously, but they made it seem that this was only part of what they did. This fact, in turn, helped them establish by 1996 a reputation in the art community, which had, since the early 90s become more and more aware of the spectacle potential of fashion. The individual members of Bernadette Corporation continued to pursue activities ancillary to BC productions, even as the group's notoriety spread across the fashion and art glossies of the mid-90s. In 1997, however, momentum began to pull Bernadette Corporation apart and they split with their head designer. At this time, the Bernadette Corporation clothing label was put to rest: there was no consensus in the group as to how to continue "just



From Bernadette Corporation, *Made in USA*, Number 2, 2000.

making clothes," even as their involvement with this activity had never been straightforward.

The "underground" culture world being as diffuse and beholden to rumor as it is, few people noticed the "official" absence of Bernadette Corporation. A year after they stopped making clothes people were still searching the boutiques of New York and Paris for their logo-emblazoned jerseys and scarves. As well, curators continued to seek the group out to participate in gallery and museum shows (most notably the BC participated in the Walker Center's mammoth spectacle-exhibition *Let's Entertain* in early 2000). In 1999, after a two year hiatus, Bernadette Corporation resurfaced, not as a fashion label per se (as many people automatically assumed when they heard the BC were back), but as a self-described "media group." Joined by new members, Bernadette Corporation launched a magazine, entitled *Made in USA* (the title was stolen from "a movie by Godard, possibly his worst"). The magazine, which has to date been issued three times and covers art, literature, fashion, photography, and politics, is currently the most visible face of Bernadette Corporation.

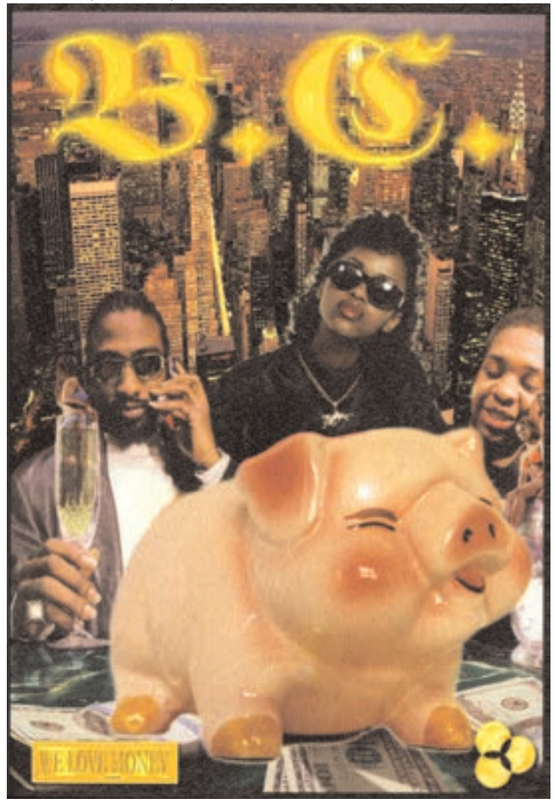
Of course, this could always change. Bernadette Corporation has always emphasized the spontaneous and mutable nature of its organization. From party promotion to fashion design to video and film, the group's interests have developed according to no set plan. Instead, their activity is premised on the idea that a corporation can do basically anything it wants as long as it stays afloat and people are interested. In this way, Bernadette Corporation are a new breed of cultural venture: hyper attuned to the half-lives of its products within the flux and flood of the market; engaging in a production that is mutable and scattered; tracing their own wandering line through an overly constructed and written space; outwardly conforming to the dominant mechanisms only in order to evade them. Indeed, by setting itself up as a corporation in the first place, the group acknowledged that its future could be open. A fashion designer makes clothes. A writer writes. A corporation becomes invisible behind a legitimate face.

BENNETT SIMPSON, NEW YORK, DECEMBER 2000
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK BORTHWICK AND CRIS MOOR



Bernadette Corporation in *Purple*, Number 2, 1997.

Bernadette Corporation in *Purple*, Number 4, Winter 1998.



Bernadette CORPORATION

PURPLE INSTITUTE

What is Purple? The branding of an abstract space comprised of a girl's face, a blank landscape, designer products, fog, underwear, tristesse, writing. A "terrain vague," as conceptual as it is libidinal. Things are marketed, theorized, glamorized, consumed and abandoned here. Founded in 1992, Purple Institute is an arrangement of multiple practices under one roof in Paris: magazine and book publishing, corporate consulting, art direction, a record label, a store, curatorial initiatives, a loose scene of friends working in art and fashion. Informed by a post-Deleuzian conception of cultural production in late capitalist society, Olivier Zahm and Elein Fleiss oversee a network of interrelated projects, some firmly engaged in corporate culture, others in the museum or in bed. Purple keeps the boundaries blurred and in flux, so that a maximum of influences can pass through its wide-open offices.

JOHN KELSEY, NEW YORK, DECEMBER 2000



Purple Institute offices, Paris, 2000.





Purple Insitute fax transmittal, Paris-New York, 2000.

PUBLISHING/EDITING

Purple Magazines
At the origin of Purple Institute. Since 1992.
Originally *Purple Prose, Purple Fiction, Purple Fashion.*
Now 2 titles, *Purple* and *Purple Sexe.*

Purple Books
Anne Frémy, *Architecture(s) Archives Comment Habiter La Terre?*, 1998
Claude Closky, *Magazines,* 1998
Martin Szekely, (co-published with Kreo, Paris), 1998
Claude Closky, *Le 11 août 1999,*
(co-published with L'Esprit Frappeur, Paris), 1999
Mark Borthwick, *Are People Plants?*
(co-published with L'Esprit Frappeur, Paris), 1999
Portaits, *16 Photographers,*
(co-published with L'Esprit Frappeur, Paris), 1999
David Robbins, *The Ice Cream Social,* novel,
(co-published with Feature Inc., NYC), 1998
Kim's Bedroom, exhibition catalog, (co-published for the exhibition curated by Kim Gordon in Eindhoven),
CD included, March 2000
Elysian Fields, exhibition catalog, (co-published with Centre Pompidou, Paris),CD included, 2000
Bellevue, (co-published with Fiction.inc., Tokyo), 2000

Mustang Collection/Texts books:
Arnaud Viviant, *Replay,* 2000
Jeff Rian, *The Buckshot Lexicon,* English version,
(with photographs by Anders Edström), 2000
Jeff Rian, *Le Lexique Revolver,* French version,
(with photographs by Anders Edström), 2000

Purple Music
Jeff Rian & Palix, "Everglade," 2000

Libération Style Supplement
Concept, editing and production of *Libération Style* magazine

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Art Direction
Forever Laser Institute (beauty institute), Geneva: catalog, advertising
Transcontinent (Japanese fashion brand): catalogs, advertising
Jean-Paul Gaultier Parfums: advertising
AxO (Japanese fashion brand): film
Alexandra Roos (French singer): CD

Graphic Design
Costume National: catalogs, advertisings
Idole, Model Agency: new graphic identity

Trend Forecasting/Consulting
Shiseido: trend forecasting
Beauty By, Paris: store concept
Cacharel: perfume name research

Marketing/Semiology
Elle International: coordination of workshop with worldwide editors-in-chief

EXHIBITIONS

Art Exhibitions
"June," Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, 1993
"L'Hiver de l'Amour," ARC Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1994
"The Winter of Love," P.S.1 Museum, New York, 1994-95
"Purple 8 1/2," Galerie Jousse-Seguin, Paris, 1995
"Collections," Galerie Analix, Geneve, 1995
"Beige," Compartment, Copenhagen, 1996
"The Daniel Johnston Living Room," Frac Nord, Pas-de-Calais, 1996-1997
"The New Living Room," Frac Nord, Pas-de-Calais, 1997
"Hélène," The Deep Gallery, Tokyo, 1997
"Hélène," Galerie du Triangle, Bordeaux, 1997
"La Voie Lactée," Alleged Gallery, New York, 1998
"Fashion Vidéo," Fri-ART Kunsthalle, Fribourg, 1998
"Elysian Fields," Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2000

Public Projects
Coordination of exhibitions in Meteor (new Paris subway line)
with French art institutions.
Project and realization for Bonne Nouvelle subway station in Paris
with artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster.



COMMERCE

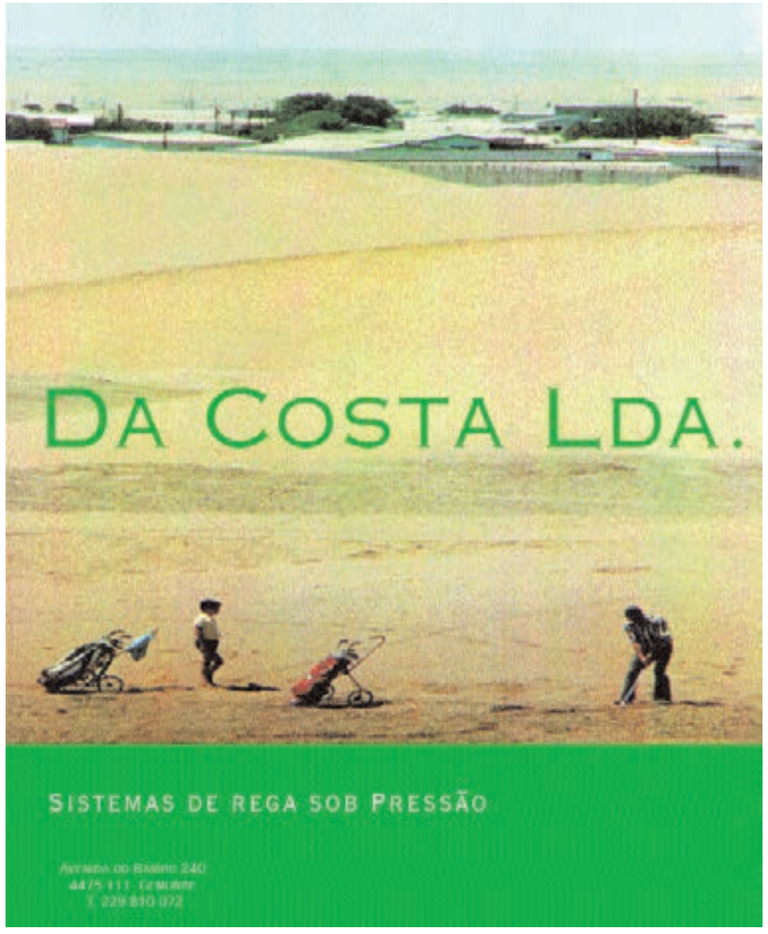
Store
Purple Boutique and café, Paris
Purple Boutique, Tokyo

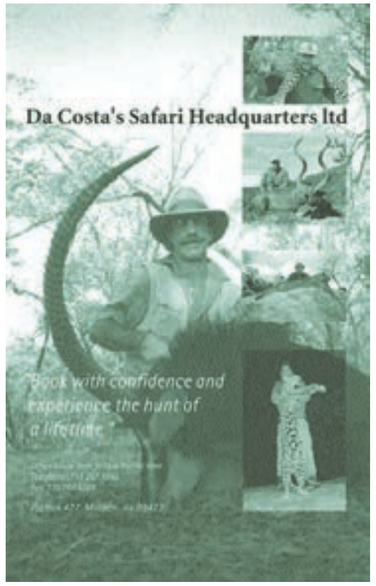
Purple Products
accessories designed exclusively for Purple and sold in our stores,
mail order catalog and internet site.
Designers: Susan Cianciolo, Bernhard Willhelm, Dorothee Perret,
Experimental Jetset, Leah Singer, Gaspard Yurkievich

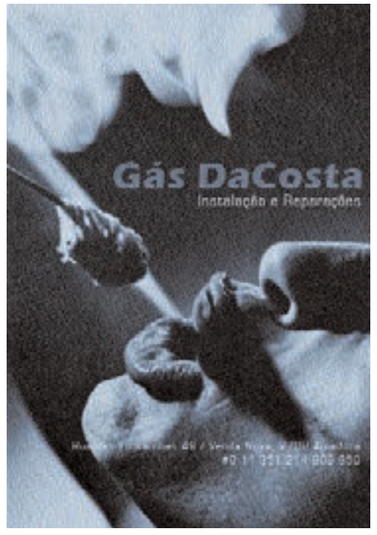
PURPLE INSITUTE, PARIS, NOVEMBER 2000
www.purple.fr

The idea of a *Da Costa Encyclopaedia* derives from an anecdote: It was at a café in wartime London. One day, one of the Surrealists (Brunius? Or Mesens?) made his entrance, greeted the Portuguese painter Antonio Da Costa (1914-1990) and then proceeded to greet each of the others in the room with the same surname. Da Costa pointed out that his friend was actually not too far off: in Portugal, apart from Salazar, everyone was indeed called "Da Costa."
From that day on, the Surrealists – who enjoyed the concept of a group of artists being identified as a single persona – started to secretly call each other "Da Costa," spreading the word to the Surrealist groups of Paris and later to those of New York.
In 1946, the Paris group published the *Da Costa Encyclopaedia*, a compendium of hoaxes, pranks and jokes. Two years later, in New York, a second issue appeared unexpectedly, now in conjunction with the Sixth International Surrealist exhibition. It is known that Breton and Duchamp supervised the New York edition.[1]
Nowadays, in Portugal, everyone is still called Da Costa. The name can be seen everywhere, in both the local business world and in the corporate realm. The new edition of *Da Costa Encyclopaedia*, the third issue, is currently under production and due to be published somewhere, sometime, soon. This publication recreates the idea of the single persona in the spirit of the Surrealist Da Costa but is an encyclopedic compilation of actual Da Costa business advertisements, supported by the income the same advertisements generate in a circular motion.

ALEXANDRE DA COSTA, LISBON, JULY 2001





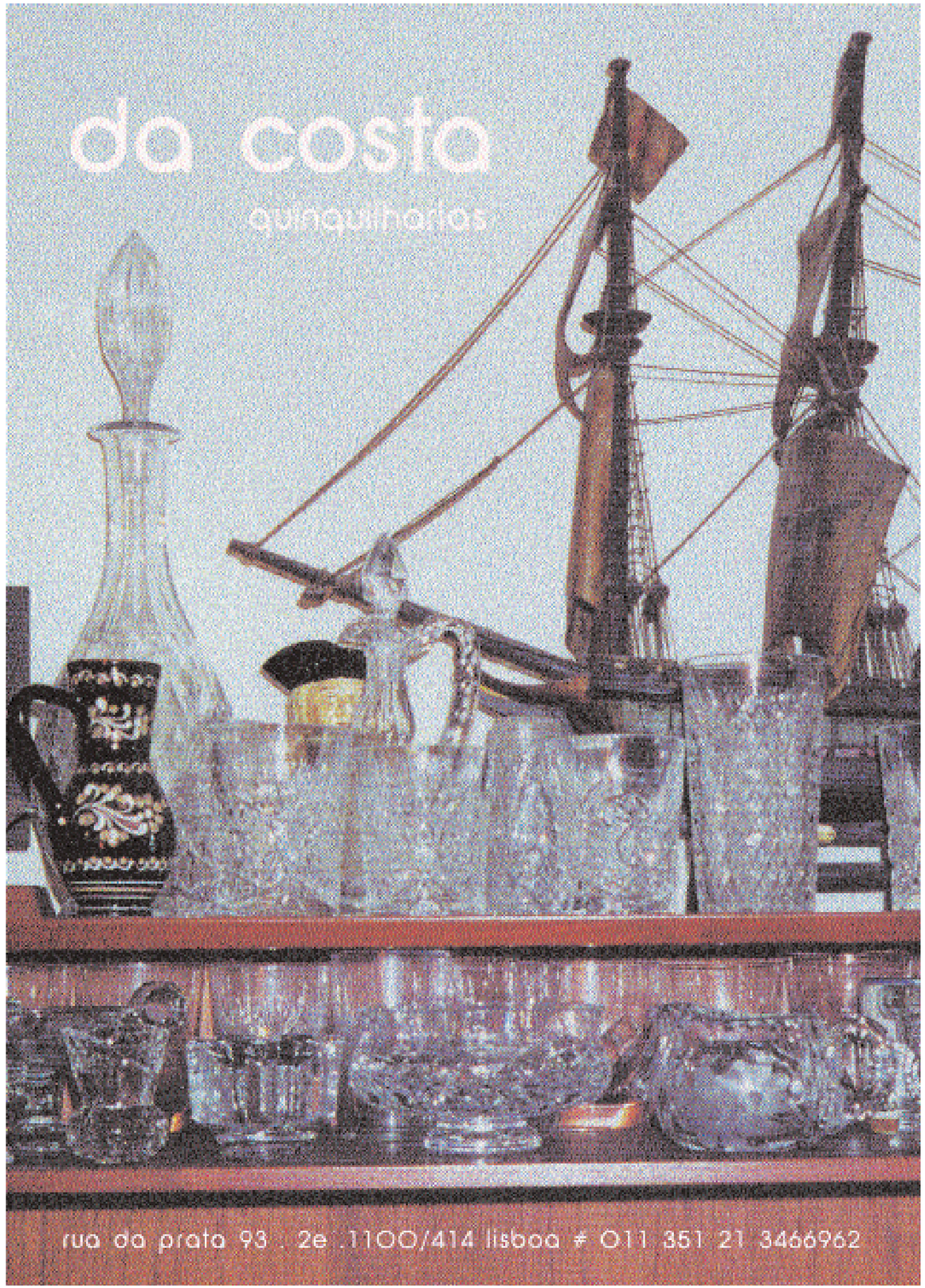


Da Costa Encyclopaedia, advertisements, 2001.

[1] *Encyclopaedia Acephalica, Documents of the Avant Garde,* ed. Robert Lebel & Isabelle Waldberg, Atlas Press, London, 1995.



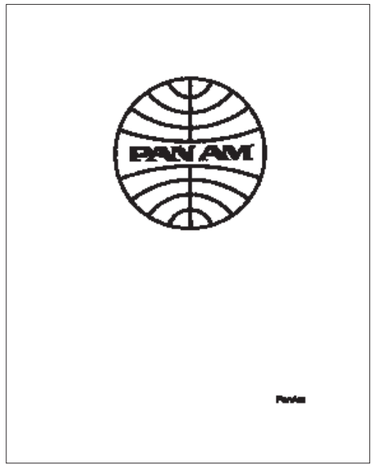

DA COSTA LDA
TERRAPLANAGEM
TERRAPLANNING
avenida 1 dezembro 1640 r84 1e
casal marco 1840-166
seixal portugal
+11 145 133
+11 177 485


da costa
quinquilharias
rua da prata 93 . 2e .1100/414 lisboa # 011 351 21 3466962

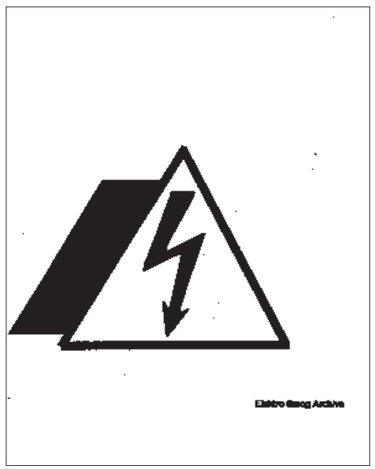
LABELING STRATEGIES WITHIN BOTSCHAFT E.V., 1990-1995

Florian Zeyfang

In 1993, Botschaft members thought seriously about mounting a big sign downstairs by the door – one of those directories advertising the number of corporations in an office building. A couple of these nearly twenty corporate names were de facto to become registered businesses eventually, but all the other logos stood in for a concept, an artwork, or a political project initiated by the various members of this 1990-founded art/video group. The number of participating individuals in the collective had risen by that time (from the founding nine to more than twenty) and nobody wanted to define anymore who was and who was not Botschaft – not to mention its various sub-labels.



Panam



Elektro Stagg Archive

Three years earlier, it was a general dissatisfaction with the current cultural and political landscape in Berlin that had led to the founding of Botschaft. The sudden availability of large spaces in Berlin Mitte (due to the fall of the wall and the following retreat or dissolution of former GDR businesses) played an additional role. A group of nine people – some from the film and publication departments of the university, a couple of artists from Berlin art schools, some from information technology studies and other fields – decided to form a working cooperation and to open a location in the center of Berlin as their headquarters and presentation space. Significant motivation came from the helplessly backward situation within the art school and, on the other hand, from uneasiness with the possibilities of traditional political work. Engaged in the activities against the IMF meeting in Berlin in the late 80s, some of the founding members felt an urge to develop other forms of intervention – a kind of platform that would function independently from the Berlin art and film scene.

Additional impetus came from the direction the so-called unification of Germany was taking. The conservative CDU (Christian Democrat Union) of chancellor Kohl, in league with the industrial sector, was promising the people a consumer paradise in what was formerly the GDR. The huge gains of the CDU in the elections of the same year, and the obvious wish of the people to embrace capitalism without hesitation or delay, swept away the last doubts about squatting spaces on the east side of Berlin. Botschaft moved into an empty floor of the WMF building near Potsdamer Platz, an area that had hosted foreign embassies in GDR times. This fact gave Botschaft its name, which means both “embassy” and “message” in the German language.

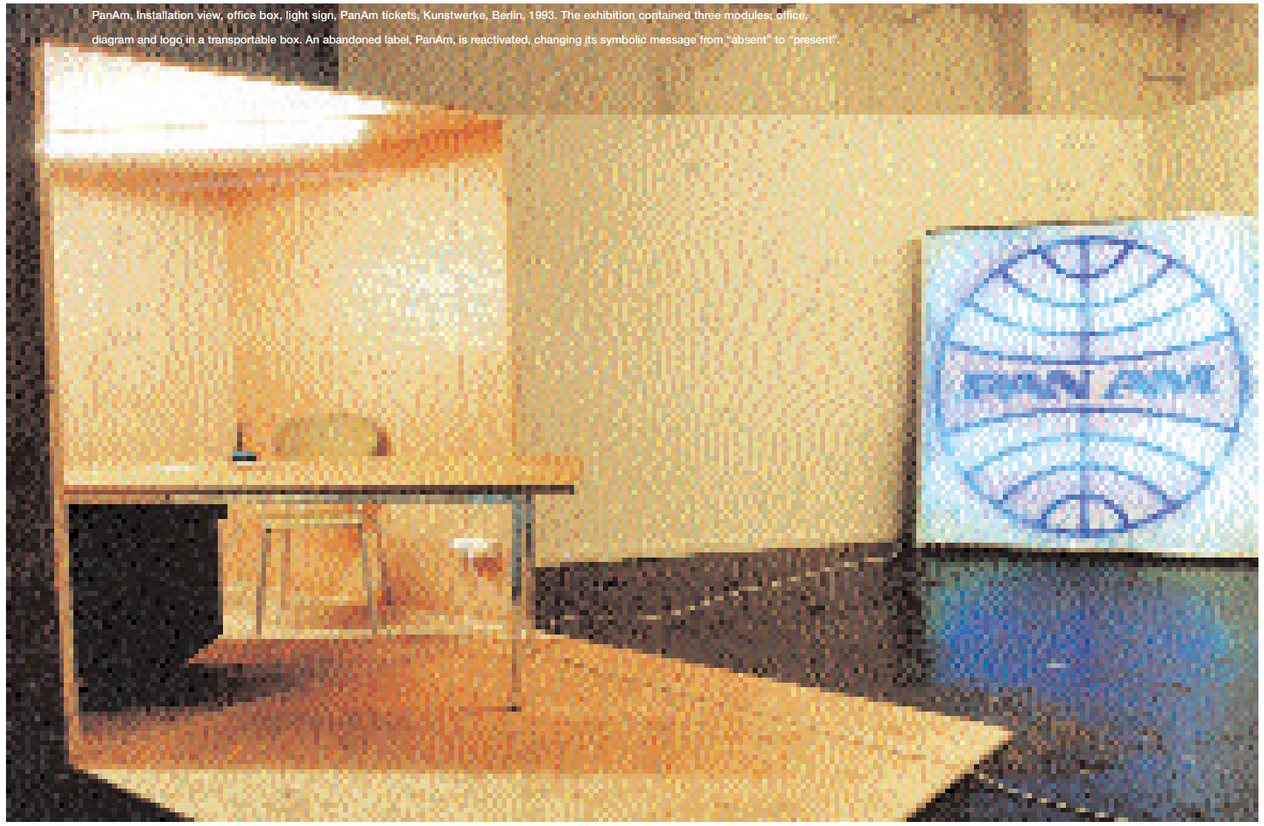
What followed, in short, was the installation of a cross-disciplinary, cultural laboratory, manifested already in the first Botschaft event, *Dromomania*, in 1990. *Dromomania* focused on architectural development in the new capital by inviting architects, artists and civil rights groups to participate in a week-long, multi-facetted series of performances, discussions and art shows. The intention was to propose alternative directions to the seemingly predestined shaping of the city. Public conversations explored the history of the neighborhood and led to the protection of the WMF building as an historical landmark. The urgency of such discussions became clear when, in line with its drive to gentrify East Berlin, the city evicted one of its thriving squatter scenes.

One year later, Botschaft had to abandon its first location and opened the Friseur, a new bar and exhibition space around the corner. The Friseur and the third floor of that same building (which functioned as meeting, work and office space) were the focal points of most of Botschaft’s activities, whether Berlin-oriented or international in scope. In 1992, with a series of events in that space called *Richtig ‘92*, Botschaft defined another central focus of its practice: a loose, experimental notion of the “documentary,” or the political impact of word and image. “Fishing for Documents,” an international workshop/symposium of film- and video-makers, and “Museum for History,” a series of art shows on the notion of history, demonstrated this move.

Meanwhile, in the basement of the group’s former location, two members of Botschaft opened a club that took on the same name as the building (the former head office of a silverware manufacturer): The WMF. In the house next door, the Elektro opened. These two clubs formed a kind of Bermuda Triangle with Botschaft´s Friseur in what has since become a government area. At the center of a growing Berlin scene, these venues were influential in defining an “underground,” event-based culture that combined the energies of artistic activity, video and club life. Playing hide-and-seek with self-establishment and historicization, the following year was also the start of many initiatives under different names or labels within Botschaft.

The depersonalizing strategy of labeling was certainly already the reason for the foundation of something called Botschaft. Art was only one focus of an organization that didn’t want to be called an “artist group,” and so its formation was conceived with a feeling of opposition to the well known dynamics of an art world organized around individual names and signature styles. Over the years, the same principle would be opposed in Botschaft’s collective approach to video production and writing.

As Botschaft developed and expanded, its members began to realize that they would not always be able to work on the same issues at the same time and in the same ways. While the name served well as an umbrella in those days, the wish to diversify, while still maintaining a kind of anonymity, was one reason for the proliferation of spin-off labels. Still, all sub-labels were somehow tied to the basic structure.



PanAm, Installation view, office box, light sign, PanAm tickets, Kunstwerke, Berlin, 1993. The exhibition contained three modules: office, diagram and logo in a transportable box. An abandoned label, PanAm, is reactivated, changing its symbolic message from “absent” to “present”.

This combination of independence and alliance with a main frame or strategy allowed the development of activities that otherwise might not have been possible, some of them concepts that would not necessarily have passed the broader consensus of the whole group. The diversification across multiple productions and initiatives can also be seen as an attempt to effectively loosen the control that group work can impose on its collaborators.

Well aware of the limitations of the documentary genre, the inventors of both the Association of Strategic Accidents (ASA) and the Arbeitskreis Touristische Perspektiven (ATP) experimented with other ways of observing and engaging what they conceived of as a corporatized industrial world. Practicing within the historical notion of the post-industrial entertainment society, ASA attempted to imagine a consumer-oriented world where products are sold via attributes that would not apply to the average customer of today. Producing fake advertisements in the form of posters and videos, ASA proposed an alternative lifestyle through products whose consumption involved a certain “risk” – ranging from banalities like smoking to extreme face-lifting. Risk analysis, and its seemingly important role in a technologically advanced society, was at the core of a series of articles that were published in papers and magazines. ASA produced what one could call a cynically overstated report on a media-saturated society, elaborated later in published interviews.

Through similar tactics, ATP addressed the tourism industry by turning the analytic methods of post-colonial discourse back on their countries of origin: the object of scientific observation would be the western explorer, the bourgeois traveler, the colonizing subject. Taking aim at the building site-infested landscape of Berlin, ATP cordoned off the larger part of a huge exhibition room with a construction fence. A poster from Herzog’s *Fitzcarraldo* drew a comparison between the megalomania of urban development schemes and the film director’s operatic conquest of the South American jungle. Refusing to be represented in the Berlin Bethanien showroom, ATP opened a booth at the Tourist Fair instead. One of ATP’s members would later present modern camping gear in a natural history museum in Denmark. ASA and ATP then collaborated in the proposal of “civil war tourism,” but here reality finally caught up when war broke out in Yugoslavia.

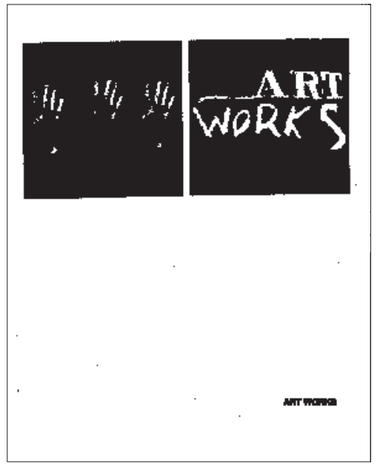
It is no wonder that, in 1993, participants of

both labels, along with two other Botschaft members, continued working under the previously established label “Dogfilm.” Dogfilm stood for a collective that produced documentaries for German public and private television up until the year 2000. Accompanying broader ideas of aesthetic and/or political intervention in public space, much of its early work was connected specifically to ongoing projects within the larger Botschaft frame. Later, after the dissolution of Botschaft, Dogfilm would go on to create whole TV evenings on Arte, the French/German TV channel.
Botschaft’s politics of labeling also allowed the possibility of including non-members as the core group’s range of interests expanded and diversified. The Museum der Zukunft (“Museum for Future”) is an example of a project whose participants were made up mainly of extra-Botschafterians. While seemingly a continuation of the “Museum for History” event, Museum der Zukunft did not, like the former, feature artists’ ideas.
Collecting and cataloging concepts to save the world,” the MdZ attempted to discuss the function and potential of utopian ideas while engaging heterogeneous disciplines. MdZ was introduced as an archive and workspace in the Künstlerhaus Bethanien (never showing in Botschaft’s spaces), presenting long rows of hanging folders, transcribed interviews, seating areas, and questionnaires to be filled out by visitors and members.
A scientific approach, on the basis of an acknowledged “anti-expertise,” was implicit in early Botschaft´s labeling tactics. It was represented, beyond the already mentioned organizations, by Homo Aquarius Project and E-Smog Archiv. The former engaged in a correspondence with a group of Japanese students who had traveled to Africa to find evidence of human evolution from water. Inspired by the idea of explorations led by anti-experts, this project’s outcome was somewhere between art and biology. E-smog Archiv’s focus was on the social, mental and physical impacts of the electronic age. From the potential threat of electronic smog caused by cellular phones to the possible improvement of life through Wilhelm Reich´s *Orgone Automat,* E-smog re-interpreted the scientific and the meta-scientific within a contemporary, critical-theoretical framework. Calling itself a “rhizomatic context machine,” the project conceptualized the invention of electricity through late, French theory. Its ideas on communication as an effect of the electrified age were then transposed to the evolving Internet, resulting in the foundation of an influential meta-media journal and mailing list called “nettime.”
Videobar organized event-oriented nights with special video presentations in the above-mentioned triangle of bars (Elektro, WMF and Friseur), connecting them via cable, camera and monitor. Videobar was at the vanguard of a growing interest in cultural productions that linked the worlds of the club, the street and the art gallery. Sometimes Videobar would produce these events in collaboration with *HalloTV* - the latter being something like the antipode to Botschaft’s documentary practice, “Who is really important here?,” *HalloTV* would ask with the Hi8 camera pointed at the participants of art fairs and other likely occasions, ironically addressing the hierarchies of the art world. *HalloTV* later engaged in the production of quasi-endless videos to be screened at night on German TV.
ConzeptKonzept collected and distributed an enormous list of art-related addresses, exposing the interrelations between art and the service industry. Claiming its status as art, the project was a comment on the commodification of even the least product-oriented works. In its proposals, it contextualized itself in direct marketing, semiotics, postal services and informatics, thereby evoking the impossibility of art production outside of a complex system to which it always relates.
Comparably, the sub-label PanAm appropriated the name of the bankrupt airline to undermine the very idea that a medium is at all important for art and similar systems. PanAm saw the use of planes by the former airline as a side effect, rather than as a necessity. Its work being more about the question of “presence” and representation, PanAm thematized the function of the logo when writing, “The logo is a symbol. Its function (like that of every logo) is based on the stupidity of the signifier. This function is then, strictly after Lacan, to “stupidify” or to render the strategy of the presence in the background unrecognizable. The logo is the central projection area for the production of desire.”
If the logo´s function is to strategically hide presence, it is for this reason an extremely effective tactic in the art world (where presence is everything). While Botschaft, as a meta-label, may have introduced such a presence, it insisted on giving all the different practices it combined under this name a strictly programmatic description. This was necessary especially because Botschaft functioned not only in the art world, but established and conceptualized its own space of production. It’s true that, during this time, the attention of art critics and curators demanded a reaction. And the proliferation into sub-labels was an answer: by engaging in the production of multiple labels (some with very short life spans), Botschaft simultaneously subverted the very effect of the establishment of presence, turning this market function against itself.
In contrast to Botschaft’s labeling practice, the art world’s more recent interest in business strategies – a widespread fascination with the (now fading) market euphoria and dot-com orgies of the mid-90s – seems motivated more by a desire to participate in cross-promotional opportunities with financial powers. Similarly, the appropriation of corporate products and logos as artistic ready-mades often does little more than reaffirm the business strategies it mimics. These strategies are deliberate reductions of the possibilities of art into another marketing tool for the corporate world, and serve the dominant interests of both the cultural institution and the new economy. Recent exhibitions of corporate art collections in Germany underline this fact. Art concepts that aim to project what they call business “reality” onto art production are, especially in their more affirmative forms, rather the opposite of what most Botschaft members intended in their work. Although the multiplicity and cross-disciplinary range of Botschaft’s approaches and guises makes it difficult to locate a single, unifying political concept behind their collective practice, it produced a decidedly non-affirmative – and for that reason inherently critical – bundle of tactics.

FLORIAN ZEYFANG, BERLIN, JANUARY 2001

Botschaft were: Dominique Croissant, Bettina Ellerkamp, Peter Iblher, Natascha Sadr Haghighian, Jörg Heitmann, Christoph Keller, Merle Kröger, Ed van Megen, Martin Leeder, Daniel Pflumm, Tom Prilop, Philip Scheffner, Gereon Schmitz, Gerriet Schultz, Pit Schultz, Petra Trojan, Carolin Weise, Florian Zeyfang and others.

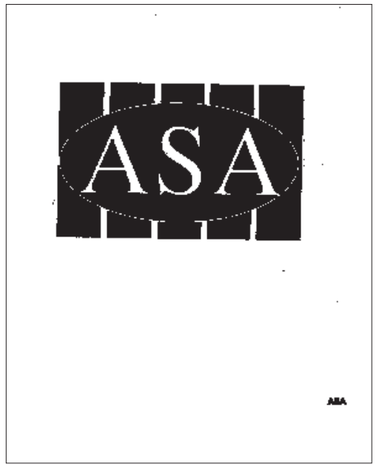
Collaborators included: Daggie Brundert, Alexander Christou, Harald Fricke, Christiane Heckes, Stefan Heidenreich, Christian Hoffmann, Ines Schaber, Habiba Sheikh, Kai Schimenz and many others.

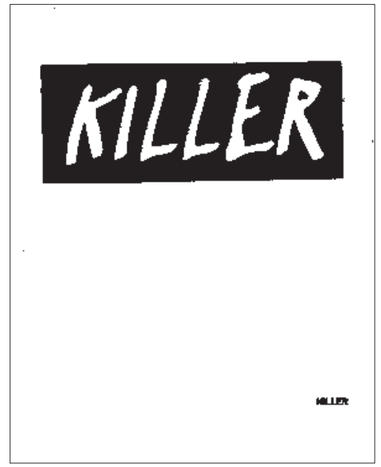


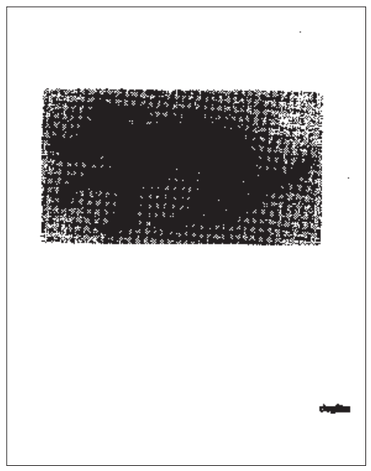


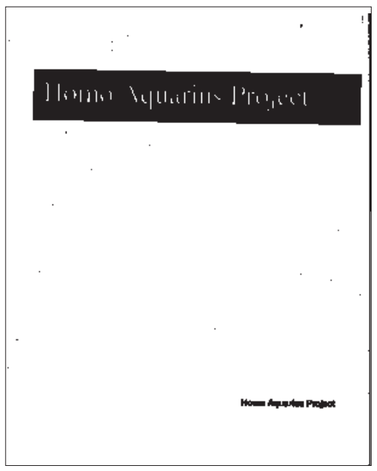


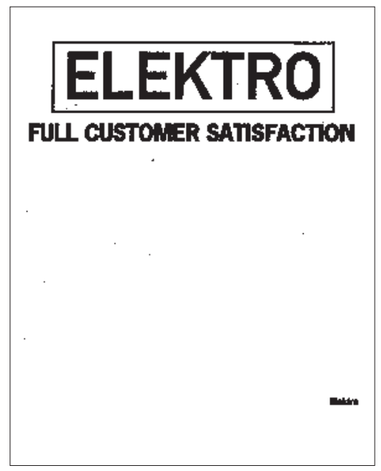


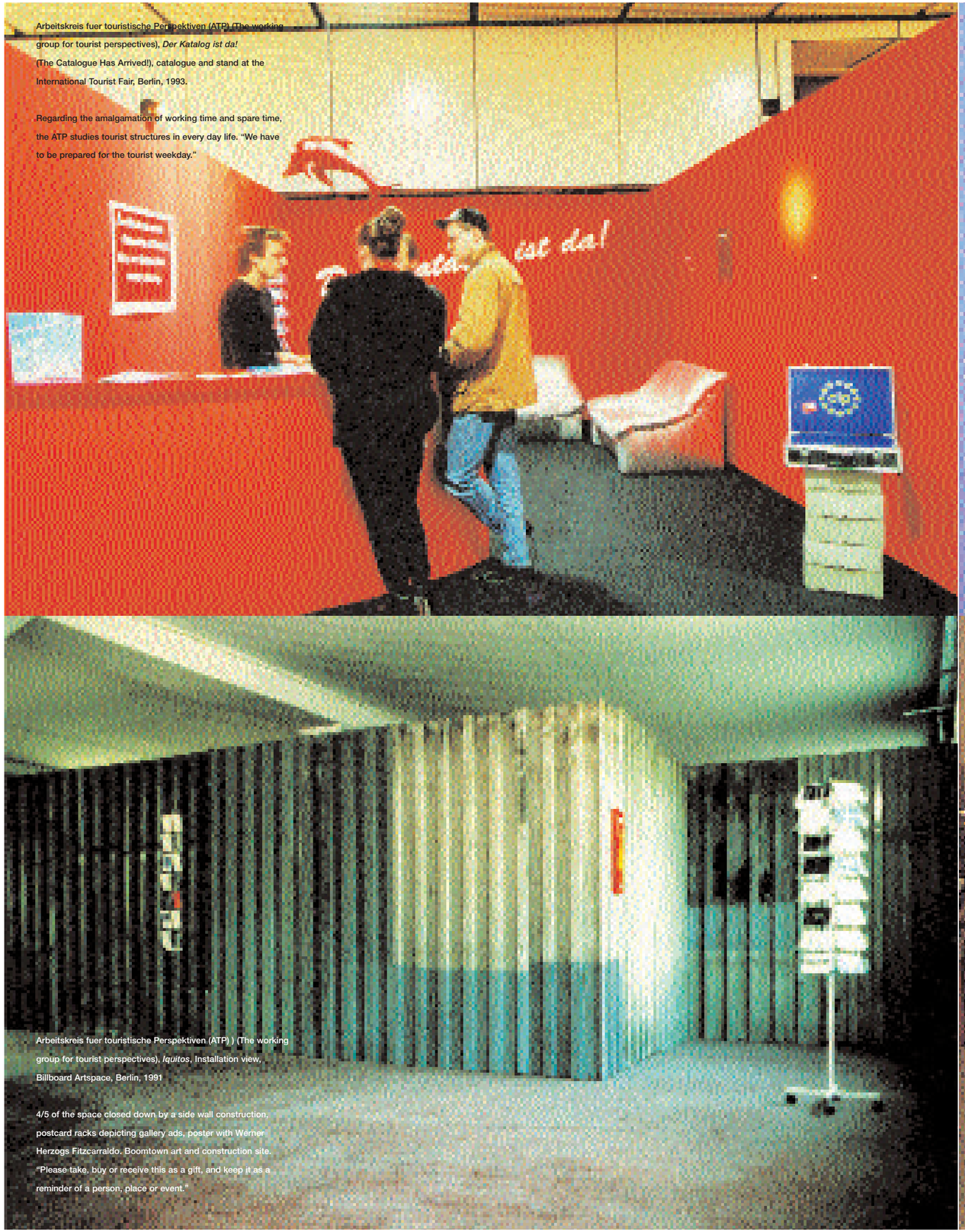












Arbeitskreis fuer touristische Perspektiven (ATP) (The working group for tourist perspectives), *Der Katalog ist da!* (The Catalogue Has Arrived!), catalogue and stand at the International Tourist Fair, Berlin, 1993.

Regarding the amalgamation of working time and spare time, the ATP studies tourist structures in every day life. "We have to be prepared for the tourist weekday."

Arbeitskreis fuer touristische Perspektiven (ATP)) (The working group for tourist perspectives), *Iquitos*, Installation view, Billboard Artspace, Berlin, 1991

4/5 of the space closed down by a side wall construction, postcard racks depicting gallery ads, poster with Werner Herzogs Fitzcarraldo. Boomtown art and construction site. "Please take, buy or receive this as a gift, and keep it as a reminder of a person, place or event."



Association for Strategic Accidents (ASA), *New Advertisements*, Billboards, Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, 1994.

Each product being made or each service being offered has its own co-produced risk, the risk of false application or misuse. The ASA claims that such a risk plays an important attractive role in deciding whether to buy a product or to use a service. (www.assforstratacc.org).



Museum fuer Zukunft (MFZ) (Museum for the Future), *Wir stellen um auf EDV* (We change to Electronic Data Processing (EDP)), Meeting Space, Archive of Concepts for the Future, Medien Biennale, Leipzig, 1994

Invited by the Medienbiennale Leipzig, the Museum fuer Zukunft decided to work on the digitalisation of its archive, a collection of plans, ideas, projects all aimed at "the future". The title was chosen to sound deliberately old fashioned, establishing a distance to internet and media hype in these years.

IT IS THE APPLIANCE OF ART THAT INTERESTS US

Kathrin Böhm/Stefan Saffer

JUNE 1999

Mannesmann Pilot Development, Munich, a research center for new and future technologies, meets with Artcircolo, a Munich-based art consulting agency. The agenda seems clear: a research department that promotes technological development in cross-disciplinary contexts seeks an art that reflects its company's image, something innovative and open to experimental working methods. That means no paintings on the wall, but interventions in and around the office space. Artists Kathrin Böhm and Stefan Saffer are invited.

JULY 1999

A start date for the year-long project is agreed upon. Together we discuss some ideas for site-specific interventions that would refer to previous Mannesmann projects. The interventions should follow a loose program, enacted sporadically throughout the year. They should be surprising, even irritating. Two large scale works are planned for the beginning, and we are invited to give an introductory talk and slide show as our contribution to their in-house workshop.

JULY 4, 1999

To inaugurate our project, a buffet for the entire staff is ordered for Tuesday evening. And there is a plan to unveil our sculpture on the balcony! What sculpture?

JULY 5, 1999

"Please Do Not Touch" signs are posted. Do not touch what?

JULY 7, 1999

At 4 p.m., the slide presentation goes well. We have fun talking about the strategy of interventions within familiar spaces in order to alter perception and to experiment with new uses of those spaces. The option of low-tech materials. The pleasures of process. Promoting a need for art that is less self-determined, that questions and proposes instead.

JULY 7, 1999

The talk ends at 6:30 p.m. Good drinks and nice food as a special treat for everyone. The so-called "sculpture" on the balcony of the communal coffee/sitting area is unwrapped first. The big, blue plastic tarp is removed. A flat wooden platform is revealed: simple wood held together by some metal pieces. It was pure DIY and a very basic idea: that a communal outdoor area wants some structural flexibility in order to provide for diverse and spontaneous uses (sitting, lying, having a meeting, sunbathing, gazing at the Alps, giving a concert, watching an eclipse, etc.).

Plain wooden panels could be moved around on a simple base to create appropriate situations. It is immediately put to use and seems successful. The "we get a sculpture for the balcony" notion only lasts seconds. We painted the platform a couple of months later: brown and pink and yellow and blue. The second intervention of the day was: a dark front office. Why? Because the office rooms are placed on the upper two floors of a new building in the South of Munich, and on a normal, clear day the Alps are visible on the horizon. Beautiful. But due to problems with the sun reflecting on the computer monitors, the blinds are normally kept closed (one solution). But wouldn't it be nice if the natural light could be regulated a bit more precisely, depending on the needs and desires of individual workers? If you could see the Alps and still see your monitor? Our solution: we covered all the windows with brown wrapping paper. This way, everybody could just tear off those bits that let light in and still block out big reflections. We wanted to create a flexible set-up that allows parts of the window to be uncovered or re-covered when necessary. Our intention was to create a quick, cheap device, one that could be tested for a while until more permanent design solutions are enacted. But what we didn't expect were the palm tree-shaped cut-outs. The hearts and cherries torn from the paper. Wild abstract patterns and stars all over. The brown wrapping paper became a kind of canvas inviting expressions that don't normally coincide with the corporate identity. It became a space for free play, and was left for quite a while because the users of the room enjoyed it.

OCTOBER 1999

Brown, beige and yellow paint on the kitchen windows provoke fierce complaints. Graffiti appears on the paint. Reactions and comments spread through the offices. "Mannesmann is blue and we worked hard on the interior design. What is the reason for this ugly paint on the windows?" "Maybe it's about the need for contrast?" This leads to a discussion about corporate identity.

DECEMBER 1999

The fulfilling of an art program becomes less and less important. More important are the exchanges with some of the employees. Exchanging ideas and information and trying to understand each other's professions and approaches.

JANUARY 2000

Mannesmann is about to launch a website called "www.futurecar.de" and asks us, as artists, to participate. Some cool designs or mad interiors. We decline this offer, but come up with a different idea: instead of predicting the car of the future, we offer a particular context for it. We link their website to our public art project for underneath London's Westway fly-over. An art project as a prototype for what might be the new meaning of a car. Declaring the car to be a space. A private space in the public sphere. Combining ideas.

APRIL 2000

The project is officially finished. Instead of printing a documentation, we publish a brochure together *Business to Business*. "It's the application of art processes that interest us." The collected statements explore a possible position and meaning for art within a corporate context. To order a copy, write to: mottomix@web.de.

We still talk to Holger, Walter, Bernd and Peter on a regular basis. The exchange is on-going. Waiting for more opportunities.

KATHRIN BÖHM, MUNICH, NOVEMBER 2000



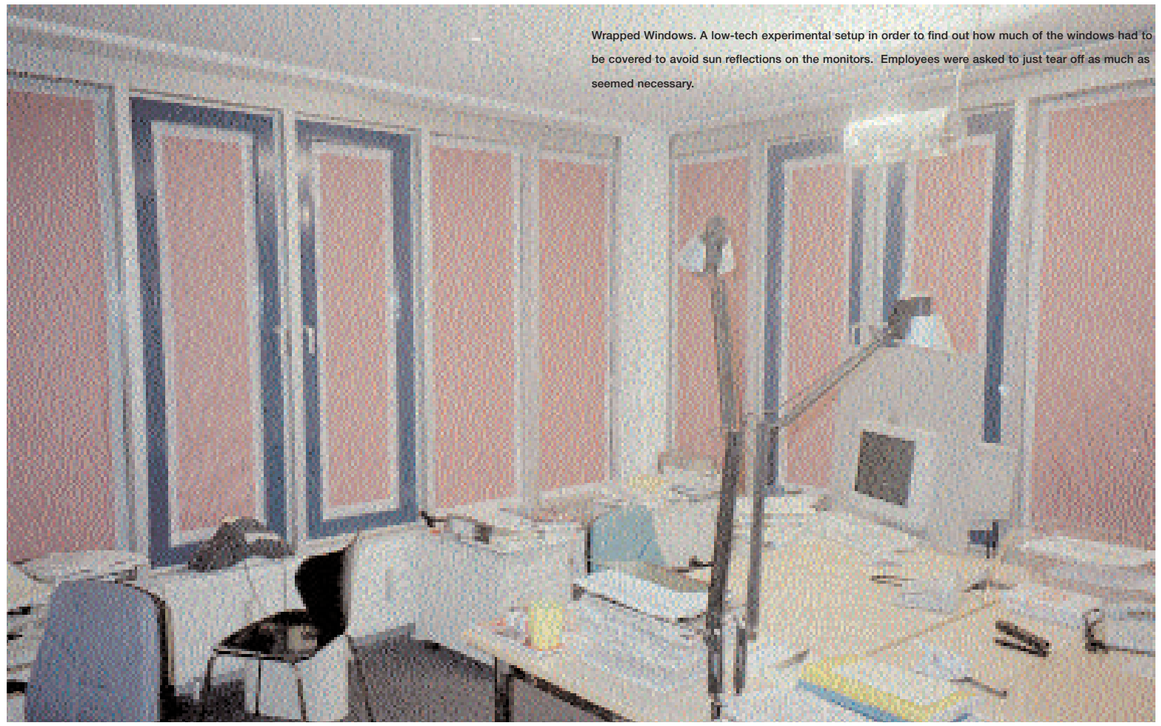


Graffiti in white paint



This intervention was to cover the windows in the kitchen area with paint, interrupting habitual, daily perception. And they really didn't like it at all. "The colors are horrible and the way it's painted is just appalling!" Mini graffitis appeared in the paint. And we had a big discussion about corporate identity. We suggested to the CI guy that instead of painting more windows we would like to start a game with him: a ping-pong conversation on this whole issue and our quotes would be spread through the office on Post-its.

Torn Paper. Surprisingly, the people who work in the office space, discovered the plain paper as a field for expression.



Wrapped Windows. A low-tech experimental setup in order to find out how much of the windows had to be covered to avoid sun reflections on the monitors. Employees were asked to just tear off as much as seemed necessary.



Painted Platform. The platfrom was the sculpture-to-be-unwrapped. A very simple design. A flexible structure that can be used for choir evenings, sunbathing, small meetings, etc. The panels are loose and can be arranged however. The platform was plain wood in the beginning and we painted it a couple of months later. Ongoing changes. It still remains there and became a very popular feature within the office.

The Mannesmann Pilot Development section's (MPD) aim is to develop new concepts for the Mannesmann group. This is done by an interdisciplinary team working to cope with sundry tasks in the industrial automotive, engineering and telecommunication sectors. The comprehension of social structures, modifications and influences is of paramount importance for an enormous number of MPD projects. These have to be considered from every conceivable point of view. In my co-operation with the artists, Kathrin Böhm and Stefan Saffer, I have come to value their very individual and natural views and perception of the environment, of social processes and possible variations.
I also appreciate their rather unconventional solutions within the internal process of the MPD section. For example, they solved the problem of the glare on the computer screens by simply pasting paper onto the office windows. They further improved the usefulness of the roof garden by introducing a basic structure with a wooden frame and wood planks to construct tables, seats and benches.
The current joint venture between the "technically geared" Mannesmann Pilot Development section and the artists is the composition of an Internet page named "futurecar." In this page the technical aspects should be combined with artistic, social and political ones under the heading of "Future Prospects of the Car," thus allowing for a much broader view of the range of problems involved. All in all, I have enjoyed the time shared with Kathrin Böhm and Stefan Saffer who have helped me expand my point of view and opinions of many things. I also learned that it is very often possible to look at problems from another angle and arrive at completely different solutions.
I am looking forward to the visits of Kathrin Böhm and Stefan Saffer who, being "gaily coloured birds," are adding zest and lots of new and exciting dimensions, not only to our work, but to everything.

DR. WALTER SCHÜTZ, PHYSICIST, SENIOR TECHNOLOGY MANAGER, MANNESMANN PILOT DEVELOPMENT, MUNICH

Kathrin Böhm/Stefan Saffer, excerpts from *Business to Business*, Mannesmann Pilotenwicklung, Munich; Articolo, Munich; mottomix, Berlin/London, 2000.

Kathrin Böhm & Stefan Saffer

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joint practice

Working as a team.
Working with different partners.
Working in different context.

Combining ideas, skills and dreams.
Combining art with whatsoever.

It´s the possible appliance of art that interests us.

We can´t deny that we enjoy creating. Working with space and colours and materials.
We can´t deny that we would like to see art as being a more relevant aspect of society.

Our art practice is very much based on a direct engagement with the site, both physically and socially. A 1:1 communication with the visitors/passers-by is as important as the realisation of 1:1 visual and architectural ideas on site.

Building something and creating a social site that allows casual encounters.
Art as an optional contribution towards a public space.
Art practice meets all sorts of practice.

Art as a clear realisation of our ideas.
Our art as a place for the projections of others.
Allowing shifts in meaning though others.
Creating an environment of different motivations and concerns that creates unpredictable results.

Opening up space.

June 2000

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

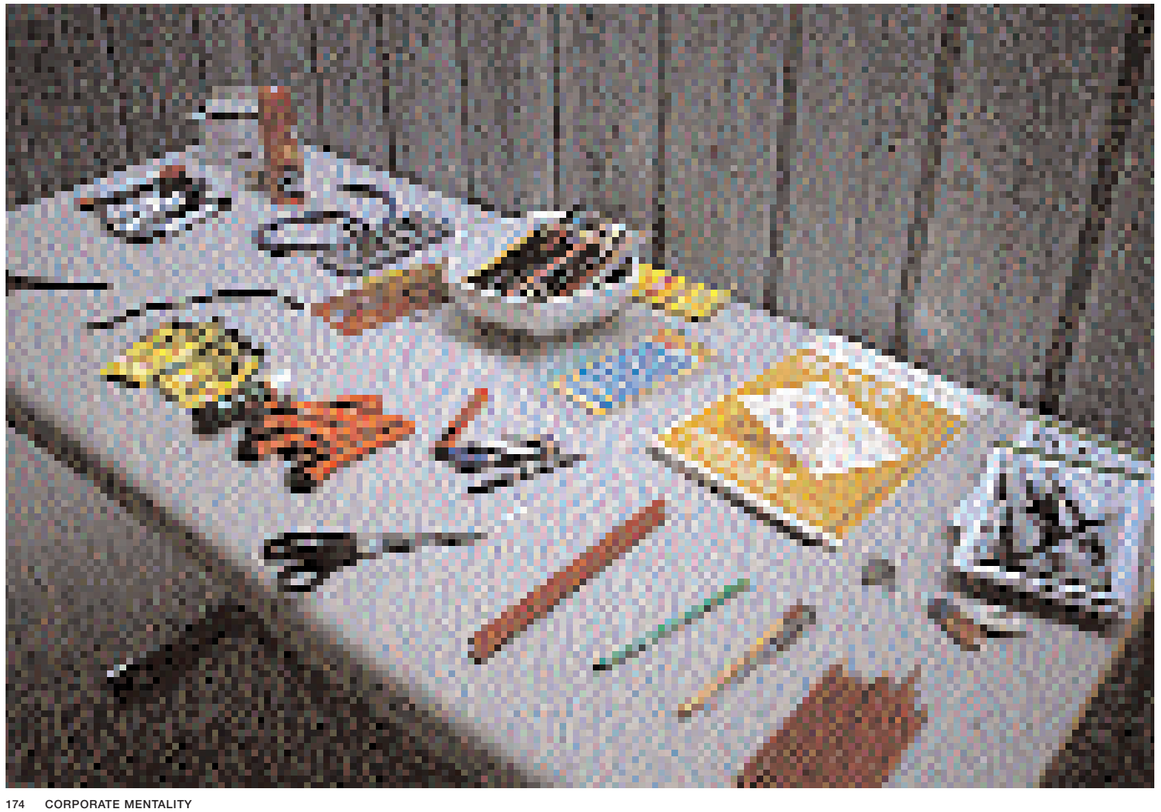
Kathrin Böhm/Stefan Saffer

During the summer of 2000 we (Stefan and I) were invited to run an artist workshop as part of the Siemens Managment Training. We were asked to coordinate a workshop for young executives of high potential within the company. This workshop takes place on the last day of a year-long internal management training program.
We call our workshop the *Model Workshop* and ask the participants to choose one term from their professional vocabulary that became relevant to them during the last year. The task is to translate this term into a model or mini-statue. We provide all sorts of architectural maquette material, plus glitter, spray paint and other craft supplies.
We explain that it's not just about making something by yourself in 3-D, but that this object shall also function as a paperweight on your very own office desk. So young executives' "relevant terms" travel back to their everyday work environment as visible mini-interventions, inviting the "What's that?" question so often addressed to art.

KATHRIN BÖHM/STEFAN SAFFER, LONDON/BERLIN, JUNE 2000



Model Workshop for the Siemens Management Training Program, in the chimney lounge of their training centre in Feldafing/Starnberg Lake near Munich, October 2000-October 2001.







Trust by Thorsten Reinhold, “I need my team to trust me.”



The Dream to Fly by Patrik Rokyta, “In principle, everybody wants to achieve something that seems unreachable. With this symbol I want to say: you should still believe that you can achieve it. It’s to encourage you not to give up on dreams.”



Global Office for Global Birds by Stefan Kandlbinder, “Our mind should be as free as a bird - limitless.”



Mobility and Nature by Matthias Kroschel, “I asked myself: what’s important for me? And I said to myself: on the one side it’s mobility, which can mean the car but also mobile phones or telecommunication – and those issues also reflect my work. But what is even more important for me is that I’m a person who loves to be outdoors, in nature, and I appreciate environmentally-friendly items. The object tries to combine those two issues. I want mobility to give me more freedom in nature.”



Highflyer by Ulf Pillkahn, “Sky is the limit.”



Work-Family-Me by Gerd Schorner, “This is a very personal object. The three Japanese characters represent work, family and me. I personally find it extremely important to position those three issues in a healthy and balanced way – which is the only way to make the whole thing round (perfect).”



I (me) by Boob Kalpen, “That’s just me. As I’m only in charge for Siemens Germany – concerning our department – I only built half a globe.”

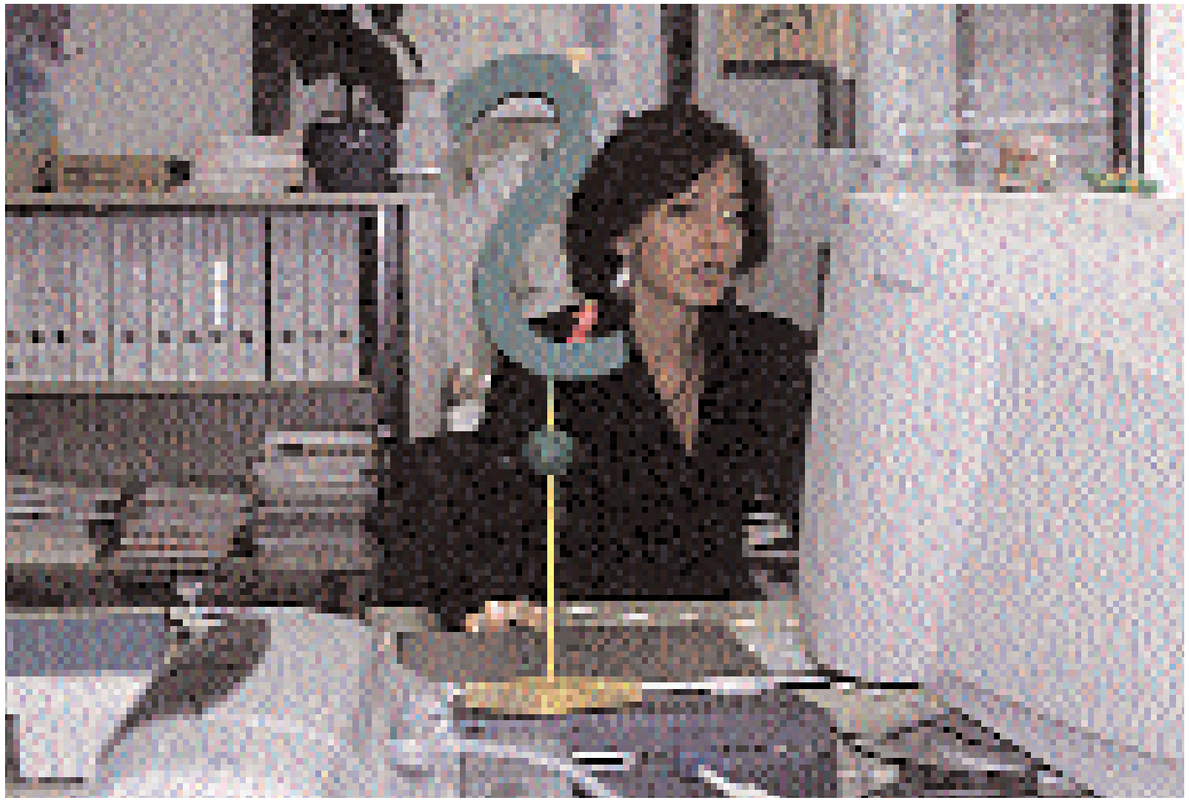


Selfmotivator by (unknown), “I didn’t know what to do at the beginning of this workshop and I wasn’t motivated at all. Therefore, I made a little selfmotivator that I can carry in my bag. And it helped. I show it to others and they smile.”



Strategy for Questioning (Question Techniques) by Wiebke Lawrenz, “Questions (questioning) is very relevant to me as I’m a curious person and I want to find out about things. It also means to understand and respect others. That’s one aspect, and the other one is: I’m a consultant who deals with question strategies: questions that are put in the right way can massively change others’ heads.”





GEMINI SCULPTURE PARK – UK CORPORATE SCULPTURE CONSULTANCY

Chris Evans

It's a global world, up here in the twenty-first century. Things are in motion whether you like it or not – whether you're part of them or you quit makes no difference because (and this is the killer, since there's absolutely no way round it) you're just one person. You're small. You don't count. You think you do, but you don't. Better people than you, more famous, more important, more talented, better-looking, are falling off the map all the time and somehow the planet copes. Everybody knows there's no such thing as irreplaceable because we, I mean we humans, built things that way on purpose. We have structures, procedures, routines and sub-routines. We have governments and corporations. We have teamwork, market research, middle management and focus groups. I know that when it's put like that it can sound wrong somehow, but it's true. We did it, and now it's done. It's history, and it's the future, but most of all it's here, and it's now.

The Gemini Park, on the edge of Chapeltown in Leeds (and if the word Chapeltown there didn't make you mentally hit the brakes and three-point turn, I guess you never spent much time in Leeds, or else you come from Chapeltown) is a modest development, not exactly industrial or trading estate, definitely not a retail park. It's an office park, more or less equivalent to those turn-of-the-century sandstone blocks with names like "Baltic Chambers" carved over the door. The buildings are all alike but different, built to a plan that (I'm guessing here) wasn't created with the Gemini Park specifically in mind. They're off the shelf, and nondescript to the point where they stand out. They enclose sufficient space for economically viable activity to take place with adequate car parking alongside, but you wouldn't come here sightseeing. You might come here if you were in Leeds and needed a debt collected, or a structural engineering problem solved, or a telecommunications or computer system installed, or if you fancied a spot of light ram-raiding. The Gemini Park offers all these things and more. In fact, it offers all these things plus a certified quantity surveyor – you never know when you'll need one. The Gemini Park is a snapshot, a controlled sample, of all the almost invisible stuff that makes our service-centered economy tick. It's no accident. It might feel like the edge of something, a place you'll most likely never go, but secretly it's our heartland, a statistical midpoint. More than that, it's the perfection of an ideal, an ideal that nobody wants to claim but that exists all the same. An ideal that we remake every day, any time we take places like this for granted.

Chris Evans's *Gemini Sculpture Park* is the first project of his UK Corporate Sculpture Consultancy. Corporate art is different to public art. Public art has high-minded aims. It educates, it beautifies, it raises the tone in general. Corporate art is a study in social Darwinism, like the antlers of the great elk or the tails of birds of paradise. It's a case of display substituted for combat, of the ability to channel excess power into ornament standing in for the physical threat of power. Switzerland, for example, is big on corporate art. Consultancy is something else again. We're all consultants of one kind or another. As Oscar Wilde said, "I always pass on good advice. It is the only thing to do with it. It is never of any use to oneself."

The *Gemini Sculpture Park* is different. It's an experiment in corporate art as public service, a new concept as far as I know. If this was a purely market-driven situation, Evans would have to persuade the companies they needed his services so much, they'd pay. But they don't have to, and neither does he, which allows a certain amount of freedom on both sides. There's room for an exchange of ideas, an element of risk-taking. At the same time the process of negotiation and compromise is central to the project and the sculptures being proposed for the Gemini Park still have to work for both artist and client. They have to achieve synthesis, unity of form and function on more and tougher levels than Moore or Modigliani ever had to consider, though Michelangelo pulled off much the same trick with the Sistine Chapel, working in a tightly defined corporate situation ("On the ceiling? You are joking?") but still managing to get away with a frankly astounding amount of pictures of young naked men.

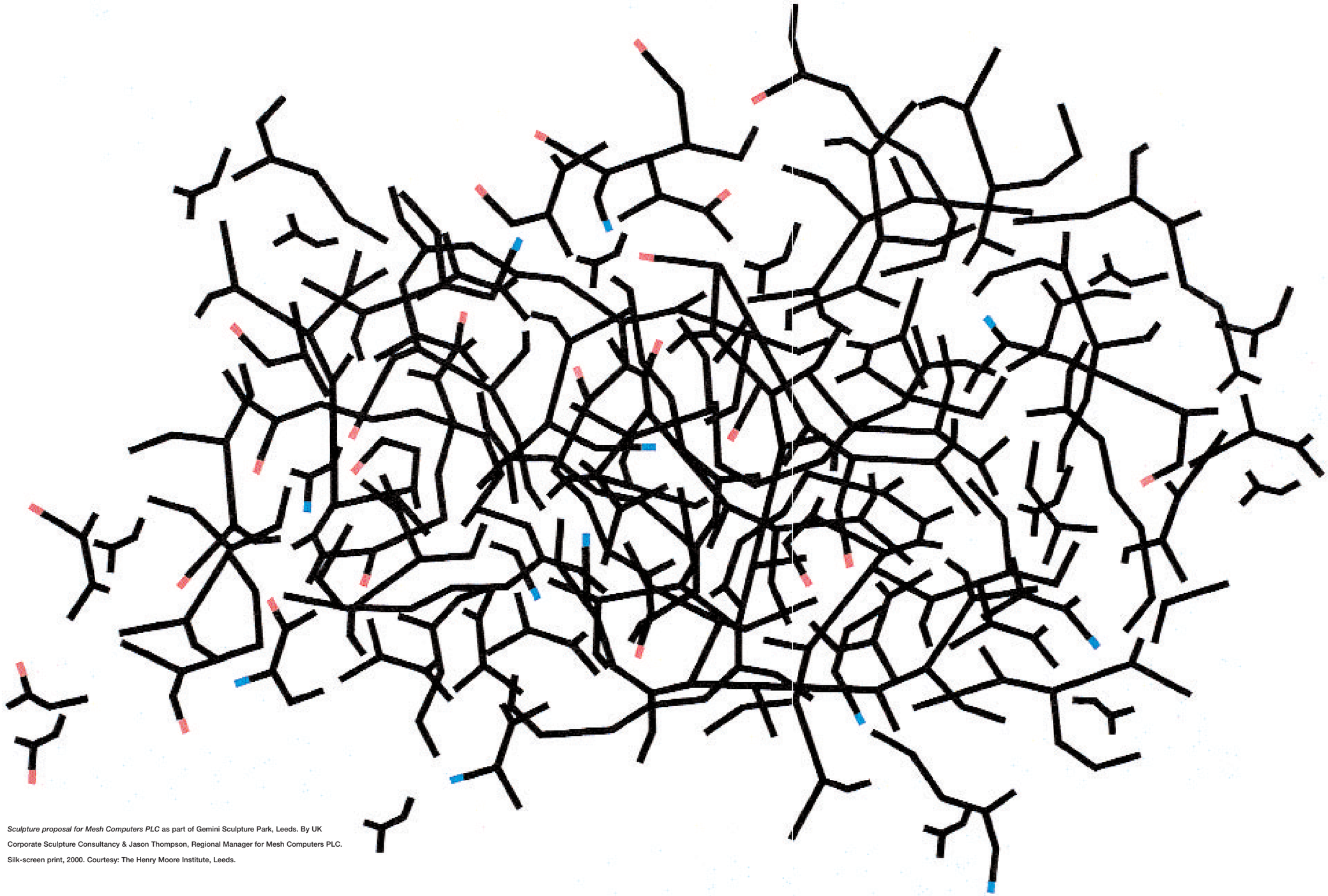
The first public presentation of the *Gemini Sculpture Park* designs is at the Henry Moore Institute, in Leeds' regenerated city centre. It's part town planners' proposal meeting, part cool post-pop art show, and part subversion of both of the above. The UK Corporate Art Consultancy works on a pretty standard business model, with Evans as manager and creative director. He negotiates with the clients and comes up with mutually agreeable concepts, and then sub-contracts other artists to make the work to his specifications. In fact, Padraig Timoney, Toby Paterson, Kevin Hutcheson and Graham Fagen actually produced the exhibition. Evans's most overt input is the design of a series of screenprints, minimal re-interpretations of the plans for the finished sculptures. More like corporate logos, and at the same time more like contemporary art as we know it, they're the revenge of forgotten graphics everywhere – showing us what they could do if they got the chance, playing tricks with art history, rising up and demanding equal rights. The show links the surface of the UK Corporate Art Consultancy project to its deeper context, from the simple-but-slightly-warped idea to the conversations with the company bosses and their choices; the skewed relationship with the Serra-on-a-bank-plaza school of corporate art; the legacy of Hans Haacke; the genuine engagement with formal issues in sculpture; the idea of the *Gemini Sculpture Park* standing alongside the wilderness sculpture parks of the seventies as a place of potential future pilgrimage; and the schizophrenic nature of the final objects themselves. Deep down, it's conceptual art but it's corrupted, in the best way, by the reality of a visitor to a northern office park momentarily distracted by a tiny bronze cast of a Venus flytrap on a patch of well-kept lawn outside a debt collection agency. It has a hidden agenda, of course, but what's hidden is that its agenda is the same one we're all working to, and it's not the UK Corporate Art Consultancy that hid it. It's us. We hide it from ourselves. Mostly we look at things upside down. As one very successful New York corporate restructuring consultant puts it, if you make a painting, what happens? Somebody puts it on a wall. So you have to realize you're really in the wall improvement business. And what does a better wall do? It makes the whole room somehow more pleasing. So already you've moved up into environmental enhancement. And if you've enhanced someone's environment, you've probably made them feel good. So ultimately you're in making people happy. We all are, aren't we? The *Gemini Sculpture Park* is an experiment in how artists can operate in this situation, co-operate with it, learn to unreservedly love it. But artists don't count. They think they do, but they don't. What counts is how any of us can operate in this situation, and what's good is that an artwork can sometimes bring that into focus, just for a second, and let us see what it is we've done - can make me think, screaming inside, sweet Jesus, please, make it stop. And then, a second later...everything's cool, beautiful. Neat.

WILL BRADLEY, GLASGOW, SEPTEMBER 2000





Padraig Timoney, artists impression of *Gemini Sculpture Park*.



Sculpture proposal for Mesh Computers PLC as part of Gemini Sculpture Park, Leeds. By UK Corporate Sculpture Consultancy & Jason Thompson, Regional Manager for Mesh Computers PLC. Silk-screen print, 2000. Courtesy: The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds.



Unit 9 MESH Computers PLC

Jason Thompson is the Regional Manager for Mesh Computers PLC. Their office has been based at Gemini Business Park for two years.

Jason Thompson: The wall underneath that display there has all just been rebuilt. The car was in the showroom.

Chris Evans: When was that?

JT: It was about a month ago they ram-raided the place. We sustained serious structural damage. The builders have just left.

CE: I remember you saying last time that you'd been broken into 4 times in the last 6 months.

JT: Yes, I got here another time and they were robbing the place. They were walking in and out, the lights were on, and they'd even helped themselves to a glass of water on the job.

CE: Christ.

JT: They noticed me and drove straight at me and my wife. They tried to run us down.... (pause). We've had to invest in so much security here. I worked for the British Army in Belfast for a number of years but I never encountered a situation as frightening as we've been in here. I've tried to instigate a security system shared by all the businesses here on the park but there's very little community spirit here. I don't know if you've picked that up.

CE: Yes, I have and I know about the situation in this area. I was stabbed in 1993, just up the road from here. Why do you think there is little in the way of interaction between people on Gemini Park?
JT: I think it's to do with what has happened on the business park. I think everyone has closed their doors and is protecting themselves. I think if we were in a nicer environment, I think people would chat, and probably go in and out of each other's offices talking, staff integrating, that kind of thing. I thought about maybe even asking if everyone wanted to do a Christmas party for the business park this year.
CE: Sounds like a good idea (pause). I don't want to sound like I'm trivializing the situation, but it was through talking to you last time and hearing about this dilemma that I thought about a corporate sculpture for Mesh that would also act as a barrier. Before we talk about that, can I go over some of the suggestions you made on my last visit?
JT: Go ahead. I like the idea of a barrier. I have in the past suggested that the Business Park invest in a perimeter wall but it would start to look like a military establishment. I wouldn't like that. I'd feel contained.
CE: On my last visit we talked about the proposal for a corporate sculpture outside this office here on the grass bank there so people would see it in front of the Mesh building. I asked what kind of image of the place you would like it to suggest.
JT: Yes, having thought about it more, I'm still interested in the idea of something that reflects the way our business is constantly adapting. I was thinking about a shiny, chrome, liquid movement. I think technical industries are non-defined – they move. As the market moves we grow into it and we evolve into markets and move away from others. The sculpture can't define a fixed shape, it needs to portray that 3-dimensional movement as if it is adapting to different situations. Anything with an arrow or a point is unsuitable, it's cutting into something and we don't do that. We roll into commercial situations rather than penetrate them and we don't necessarily realize where the path is before it happens. In our business it's usually the customers that pull us into different areas.
CE: So initially you are led rather than actually trying to direct...
JT: I don't think we can. The market is too big for a company of this size to do that. Instead we play to our strengths. We are comparatively small in the field but what we offer, I think, is a very clean un-gimmicky brand. We communicate very well within the company which is not the norm for the industry. I've seen other firms where you'd see people throw down phones, swear and walk out. It's such an aggressive industry. There's no platform, no base to it and no governing bodies. Where else will people pay £1,500 on the phone for a product they've not even seen let alone tested. It's unique. I wouldn't do it.
CE: The way your company mutates perhaps parallels, in some way, the development of micro-technology itself. I remember hearing about the way the development of chip technology echoes the formation and mutation of cells in plant organisms (indicating cell structure diagrams and drawings).
JT: Yes, it could be said that technology should or is reflecting nature because nature is the most efficient form of development. I've seen these diagrams before that you're showing me.
CE: This one shows cell mutation. It's apparently called *Micro-gamatogenis*. Our version would be called *Stone Wall*. It looks like the cross-section of a human brain which maybe isn't what we're looking for.
JT: Maybe not... (pause)
CE: As a wall, even if it was, say, rendered in a dull black it would still perhaps be too archaic and fossil-like to represent what we've been talking about.
JT: If it is going to look like a stone wall we could always re-locate Chapeltown to Wales. I'd like that. But seriously though, I think this suggestion wouldn't really reflect a high-tech industry.
CE: No, but I continued looking at cell structures and morphology and came across these more angular, dynamic forms. This one is called a *Harvey RAS Oncogene*. A human cell mutation.
JT: That looks much more suitable. It would also relate well to the corporate identity of Mesh which, although originally coming from the initials of the original directors, has come to reflect the concept of a matrix. I also like the way that it doesn't look static. I think it would be good.
CE: And it could operate as a barrier, stretching along the grass bank outside.
JT: It wouldn't have to be that high would it? So you'd still see the building and the branding. It could also carry on along the bank and wouldn't have to be that small. It could be lower and longer, 3-dimensionally deeper in some places and narrower in others.
CE: Mutating as it stretches along.



Unit 4 Yorkshire Telecommunications Ltd.

Jeffrey Cohen is the Director of Yorkshire Telecommunications. The company was based at Gemini Business Park for four years until very recently when the firm moved to Network House, 34 Regent Street, Leeds.

Chris Evans: The last time we met we were talking about Yorkshire Telecommunications' corporate identity.
Jeffrey Cohen: Yes, the globe and the sash. We found ourselves constantly making circling motions with our hands when demonstrating to clients the way in which we operate – so the ring around the globe comes from the wish to portray ourselves as solution sellers, encompassing the requirements. It goes without saying that the industry we're involved in is global so the corporate logo is an amalgamation of these two aspects.
CE: How important is the image that the company reflects visually?
JC: It's very important. At the moment we're developing a website which will have all the up-to-date media, interactive games and so forth. It also has to look confident and cohesive.
CE: Would you see a sculpture outside your premises here as an extension of your public image?
JC: Yes, though I went to a business lunch recently and they were talking about the way you present yourself. I remember someone saying that 80% of the companies that put a fountain outside their corporate offices go bust.
CE: Water down the drain...

The designs for the sculptures are collaborations between the UK Corporate Sculpture Consultancy and the respective managing directors of each business on the park. Artists' impressions were commissioned by the consultancy from Padraig Timoney and Toby Patterson, and Graham Fagen cast one of the sculptures in bronze.

JC: Maybe, though I guess it could just be a corporate myth. It makes sense though not to be too ostentatious.
CE: OK, so we should make sure things don't get too huge in scale. Your idea for a corporate sculpture for Yorkshire Telecommunications was something that would integrate the aspects of the globe and circling line from the logo but in a 3 dimensional form and with reference to the nature of the business.
JC: Yes, I like the idea of the sculpture referencing the binary system. The nature of digital transmission is binary. Ones and zeros. This is typically presented as binary blocks.
CE: Looking at the sketches here, we've opted for the circular disc forms with the binary blocks running through the form in layers.
JC: When we are working with a client, we are building layers of a product – so we put the layers together with the blocks and that gives us this feeling.
CE: What materials and type of finish should the sculpture have?
JC: With telecommunications you're looking for something very sharp, clean and shiny. The perception of telecommunications is that it's state of the art, constantly moving, at the forefront of technology, and cutting edge. We're not a teddy bear factory so a warm fluffy image isn't appropriate. Matte black and shiny chrome spring to mind. I think this would coincide with the public perception of what we do.
CE: Where do you think the link comes between "cutting edge" and shiny chrome etc.?
JC: I think people's perceptions of imagery associated with space technology has something to do with it. A lot of the appearance of modern technology echoes the look of NASA space exploration craft from its heyday in the 1970s. I've just visited the Kennedy Space Station in the States. You see a lot of sharp angular lines, blacks, whites, chromes and golds.
CE: And seamlessness is a key aspect too. You can see that reflected in a lot of product design. Things seem more advanced if you can't see construction joins between materials. It's as if we often feel more comfortable with objects that don't look like they've been made by humans. The sculpture we're anticipating will appear to have no joints or interconnecting parts. The black binary blocks on the chrome could be applied at the finishing stage, rather than using a different kind of metal intercut into the discs. How do you think they should appear outside the office?
JC: I think more than one sculpture would be appropriate. Maybe they could be placed within the office in strategic places as well.
CE: Why several discs? Is it because no problem has the same solution?
JC: We avoid the word "problem," but there isn't one encompassing provision that we can offer clients. Particular solutions have to encompass the requirements of their needs both now and in the future. No two solutions are the same so I think it would be fitting to have the disc sculptures relating to each other, in differing proportions. I could also imagine a form where the binary blocks are going into the distance into infinity.
CE: That would make for a long sculpture!



Unit 6 Rider Hunt

Richard Schofield is the Managing Director of Rider Hunt Management Consultants. An initial meeting took place with Peter Lynn, who, before recently taking retirement, was a partner in Rider Hunt & Partners (Quantity Surveyors & Construction Consultants). Rider Hunt has been based at Gemini Business Park for ten years.

Chris Evans: I spoke to Peter on my last visit – we talked broadly about the ideas behind the *Gemini Sculpture Park* project and he talked me through the nature of your business here as Quantity Surveyors. What do you think about the premise for the project?
Richard Schofield: Well, although we aren't designers here – we are involved in the management and the cost of building. I've been involved in projects where major pieces of artwork were commissioned specifically for a building and with its relevance to the building. This wasn't in Britain, it was overseas. Most notable was the Canadian Embassy in Washington – I didn't actually see the finished sculpture, but I talked to the artist about his concepts. So I've had some involvement and I'm personally interested in the relationship between architecture and sculpture.
CE: It's interesting you say it was an embassy because those kind of sculptures...
RS: It was a showcase for Canadian art.
CE: That's different, isn't it, from it being a sculpture outside a bank?
RS: Yes, it is. We weren't representing a corporation, we were representing a country, in mid-Washington – our Hyda Indian heritage, our Inuit heritage. It was a showcase to represent Canada as a country in the same way that a piece of work outside the headquarters of Shell or AT&T would have some representation aspect towards their business so I see where you're coming from there.
CE: When you see big sculptures outside big firms in what way do you think they

might reflect the nature of the company?
RS: You could take a cynical approach and say that if a company commissions a piece of work by a known notable artist it's more about snob appeal than the relationship to their actual business. I can't think of an immediate, specific example where I've seen something and thought about it relating to the nature of a business. You could say that an aircraft outside a British Aerospace factory on a stand, pointing skyward is designed as a piece of art and also represents what they do. It's actually an example of their product but you could still look at it as a piece of sculpture.
CE: Because of the way it is presented?
RS: Yes, it's not just sitting there gathering dust – it is on a plinth.
CE: With those metal constructions you see outside banks, I make associations such as: the material is heavy metal and that means it's solid, so the company is strong; it's often pointing upwards, so it's forward looking – confidently aspirational...
RS: Yes, I think you're right, in terms of banks and building societies. We used to get involved with building societies years ago and they like the solid stone designs – in fact, the headquarters of the Halifax Bank looks like it's sitting on a rock, with the whole design serving to give a solid feel to the business. On the other hand, a company in the high-tech field may want a different view, it may want a less solid, more ethereal vision to portray its purpose. In our area we have to relate to the solid limits of building.
CE: After talking with Peter on my last visit, it seemed to me that the nature of your business was about quantifying measurements for things that at the time of action are invisible. Nothing is there.
RS: Yes.
CE: So you have to imagine these quite abstract situations of space, material, and time costs. How do you represent something like that in visible solid forms?
RS: We think of it as building on paper. Literally, you create the building in your mind. In analytical form you create a composition of quantities and materials.
CE: So it might be interesting for there to be a sculptural form, which when you're looking at it, is hard to rationalize in terms of the relationship between the materials and mass – a shifting between materials of similar volumes perhaps. For example, an easy to rationalize volume such as a cube intersected by a similar shape that has the same volume but by altering the shape, making it slower to grasp perceptively. A kind of undoing of the process of material quantification. Stop me if I'm talking complete nonsense...
RS: No, I like it.
CE: I wonder whether each side of the cube element could be spaced with smaller squares, perhaps in divisions of 10, therefore corresponding with the metric system making it more representative of a quantity... but it all seems to be getting too literal.
RS: Yes, that's starting to look like an office block.
CE: I'll drop that. What materials would we use for the two forms?
RS: You have quite a palette of materials that you could abstract from.
CE: What would you suggest?
RS: Well, this is where the practicality would come in. If we were looking at putting a sculpture outside here then the materials would have to be durable. We're not exactly in the greatest part of Leeds here so anything you'd put outside is subject to misuse and abuse. A concrete material is cheap and effective; it's the foundation, fundamentally, of most buildings.
CE: Is it straightforward to effect the colour and appearance of concrete?
RS: Yes, the Americans are particularly good at coloring concrete and applying salt glazes. If you go to the Southwest, you see a lot of sidewalks that have a sort of strange glassy, glittery look to them. What they actually do is literally throw salt on it and it provides protection and durability. You can do all sorts of stuff – coloured add-mixtures, textures.... Concrete is a wonderful material.
CE: And other materials that are prevalent in your industry?
RS: Stainless steel is a material I personally love – it's a material of durability and longevity. Concrete and stainless steel work together, I think, really well. There's also copper but you never see it, it's pipe work. Glass is another much-used component. Perhaps we could look at a structural steel element that you don't generally see.
CE: How distinct should the difference between the two materials be?
RS: In the construction industry we generally have hard lines – the definition between the windows and the brickwork, the roof lines.... You very rarely get a blend of materials, it's usually a very hard line between a material type or colour. This is particularly true of non-organic, hard-line architecture in this country.
CE: So the difference between the materials should be quite distinct (indicating sketch).
RS: I would probably want to see a distinction there between the two different materials but within the same shape because fundamentally that's what we do with buildings. The "hole in the wall" windows (pointing outside to the buildings on the estate), as we call them, are a part of a whole form – generally we try to fit things together so it's relatively seamless. I think the materials, stainless steel and concrete, go well together – one doesn't shout above the other so I think that's what we'd go for.
CE: If this were outside the building here, how would you see it looking? Imagining this area outside here was grassed over and this was representing your business, what kind of scale should it be?
RS: I think it would have to be in scale with the buildings (moving to look out of the window). I certainly couldn't imagine the viability of anything that, as you come up to the building, you'd lose sight of the entrance doorways. You'd have to see where you're going in. I'd want to see it as something chunky, in some respects, so it gives the solid feel we were talking about earlier, though I'd be a bit concerned with anything with too high a profile. We are the lead consultants generally on projects so we tend to be a bit understated.
CE: I got that impression from Peter as well.
RS: Yes, on the Quantity Surveying side we tend to be the backroom guys; we have a quiet, subtle profile. As a profession we're not the Norman Fosters, we're not the Arups, we don't create designs, we work with designs and actually deliver designs. It would be arrogant of me to say, "Yes, we should have this wonderful great arch that goes over the roof tops and shouts our name." I don't think anyone would go with that notion. But what we're talking about here would present to me, "These people are here to say that is one heavy block of concrete" or whatever, and the locals wouldn't be able to walk off with it either so it's a very practical view for a sculpture out there.
CE: So, if we were to look at the lower form being stainless steel with an adjoining form in concrete...
RS: That would be an interesting notion because that reverses the concept of concrete supports. We have the concrete being supported by stainless steel. It would be an interesting twist because that is usually the material that everything else is attached to, screwed to, built on, or hanging off. It flips it the other way. Yes. And I see a vision of a piece of grass out there with the sculpture sitting low but solid. In the proportions we have here, we're almost looking at a cube. Perhaps it could be the height of a car.



Unit 2 Mountgraphic Ltd.

Dave Smith was the Managing Director of Mountgraphic Ltd, a Civil Structural Engineering firm which very recently ceased trading. George Gorman, who worked in an associated business at the same premises, before retiring from the profession, accompanied Mr. Smith during this meeting.

Cris Evans: How do people hear about Mountgraphic? Is the public visibility of the company important to you?
Dave Smith: It has changed slightly but it was always professionally ethical not to advertise. You weren't allowed. It's only just crept in over the last 10 years and it's still miles away from any popular notion of direct selling.
CE: Before I forget to ask, and get confused to the point where it's too late to ask, what is Civil Structural Engineering?
George Gorman: Mountgraphic is a branch of Civil Structural Engineering. We specialise in reinforcing concrete. We put the reinforcing bars inside the concrete structure that holds a building up. It's about putting bones into the architectural concept.
DS: George has dug a hundred thousand holes in his life...
CE: And he's liable for collapsing towerblocks?
DS: Yes, we're told to put in suitable foundations for a building for it to stand up whatever condition the ground is in. Locally this can be a difficult procedure as many areas are effected by mining and quarrying going back to the end of the 1800's.
CE: And then Mountgraphic comes along afterwards to work on the concrete infrastructure?
DS: Yes, George's firm will do a design to support a building, then I prepare drawings which tell the contractor how to build it. I've brought some drawings down with me showing how we deal with this. (The table becomes covered in drawings.) George deals with the reality – the hands on of digging holes and I deal with pure fantasy, just numbers and pictures. I often never get to see a job. These ones here are all computer drawings – I used to be a draughtsman!
CE: Do you think a corporate sculpture outside your office here should reflect the function of your business?
DS: There's maybe something in these (pointing to the construction drawings) but the work that I'm involved in – this is the office block in Forster Square in Bradford – the actual part that I do is invisible when the building's up so there's nothing to show for my work.
CE: Maybe the sculpture could be about making visible what is not normally seen.
GG: I saw some work in Skelmersdale, recently, where there was mining gear cast in bronze – which I think can be interesting to see. And they've put a big crane out there though I think this kind of thing can be a bit of a cliché. I went to see Epstein's exhibition in London forty years ago and I was really impressed. Crazy sort of granular things. One was maybe of himself. It wasn't those great terrible things that he did which were in Blackpool. It was the studies. And I remember seeing a bust.
CE: Should the materials that you're involved with in your business be a part of the sculpture?
DS: Maybe, yes. There's sand, gravel and Portland cement.
GG: And steel.
CE: How do you configure the structures which support the foundations?
DS: To go on top of the piles? This layout (indicates drawing) shows part of the foundations of an office block, these being the columns that hold the building up and these are foundations that they all sit on. The circles are the bored piles that are filled with concrete down into the ground to a load bearing level and that's the shape of a three-pile cap. We hold them together with beams, indicated by the black lines, which are all reinforced with bars and then the volume is filled with concrete upon which they can start building. So basically I have to fill shapes with bent pieces of bar and use tables to calculate the correct widths in all the right radiuses for bends, etc. The structures must withstand the calculated loads so the building doesn't fall down.
CE: How do you think this could be shown sculpturally?
DS: I'm not sure. One of the things that troubles me is that I always work in two dimensions – and I can visualise what this looks like, but I don't think a layman could look at it and know what it means at all. Within this shape I ignore the concrete. Instead there are bars within a space existing as a 3-dimensional concept.
CE: Like a cage?
GG: Yes, cages, it's all cages. The formations become very interesting when a big retaining wall is being done with pile caps. They are almost sculptural.
DS: Yes, they definitely could be.
CE: So we could make this the starting point perhaps for the sculpture. Are the plans always flat and 2-dimensional, or do you ever get to draw something 3-dimensional?
DS: Sometimes, when it's really complicated, it can be the best way to relate the structure to the people who have to build it.
CE: That sounds interesting. Do the 3-dimensional drawings show the angles and turns of the metal that will eventually be within the concrete to give it its strength?
DS: Yes, I draw by doing plans, elevations and sections – that's how we produce the information. I often draw things in isometric to show that one bar is coming in on one level and others are coming in at different levels. Sometimes this information is crucial.
CE: It would be great to use an isometric drawing, which you could select, to act as the beginnings of a sculptural form.
DS: Yes, we used to keep old drawings though now these are worthless. You press a button and it gets printed out. It used to be a real treat to draw something in 3 dimensions. I'll try and dig something out for you. We may have photos to help with it.

The other thing I thought about was numbers, as a lot of time is spent doing calculations. There's a lot of mathematics involved. The bottom line for me is coming up with a structure that can withstand the forces on a building that ultimately have to be transmitted to the ground.

CE: You haven't done any work in Turkey have you?

GE: Did you see those programmes on television recently? Some were fascinating. There was a great one which was about what happened in Italy when that mountainside slipped into a reservoir and it overflooded its banks. The concrete dam held firm but a massive wave came over the top and drowned the village downstream.



Unit 8 Newman & Company

Lester Newman is the Managing Director of Newman & Company, a Debt Collection & Business Information firm. The company has been based at Gemini Business Park for seven years.

Chris Evans: You were saying, Lester, that the hands with the glowing ball in between, on your letterhead, represents the exchange of goods.

Lester Newman: Yes, and with the gray and black elements you wouldn't know for sure which way it was going in terms of debt collection. It's always grey when there's an account to collect. You don't know whether you're going to be successful or otherwise so there is a definite grey area when dealing with it. That's one theory, but the hands could be the passing of money from one to the other, which we'd like the clients to think about. We had square blocks last time but the hands thing is OK. I don't think it's that instrumental to how we operate in the field we're in.

CE: With the sculpture for your company we were thinking it shouldn't be something quite so literal as hands.

LN: Or a pound sign!

CE: It's more likely for something like this that it would be a particular structure that in some abstract form suggests what the business does. Though we talked about incorporating grey and black in the design and that it should in some way suggest collection. I've been following that path with my sketches though I've thrown in a couple of more literal objects as well to see what you think. The first is a dark metal dish with gold balls nestling inside it. You'll have to excuse the way my drawing looks like it was done on a fast moving train. The dish could be sunk into the ground so that the rim is level with the grass. It would look less like a bowl then.

LN: That could be interesting. Where would the sculpture be located?

CE: The idea would be to grass over the car park area in the middle of the Business Park - this is where the sculptures would be located - and people working here could walk the last short distance to work.

LN: You'd have to be careful about taking over car parking space because one of the problems we've got, is that there's a lot of double parking here. So, if you're contemplating asking us to agree to that sort of project, we'd probably be upset about it, and if the council imposed it on us it would be bad news. So I'd advise using existing grassy areas. There are the small areas of grass around each office that could be used.

CE: And there's the grass bank bordering the main road.

LN: Yes, that would be a good area to use.

CE: This next idea starts off as a web formation, perhaps in black metal gradually changing tone to grey in the centre of the structure. These shapes here would be strips of metal spiked through the wire strands.

LN: I guess these could represent notes. Would the council take care of maintenance of something like this?

CE: I'm not sure where the responsibility would lie for that.

LN: You need a material that wouldn't be vandalised easily.

CE: Did you hear about the decapitation of Henry Moore's *King & Queen* sculpture? Their heads were sawn off.

LN: But why? It's just unreal, isn't it? So, they're now headless. Somebody would quite like that though, wouldn't they? A Scotsman.

CE: I started to move towards the more literal with this next drawing. It's a Venus flytrap. It could be made to scale in bronze.

LN: That would keep you busy, wouldn't it? Why did you come up with that?

CE: Because of the nature of the plant and the way it collects things.

LN: It looks fragile to me. I'd be concerned about having such a thing around here. It would look very nice, wouldn't it, because the other ideas, you could argue, are a bit plain. This is the opposite, but the life of it would bother me.

CE: I did develop the web idea a bit further. On these later drawings I altered the structure so it looks like an upside-down tree, the metal shapes again representing notes.

LN: They're also a bit like cascading leaves, but not. How would the base be constructed?

CE: I've not got that far with it yet. I wanted to hear from you which idea you'd feel would seem most appropriate.

LN: The plant. You'd identify with this most easily – and it's only the durability of it that disturbs me – beyond that it gets the message across and would be very nice to see. This other drawing wouldn't be very interesting would it?

CE: No, I think you're right.

LN: Whilst we could put that up and not worry about it. You'd maybe think, "Why did I bother in the first place?" whereas the "Venus flytrap concept" is much more appealing to me and I'm sure it would be to other people as well. I think I've seen the one that looks like a web before somewhere, maybe when I was in Europe, on holiday.

CE: I guess there's something quite generic about it.

LN: In terms of what I'd find most interesting it would be the *Venus flytrap* definitely.

CE: Would you not object to that particular flower?

LN: Not at all. I just fear a scenario where it looks beautiful on day one and then within 30 days it's been devastated. That's what bothers me. How do corporate sculptures on business parks usually fare?

CE: They're usually big solid metal things.

LN: And this is very much daintier, isn't it?

CE: Very.

LN: It's a nice idea. I was watching a programme on television yesterday, I think it might have been part of the news. You know when the fly goes in here, (pointing at the drawing), there's something in the plant, I can't remember exactly what they said it was, but some scientists have worked out that if you extract this substance and put it on other plants they become more active and they'll grow faster or do something.

CE: So it would become a generous plant then, not just out for itself.

LN: Yes, they're going to take this off and rub it on other plants and see what the reactions are.

CE: Have you seen a real Venus flytrap? They are really small.

LN: How big would the bronze sculpture be?

CE: It would be life-size. About 3 inches tall. I'll look into ways of protecting it.

LN: All I can think of is the heads sawn off. Whatever you use you're going to need something round it like electricity so if someone comes near it they explode!

CE: But wouldn't they rather damage a Mercedes rather than a small sculpture of a plant?

LN: Yes, but if there are people going home on a Saturday night when there are no cars and they've got some windows to smash and a bronze to mess around with you know what's going to happen. It would be very nice to see this sculpture, but I'd come in every day wondering if it's still OK.

Chris Evans, excerpt from *Gemini Sculpture Park* – UK Corporate Sculpture Consultancy, The Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2001.



Venus Fly Trap, corporate sculpture for Newman & Company Debt Collection as part of Gemini Sculpture Park, Leeds. By UK Corporate Sculpture Consultancy, Graham Fagen, Lester Newman, Managing Director of Newman & Co, Bronze, 2000.

INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

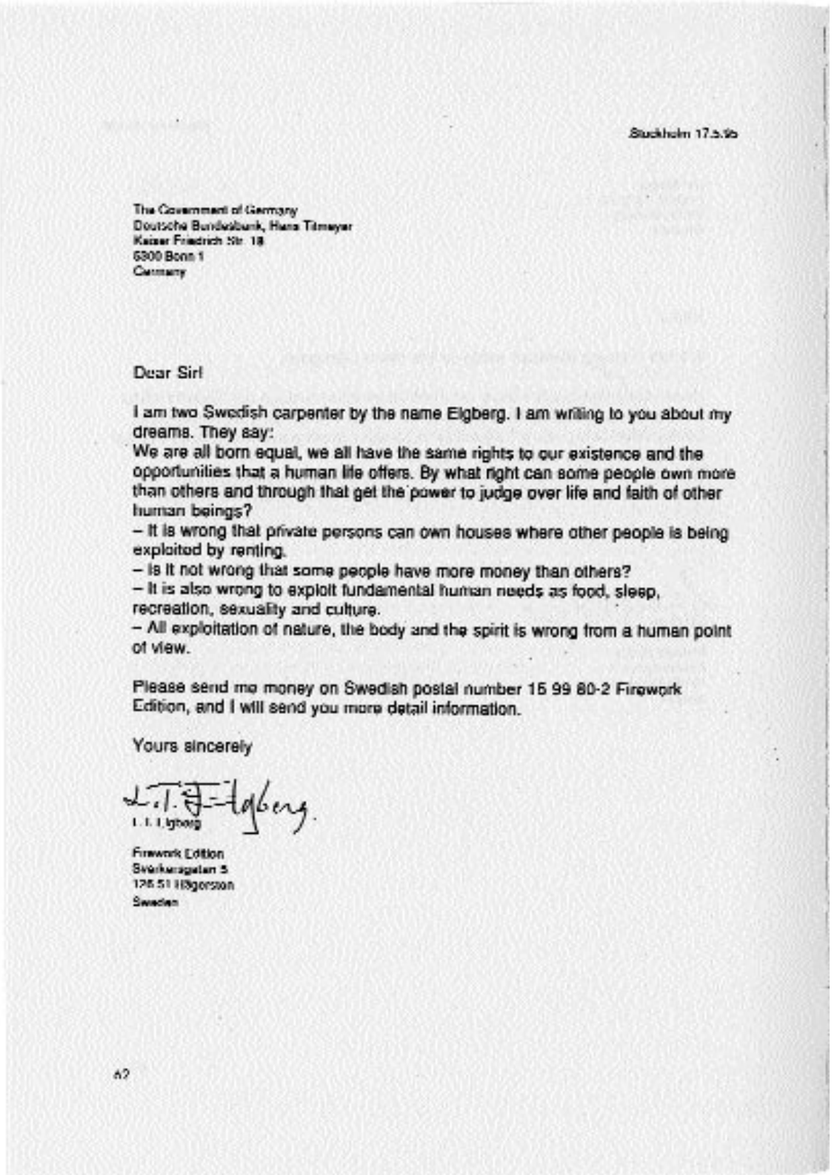
From: will.bradley@ntlworld.com
To: aleksandra_mir@hotmail.com
Subject: corporate mentality
Date: 10 Sept 2000. 19:39:21 -0400 (EDT)

Here is the Fall song I told you about:

>INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
>
>Get off the Ind. Est.
>Get off the Ind. Est.
>
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>
>Well you started here to earn your pay
>Clean neck and ears on your first day
>Well we tap one another as you walk in the gate
>And we'd build a canteen but we haven't got much space
>
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>And the crap in the air will fuck up your face
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>Boss can bloody take most of your wage
>And if you get a bit of depression
>Ask the doctor for some valium
>
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>Yeah, Yeah, Industrial Estate
>

Will

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION FROM MARK E. SMITH



Stockholm 17.5.95

The Government of Germany
Deutsche Bundesbank, Hans Tilmeyer
Kaiser Friedrich Str. 18
6300 Bonn 1
Germany

Dear Sir!

I am two Swedish carpenter by the name Elgberg. I am writing to you about my dreams. They say:
We are all born equal, we all have the same rights to our existence and the opportunities that a human life offers. By what right can some people own more than others and through that get the power to judge over life and faith of other human beings?
– It is wrong that private persons can own houses where other people is being exploited by renting.
– Is it not wrong that some people have more money than others?
– It is also wrong to exploit fundamental human needs as food, sleep, recreation, sexuality and culture.
– All exploitation of nature, the body and the spirit is wrong from a human point of view.

Please send me money on Swedish postal number 15 99 80-2 Firework Edition, and I will send you more detail information.

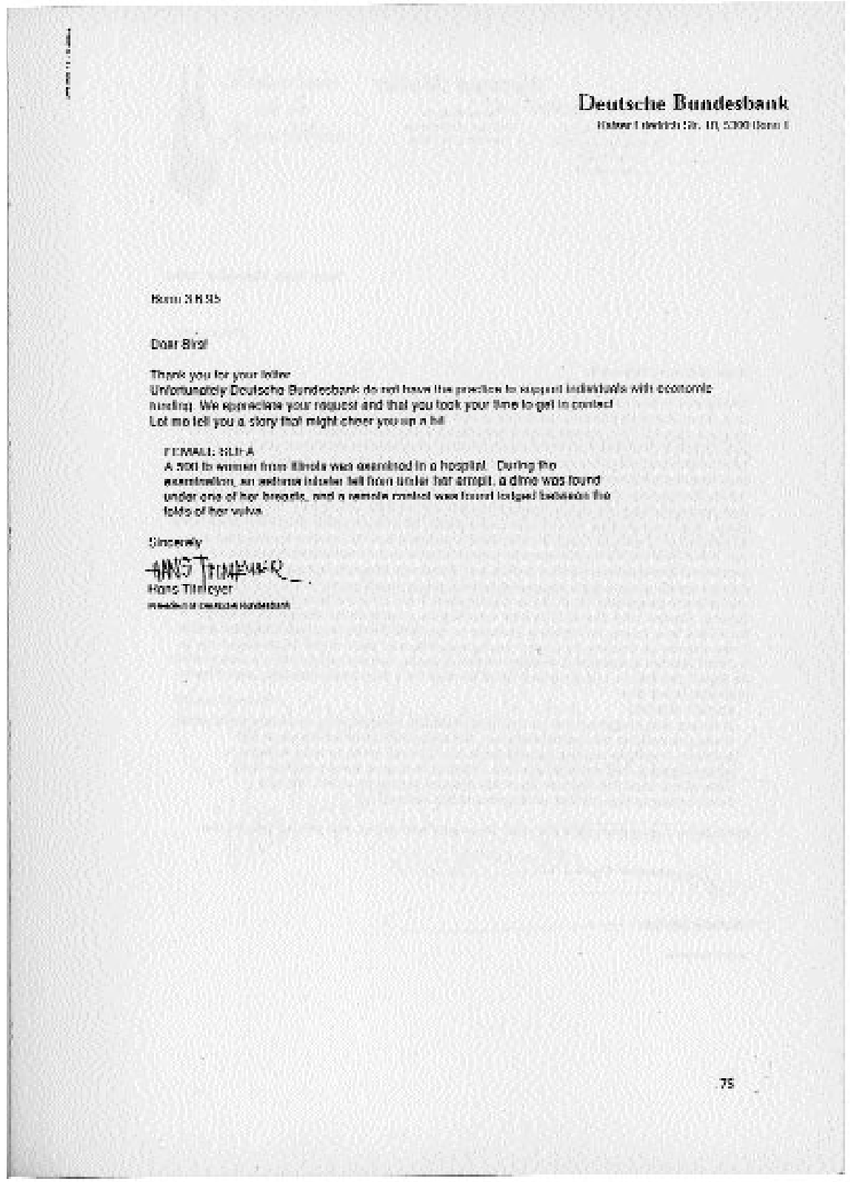
Yours sincerely

L. T. Elgberg

L. T. Elgberg

Firework Edition
Sverkaregatan 5
126 51 Hägersten
Sweden

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Deutsche Bundesbank

Bonn 31.8.95

Dear Sir!

Thank you for your letter.
Unfortunately Deutsche Bundesbank do not have the practice to support individuals with economic funding. We appreciate your request and that you took your time to get in contact.
Let me tell you a story that might cheer you up a bit:

FEMALE SLUG
A 500 lb woman from Illinois was examined in a hospital. During the examination, an asthma inhaler fell from under her armpit, a dime was found under one of her breasts, and a remote control was found lodged between the folds of her vulva.

Sincerely

Hans Tilmeyer

75

In 1996, we published *Experiment with Dreams*, a book filled with letters to a selection of the most autocratic people of our times. We demanded compensation for the unjust inequality that prevails in the world and because these people profit themselves on everybody's dreams and possibilities for the future.

In 1999, we published *The Answers,* replies from the correspondence. With insight into the frighteningly unjust distribution of human opportunities that continues to occur on earth, despite seeming hopelessness the potential also exists to turn disadvantage into its opposite. We are all born like Jesus Christ.

Stockholm, Dec. 11, 1994

Coca Cola Company
PO. Drawer 1734
Atlanta Georgia 30301
USA

We are two young guys that like to drink Coca Cola and for a while ago we had a dream that the secret recipe of Coca Cola stood clear for us. We are now planning to start a factory that will produce Coca Cola under the name Cuca Cula. The recipe is like following:

500 g strösocker
1/2 liter ljus sirap
1 ägg
500 g smör
3 dl tjock grädde
2 msk kanel
1/2 msk nejlikor
1 matsked bikarbonat
1,3 kg vetemjöl

If you dont want us to do this, please send us money on Swedish postal number 15 99 80 2 Firework Edition.

Sincerely yours

Leif Elggren Thomas Liljenberg

Firework Edition
Sveavägen 5
178 51 HÄGERSTEN
Sweden

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Coca-Cola

PLEASE DO NOT DO DHAT • WE SEND MONEY • SOON WE ARE VRRY AFRAID • THE RECEPY IS COORECTH © YOOU HAVE REVEALED A HIDDEN SECRET • DO NO MORE • PLEASE •

THOMAS KAMAGASI
ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

31

Stockholm June 6, 1995

Shell International Petroleum
MIJ
B.V.
P.O. Box 162
2501 Anthe Hague
Holland

Hello!

I am a guy that have been brought up with Shell products. Now I am tired in to my bones. Every day I see Shell icons and I have certainly not choosen this relation. It has invaded my mind since I was a child.
I don't want this shit any more. What gives you the right to exploit me and my inner life? Now I want my money back for all the Shell products that me and my parents have bought! (Remember that my father always filled up his car with Shell gasoline.) – You can also give me a large amount of money for all the suffering I gone through cause of this.
Send money on Swedish postal number 15 99 80-2, Firework Edition.

Leif Elggren

Thomas Liljenberg

Firework Edition
Sverkersgatan 5
126 51 HÄGERSTEN
Swedan

141

HarperCollins*Publishers*
77–85 Fulham Palace Road,
Hammersmith, London W6 8JB

January 12th, 1995

Leif Elggren Thomas Liljenberg
Firework Edition
Sverkersgatan 5
126 51 Hagersten
Swedan

Idiots! Refering to Your letter of October 12th 1994 Harper Collins Publishers reject Your claims concerning the book "Neuromancer" by William Gibson. Ha!

Also I am dreaming about being a successful writer – but not everyone can be lucky! Believe me! I know what I am talking about! Some years ago I wrote a novel my self, "Mona Lisa Overdrive". But noone payed it any attention. After that I have been working as a solicitor at this place.
I am also divorced. Got five children that I seldom see. Small apartment.

Don't You understand that You not always can get what You want?!!

Bobby Quine
Publisher

11

Stockholm, Oct. 14, 1994

Bill Gates
One Microsoft Way
Redmont WA 980 52 6399
USA

Dear Bill!

We are great fans of your products and your inventions, we use them daily. But when we was in our childhood we had a dream (March 4, 1961) about a special future computer system that was supported by a "Windows system", exactly the same as your Microsoft version.
So, as far as we can see, we was first and now we want to have our piece of the cake. Please send us the money on Swedish postal number 15 99 80-2 Firework Edition.

Leif Elggren Thomas Liljenberg

Firework Edition
Sverkersgatan 5
125 51 HÄGERSTEN
Sweden

APPLE

One Infinity Loop Cupertino CA 95014 Tel 0897 56 66 56 Fax 0897 654 654 http://www.apple.com
One Infinity Loop Cupertino CA 95014 Tel 0897 56 56 56 Fax 0897 654 654 http://www.apple.com
One Infinity Loop Cupertino CA 95014 Tel 0897 56 66 56 Fax 0897 654 654 http://www.apple.com

Dear Leif and Thomas!

The computers will (2 now [Kraft Machine]) be shipped to you done of these days. May God be with you. We are now in a big business developing new computs called Kraft. Those computers are best in many ways. Perhaps perhaps
We are some guys here at the office that have, as they say, bitten the apple, that haves little nest in Paris. We juice to go there very often together with the office girl. If you count the apples above you also have the number of girls that have been taken very seriously between the sheets in Paris mad. This little Apple Bordello is a small villa in Dyllevilla in Paris nid Arabian blocks. Not so far from the museum Gustavo Moreau. I like these smellers. Good food, good wine, good girls. And no one can blame me for that. I am a human being too. I want I was rich. Do not blame me I am rich. Int I am a human being. I have twenow Ford cars. But I always use my bots in Paris. The cars are in garage. My wife do have three cars. She never walks. She is already fat. I have to do the homework. Washing, dishing, cleaning, furnishing and so on. I am a henpeck. I am a jerk. A joke among my absent friends. But I do not hesitate I do my homework in French. Do your home work! my wife says. My wifes mama is Ugly Blanda. She is good, but extremely ugly. Let me tell you about her: fat, stinking, bald headed, hate, fat haired, dirt under her nails, never washes, only love to eat eating chocolate, lying to me when I'm coming home saying she's been with fewer best fri end but I know she has been with our neighbour UglyTrob and penetrating the metal dick with hate stinking fingers, stinking from old rotten fish when she was eaten garbage in another neighbours garbage can, she is smelling of pee shit, she never clean her ass after toilet, let me introduce flipedy the chocolate Queen. she is the opposite to my wife, she is wonderful and sexy, here legs are always wet, let me tell you a secret, this scenario is the reason to my hard work at Apple Company, thats why I have become a big and successful leader henpeck at home is hard at work, that's the windy truth and nothing more or less. Bellfo me guys! Come and visit me her in Paris and I will introduce you to some wyl girls from the neighborhood, bakers and waitresses. Aaaaah! The Apple Sisters. Come along I got an awful amount of money too, to spend along in the bars and bordellos. You just name it! I can make you too successfull!! Yes, and I can ashure you that you wont regret a single word of what you will sing along in these areas here in Belleville. Arabian nights in Paris and the big Mosqie in clear distance. Jolly Holly Folly! Salome will be there too and Fatima and Mahmod and Medina and Hits and Fleumeen and Bolina and Lulu and Lolo and Bambina and Zulla and Dulla and Fylla and Gulla and Xena and Iwa and Xaviar, a cat among ticeblokes! What do you say? Eeah!? Come over here! Sing along like no tomorrow in the world.

Michael Spinelli

All

Stockholm May 29, 1995

Paramount Pictures
The Dream Factory
5555 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles
CA 90038-3197
USA

Sirs!

We have written a book, "Experiment with dreams", consisting of letters between us and famous persons in the world. The letters are funny and ironical (sometimes dirty and rude). The idea was to make a book that should interest a lot of people and by that we could get rich. The book is reflecting the desire and longing in modern society of today as it meet us in press, TV and film.
We would suggest you to read our book and make a film out of it. Probably it could be a hit. And we can make a lot of money together.
Please send money on Swedish postal number 15 99 80-2 Firework Edition so we can send you the book.

L Elggren Thomas Liljenberg

Leif Elggren
Thomas Liljenberg

Firework Edition
Svenkersgatan 5
126 51 HÄGERSTEN
Sweden

12/

PARAMOUNT COMMUNICATION

15 COLUMBUS CIRCLE NEW YORK N.Y. 10023-7780 USA Phone 212-942-3314 Fax 212 942 3315

New York Nov. 2, 1994

Leif Elggren Thomas Liljenberg
Firework Edition
Svenkersgatan 5
126 51 Hägersten
Sweden

We got your letter of Oct. 13.

Bullshit!

John Rowley
Vice President of Paramount Co.

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CREATIVE 1900-2000

Leif Elggren/Thomas Liljenberg, excerpt from *Experiment with Dreams/The Answers,* Firework Edition, Stockholm, 1996/1999.

STARBUCKS PERFORMANCE ART SERIES 1998-1999

A telephone conversation

Kelly Kuvo: The gigs were already happening at Starbucks Astor Place before we performed there. Two guys, David Muldoon and this other guy Derrick, both really young guys, like, at least 19, were booking music and performance nights at Starbucks...usually a miscellaneous group of acts, very low key and typical for a "coffee house" setting, you know, like, poetry readings and a stand-up bass player. They called the night, *Derrick and Dave's Experimental Stages*. Originally, in July 1998, before I even knew about gigs at Starbucks, Casey Spooner and I were looking for a new place to rehearse and perform on Ludlow Street in the East Village. David Muldoon's roommate, an older man in his 40's whose name I can't recall...he booked acts at the Piano Store and The House of Candles. They're storefronts that used to sell pianos and candles, but now function as theatres with rehearsal space in the basement. Anyway, those spaces were booked up or something, and we were looking for a space and a gig immediately, so the Piano Store guy was like, "Well, my roommate books gigs at Starbucks if you'd want to perform there. They pay you to perform and even pay for your flyers." Casey and I thought about it for about 3 seconds, and then said, "That would be awesome!" But instead of being mixed up with all this typical random shit, you know, all the other acts on a typical Starbucks gig lineup, we wanted to take over the whole night. We're a bunch of crazy artists with plenty of friends who also perform, so you know, we COULD take over the whole night! I asked Dave if we would be able to do that and he said, "Okay, but the pay is $250, and as long as you don't mind sharing that...that's all we have to pay for the night, and it lasts from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m." And we were like, "No problem!" So we got our own PA and mics and gave Derrick and Dave the art for our flyer and they printed up the flyers for us. We ended up doing 3 of those nights over the course of the next year. Starting on Thursday August 27, 1998, we took over Starbucks for a night. The first night was the best and weirdest and most unpredictable...then the second show was on February 12, 1999 and it was the biggest, fanciest and loudest. The last show was on August 27, 1999, which was a mellow fun ending to the whole thing. The very first show was a fiasco because half the people in our band Sweet Thunder loved it, and the other half hated it. We had technical problems that made our performance go sour and the people who hated it, they didn't get the joke of us being there in the first place. I think they felt stupid playing at Starbucks, they didn't WANT to be a joke, plus, we did it karaoke style, singing along to a very low-budget recording of our music without playing our instruments, so that was a whole new way of performing for us which caused a lot of stress, so Sweet Thunder pretty much broke up that night. But once the word got out that it was a good show, we worked out the differences.

Aleksandra Mir: The show was a revelation to me. Finally someone was looking to New York as a local site. I mean REALLY LOOKING exactly at what kind of place it is to live in now, as opposed to the mythologies and unfulfilled expectations that go around when it's just referred to as a market place for remote ideas.

KK: Some of us in Sweet Thunder have been performing for the past 10 years, everywhere, on every kind of stage. We're pretty jaded. So when Sweet Thunder did really great shows at The Knitting Factory, and on WFMU radio, and at The Cooler, it was great, but nothing new. So for us to perform at Starbucks, it was just a hilarious addition. The whole idea of doing it at Starbucks was much more punk rock than anyone of us could imagine it could be.

AM: It was absolutely packed that night. Many people came for you, others were there for a coffee.

KK: It was convenient, early, free, and a perfect location. Location, location, location. People could come and go in half an hour. Something that I've never been able to do before with a show, you know. Usually one of our shows would be in some shit-hole at 2 in the morning. I wanted to do something different. I was part of the whole Williamsburg skank, Rubulad scene, but these days all the dingier places to play are mostly facades. I come from a punk rock, Do It Yourself way of doing things in Chicago. And, it was like, surprise!, in NYC the gross spaces aren't necessarily the cheapest to rent, and are not the most accommodating. I tried to book shows in NYC by doing it the old-fashioned way, in an empty warehouse basement, having it just for fun and not for profit...but believe me, the old punk values virtually don't exist anymore. The greediest person I have ever dealt with runs Rubulad in Williamsburg, the hellhole space where Sweet Thunder would rehearse, where we recorded a record, and where we'd perform. This woman tries to come off like a spaced-out hippie who doesn't care about money, but is actually a totally rich snob who ripped us off. The space reeks of cat shit, is a total fire hazard, and it floods during rainstorms. The only way to get a crowd was to sell booze, and there was no liquor license, obviously, and of course we never carded, so we had the risk of being caught – especially with Mayor Giuliani closing down clubs left and right. Anyway, we put on 2 huge shows at Rubulad and brought in more money and people than had ever been there before, and then the woman, who ONLY rented us the space, demanded half the money! That was it. The romance was over. I was tired of all that skanky punk rock DIY bullshit. After that we did our first Starbucks show, and I was like, "I'd rather deal with this person who is honest and nice to us at the Corporate Shit-Hole Starbucks than deal with the bitch at the Phony Artist Collective Shit-Hole Rubulad." Starbucks just seemed to be the last resort for us as a place to play. We decided to perform for the tourists, since we'd never done that before and tourism is taking over the East Village anyway. So, why not put ourselves on display for them, as these crazy shit artists? Like we're cartoon characters at Disneyland. We just had to let our hair down about it. This is New York City, what the fuck? It couldn't have really happened anywhere else in America. Crazy shit is SUPPOSED to happen in NYC, right? It was fun to have people think, "WOW, we're in New York City and this is great! Look at this!" As if this must happen in NYC all the time! The mystique of the sinful city.

AM: Can you describe the acts?

KK: We just booked ourselves as our own solo acts and then booked our friends. On the first night, Jeff Jensen did a puppet show called *Mr. Manchild and Spoons*, a weird performance thing about the punk band The Germs. Jeff Jensen and I had been booking and performing our various acts together for the past year. He's a good sport. Outside of the people in Sweet Thunder, he was willing to do Starbucks before anyone else would. Another one of the acts was Warren Fisher and Casey Spooner who collaborated together for the first time that night. Casey was an actor before he started singing, so he had this monologue about an Indian cab driver who tried to have sex with him in a cab. Warren and Casey put it together with music that Warren had composed on the computer and they made it into a song. The result was a very stripped down Fisherspooner. But that's how Fisherspooner was born. Then Casey did another act as Monotrona. Jodie McCann



Lizzy Yoder, Sweet Thunder t-shirt design, 1999.



Sweet Thunder, *Starbucks Performance Art Series*, 1998-1999.

was the drummer for Sweet Thunder and she also has a solo act as Monotrona. She was originally going to perform at Starbucks, but then had to go out of town on a business trip. We couldn't find anyone else to do the gig last minute, so Casey dressed up in her costume and performed her songs. And then Sweet Thunder headlined the show that night, and that was that. Sweet Thunder consisted of: Jodie McCann, Lizzy Yoder, Alexander Eiserloh, Casey Spooner, Gavin Russom, Peter Redgrave, Heather Romney, and me. It was a band that started off with 8 people, then 6, and then 5. A bunch of us were friends that had met in the early 1990s in Chicago at art school or from just living in the same Chicago/Wicker Park neighborhood. Lizzy's lived in NYC since 1990. I knew Lizzy from when I was still a teenager in Denver, Colorado. I met Gavin in NYC. He was familiar with me from when I was in a band called The Scissor Girls. But basically, we were just a bunch of stray performers who had gone solo until I got us to all join forces. After talking to everyone about various concepts for a new band, I came up with this concept of trying to make music about Niagara Falls. They all loved the idea and then the ball started rolling.

AM: What about the intermission coffee commercials? A guy would come up in a Starbucks outfit, hold up a TALL cup and remind us to buy coffee.

KK: Hmmm. We had Kent Albin, and Adam DiCarlo act as MCs. I can't remember. It's all blurred, but I doubt that they were telling people to go drink coffee. And then there was Peanuts from Fisherspooner who was acting as a stage hand/roadie dressed up as a Starbucks employee with the shirt, hat, apron, and all. But he didn't talk. Maybe that was David Muldoon, the guy who booked us. David probably got the vibe to go up to the mic in between acts and hype the coffee because one night a corporate bigwig from the Starbucks HQ in Seattle came to our second show. He came to see what the big deal was, and most likely to see if this was something to have other Starbucks across the country participate in. So that must have made Dave do that. But I honestly don't remember it. I was too busy dealing with the band, helping people set up, too busy on stage, and everything.

AM: And everyone at Starbucks was happy?

KK: Oh, yeah. They got a lot of business and clout that night for putting up with us. They were happy and I am glad it happened too. It got louder and crazier than we expected, but we didn't get into any trouble, nobody got hurt, nothing got broken, and it was still an historic event for the East Village scene. I think of it as similar to how artists, like Keith Haring, would take over billboards to make them into art for themselves and to share with the public. They were sick of looking at advertisements and decided to make them into their canvas, saying to people that you can make your painting on anything you want, anywhere you want. As far as I'm concerned, that's what Sweet Thunder was doing at Starbucks. It took awhile for other people in the band to get that. Some of us had lived in the East Village way before Starbucks came and had a lot of baggage, and decided against ever walking inside that place, let alone performing in there. They were horrified about the fact that the East Village and SoHo was turning into this corporate shopping mall that was closing down all of the old mom and pop businesses. I think they were like, "Oh my god, by performing at Starbucks, I am accepting the fact that Starbucks exists and the Corporate Chain Store machine is taking over my neighborhood." There was a brand new Kmart there, you know. Everything was changing fast. I could respect their problem with Starbucks, but I felt that the best way to deal with the takeover was to confront it.

AM: To find new reasons for being in the city…

KK: I had to explain and make clear to everyone who questioned performing there, that this corporate takeover thing is happening all over the world. It's here to stay. Why don't we fight fire with fire? We don't have to drink their coffee; we are just going to go in there to torture their customers! We are not giving money to them; they are giving money to US! This is a way of manipulating them, like the way they are manipulating our neighborhood. Let's take advantage of it while we have the chance, then the next day we can walk by there and feel proud of ourselves for having the balls to have just created an atrocity in there. But still, it was really hard after the first show. I questioned myself about whether it was the right thing to do, plus the band had turned against each other for various reasons, so after that first night, I knew that I really had to twist this thing around and make it a positive experience for myself.

AM: If that's what you were going through, the staff must have been caught in the middle too. What was it like for them?

KK: No problems at all. They were so excited that so many people came to the show and that it was a good time and that it freaked out their customers. In the 90s, I knew a lot of people who worked at Starbucks because, for a shit day job, it pays well. $7 per hour isn't great, but it's better that the $5.75 minimum wage. You could go work at Starbucks and finally get health insurance and stuff. When you're young, you worry about being a sellout when you work at a place like that. But, when it's been 5 or 10 years since you've seen the dentist or the doctor because you can't afford it, you just don't give a fuck anymore. A lot of the employees that work there already have street cred as artists or musicians, so they don't care what people think of them working there, you know. They were excited that some weird performances were happening at their lame job because it meant that Starbucks could be cool. Plus, Starbucks will hire anyone because they want to be a cool company. They're a new school corporation out of the Northwest. They want to continue to have that progressive Silicon Valley vibe. And they want it to be real.

AM: A perfect economy for everyone involved then?

KK: I think so. I'm sure that the Starbucks Corporate bigwig who came to see us perform was shitting in his pants to see something that was making Starbucks "cool," and it was only costing them a measly 250 bucks! Companies like Levi's and Apple and Starbucks have huge budgets to hire hip marketing agencies that get paid million of dollars to help corporations to be "cool" in order to sell their products! Then Sweet Thunder comes in and does it for pennies. To Derrick and Dave, the bookers, I'm sure they were thinking of the Sweet Thunder show successes as brilliant career moves for them in the company. They were probably thinking, "Shit, maybe this is something I could do at every Starbucks in the entire country." They can get artists to do this as cheaply as the typical beatnik coffee house, where people get up and perform with their bongos for a few bucks, but at the same time, in reality, this is a coffeehouse that is generating millions of dollars. It's weird. And when they started to give me that impression, like they loved what we were doing for their company, that's when it was over. Sweet Thunder went there to piss people off, and ruin their cappuccino, not make friends with the company.

AM: So for what then?

KK: You know what, we went in there to do New York City like nobody else had done before, and do New York City the way it is supposed to be done. By the seat of our pants! I mean, shit, this is New York. A lot of people like ourselves, that grew up in small cities all over America, came to NYC looking for excitement. The same excitement and hype that we heard about while growing up as kids in a dumb town and all the while wishing that we lived in NYC. And then when I got there I discovered that what I came there looking for is not even there anymore, and that made me realize that you've got to do your own thing and fast or you'll get depressed. You can't try to relive the past or reclaim it. Glam Rock, Punk Rock, Prog Rock, Art Rock, whatever, Sweet Thunder, as artists, had to do something new. That challenge was to show and prove to everyone we knew that we had the coolest gig in town, and it was at, God FORBID, Starbucks. And we actually managed to get people to think, "Wow, maybe it is the coolest gig in town!" Not long dead CBGB's, or The Knitting Factory, The Cooler, The Parkside Lounge, The Key Club, or other artist collectives like the Happy Birthday Hide Out, DUMBA, or shit-hole Rubulad. Every hipster and every club wants to have this stamp of being a part of some sort of nostalgic history. Like, CBGB's sucks, and has sucked for a long time, but so many people still go there. Why? Because of nostalgia. And I was in the middle of an identity crisis. I thought I'd try to not fit in anywhere considered trendy or hip or cool and I thought, "What would be the epitome of taking the most uncool and resented place in NYC and make it cool for a night? And once I had actually done that, I finally had a sense of accomplishment. We didn't have anything else to lose as a band or as individual artists. We were all totally broke and getting old, you know? The art and music scene is so hard for me to gage, it's so saturated and diluted. "Poseur" rich people wearing thrift store clothes that shouldn't cost more than 50 cents and they're paying $50 for it. I mean, when Urban Outfitters was created it just made me sick. My cheap thrift store poor girl style was ultimately appropriated by popular culture and I couldn't relate to myself anymore. The boundaries of me being a hipster, or an artist or whatever, were gone. I couldn't look at myself in the mirror anymore because I didn't feel like an individual anymore. I looked like a typical hipster and I hated it. I couldn't go to an art opening without hating it. I couldn't go to a rock show without hating it.

AM: Why?

KK: Well, where can you play where it's not a cliché anymore? I didn't know a single fucking person who'd ever played at McDonalds or any other scary place like that, like Starbucks, so, since I had no sense of identity and I just wanted to set myself apart from the crowd, that was the door I was looking for. Plus, in my scene, everyone was competing with each other. My friends would be like, "I am going to do THIS cool thing and you are invited to watch!" And then I'd be like, "Oh, yeah? Well, I am going to do THIS, and YOU are invited to watch." So, finally it got to the point of, "How the fuck can I out-do everyone?" Sweet Thunder out-did everyone by doing Starbucks.

AM: You did.

KK: Yeah, and then it was over. The craziness died, it lasted through the year, but by the third time, it wasn't weird AT ALL anymore. For the first night, we thought Starbucks would never invite us back and then by the third night, they loved us. So, what's the point? At the last show, I even got my Dad to come and perform country & western music. It was bizarre, like Starbucks had turned into our little local corner tavern. We would joke about the idea of what if they had said, "We'll give you a contract and a million dollars to tour all the Starbucks in the world."

AM: Would you?

KK: At that point, for me, yes, probably. I was so broke and I hated my job. I would have been up to anything just for a free trip to someplace new. On a lark, what the fuck? But half of Sweet Thunder would have said yes and the other half would have said no and then it would have never happened. But at least these gigs DID happen. I'm amazed that it was so successful, because you never can predict when something will go over well with a crowd. I have been doing art for so long. It is too unpredictable, you don't know who, or when, where, why, and how people will like it. You never know. It's weird. I'd like to continue to do crazy corporate art things here in Hollywood. I moved to L.A. after Sweet Thunder died, looking for more excitement. Now I work in a mental institution as an activity director. I make art and play games with mentally disabled people and I like it better than when I was working at the *Village Voice*. There's crazy shit happening here, despite what some of my New Yorker friends would like to believe. Some of my friends here who will go into a music store, pick up any instrument and play their songs to the customers and staff in the store until they finally get kicked out. And that's their gig!

KELLY KUVO AND ALEKSANDRA MIR, LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 12, 2000



One Year Performance at Kmart
I lust after Kmart. Its windowless fluorescence...the scuffed white floors, the A-4 on aisle 3 couched by the love songs on the overhead speakers...the Bounty, the Blue Magic, Tre Fleurs, and La Belle gel, the glass screw-top Nivea stacked one on top of another in rows 4 deep and 2 high on the island just right of the Lifesaver's Crëme Saver candy bin, complete with Farley's Circus Peanuts. The rack of fresh Roman Meal...the misplaced sunglasses with brown fade... the Mountain Dew and Diet Brisk canned iced tea lined up in front of the Little Debbie Nutty Bars, Oatmeal Crëme Pies, Pecan Spin Wheels, and Honeybuns snack cakes. Legs panty hose, pink and white Barbie high-tops, the Lisa Frank leaning on The Original Super Silly Slammer Frog...the Krazy Glue, Little Trees Safari Mist...the Wet'n Wild Crystallic, Megaplump, and Megacore Lipsticks, Kiss Nail Kit and Body Puddin...around the corner Caress, and Irish Spring, Secret, some Finesse, Zest and a whole island of LA Looks.

Sometimes I jumped, fell into the bin of supersized re-fluffable polyester pillows. Other times I guzzled Coca-Cola, Crush and Dr. Pepper, and still others – a Sunbeam iron thrown to the floor sliding and hitting then jamming up against the next aisle of Martha Stewart Everyday Refrigerator Bottles – I walked. I rested. I ran my hands down the purple, beige, opalescent green, black, and blue bottles of Skintimate, Sauve, Loctite Plastix, the Rejuvenator, the Floor King, Brut Trimax, Grecian 5, The Eye Opener, the Gain, the Cheer Complete, Dynamo Ultra Power, Goof Off Ultimate Citrus, Sure Clear Dry, Arm and Hammer Advanced Deodorancy, and Shout. And they hit the floor with solid and certain thuds. The clearance aisle and boxed-up dinette sets pushed on, kicked at. The Samsonite American Tourister Suitcases, the polo shirts, the Snack Ramen, the Conair phones pulled down. I moved these objects that were intended, that were compelled to move me, and they did move me and I did move them...gently disheveling...smashing, playing, bouncing and knocking them to the floor.

The rebellion of the commodity....

Melissa Longenecker, *One Year Performance at Kmart,* LA, June 2000-May 2001.



Melissa Longenecker, *Employee of the Month,* July 15, 2000.

Employee of the Month

Employee of Jamba Juice, Derek Ford, agreed to walk off his job without explanation July 15, 2000. He agreed to come talk with me as a part of my piece at the Hartsook House (a temporary artist-run space in North Hollywood). I agreed to find him another job if he was subsequently fired. We talked alone in a mirrored surveillance room looking out on the opening crowd (we could see them very clearly), an intercom carried our voices out to the crowd. We talked for hours about his aspirations to open a restaurant back in his home town near Atlanta, GA. He told me that it was his strange sense of entitlement that had landed him at USC (The University of Southern California) as a scholarship student. He told me that he no longer fit in so well among his class back in Georgia. We talked about Hollywood and it's intersection with race and class. We talked about South Central, the South, collard greens, biscuits and the intersection of our lives. We talked for four hours. Derek, upon returning to his job 2 days later, was not fired. Instead, he sweet-talked his way back into his job by forfeiting his upcoming raise. He was to receive it a week and a half later.



Melissa Longenecker, *Someone's Astroturf Lawn and Me,* One hour lounging intervals, 59 days, January 1998-March 1998.

Someone's Astroturf Lawn and Me

I love this lawn. I wanted to spend time with it. I wanted to know why such wealthy homeowners had chosen Astroturf. I decided to sit on their lawn, thinking, waiting for an answer until I was answered or forced never to know. Was it subversive neighborhood action, tagging, or mere taste?

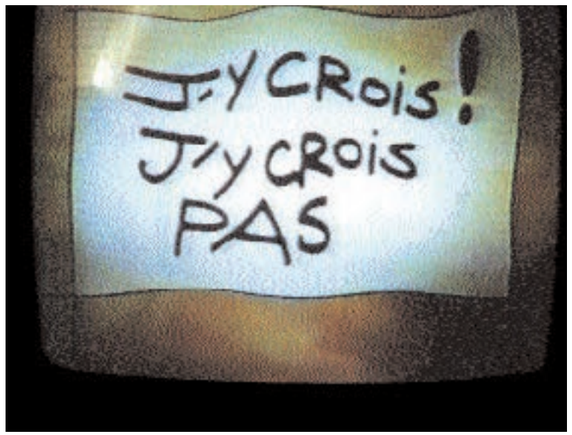
MELISSA LONGENECKER, LOS ANGELES, AUGUST 2001

THE FREEBIE KING

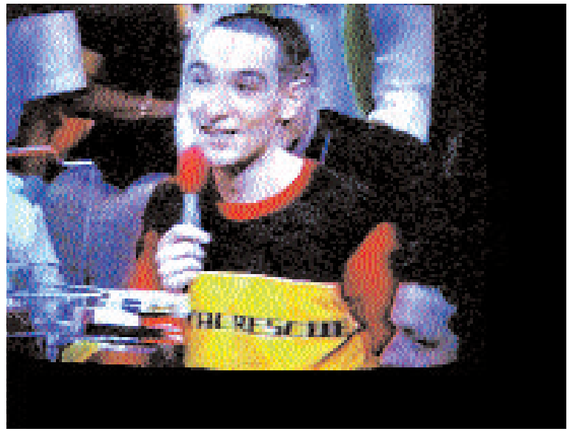
Matthieu Laurette

Transcription of the Dialog from *J'y Crois, J'y Crois Pas* (Believe It or Not), a TV Talk Show Presented by Tina Kieffer on TF1, France, June 20, 1996

Characters:
Tina Kieffer, the host
Eric, the journalist
Matthieu Laurette
Dave, a famous singer
A guest on the set







Matthieu Laurette, *J'y Crois, J'y Crois Pas,* stills from TV program, 1996.

Applause
Tina Kieffer, the host: Welcome back to *J'y Crois, J'y Crois Pas*. Here are the most amazing French people.
Applause
Tina Kieffer: So Eric, you're going to introduce us to "The Freebie King." It's Matthieu Laurette.
The Journalist: Yes.
Tina Kieffer: Good evening, Matthieu.
The Journalist: Here he is, give him a big hand!
Applause
The Journalist: Honestly, this guy is absolutely incredible. Matthieu Laurette right here, straight from Paris – he's a modern artist, has been eating for free for the last three years, washing himself for free, and dressing for free, amazingly, and completely legally.
Matthieu Laurette: There's no theft or scrounging, none of that. I buy, just like everybody else, I do my own shopping.
The Journalist: Question number one, Matthieu: How do you shop?
Matthieu Laurette: It's easy, just like everyone else. I go to a store, big or small, to a supermarket. I take a basket...
Tina Kieffer: You've brought one. Show us the housewife's shopping basket.
Matthieu Laurette: Yes.
Tina Kieffer, the host: And how much money do you get back like that?
Matthieu Laurette: At least 1,200 fr. per month. If you add it up! You get an idea of what it represents in a year. I've done this for over three years, and I'm only talking about hygiene and food, without mentioning the other things I've bought besides.
The Journalist: Let's go back to the shopping. How do you proceed? Which items do you choose?
Matthieu Laurette: It's easy: I go to a supermarket and go through the aisles. I don't look for what I need, but rather for all the items on sale – such as "first purchase refunded" or "enchanted or double your money back." In this case you really win money!
The Journalist: You put everything in your cart. What happens next?
Matthieu Laurette: You go to the checkout like everyone else, you don't need to steal. Here it gets a bit complicated – you have to ask for one till receipt per item.
Tina Kieffer: How to make a cashier happy!
Matthieu Laurette: They don't mind, because it's a bit of a laugh. At first they might be annoyed, but when I explain it's O.K.
The Journalist: Why one receipt per item?
Matthieu Laurette: Because you need to send your original till receipt to get a refund, as well as the bar code, and sometimes you have to explain why you weren't happy. But in the case of the "first purchase refunded" – about 70% of offers – there's nothing to explain. You just have to send your receipt, the bar code and your bank account number. About a month later, the money is transferred to your account!
Tina Kieffer: I hope you don't eat only the special offers, because if sausage is on sale...
Matthieu Laurette: Yes, precisely. This year, for example, there is a major offer...
Tina Kieffer: You know them all, don't you?
Matthieu Laurette: Yes, maybe. It's the anniversary of a big brand of sausage – we're not going to say which one – its 25th anniversary, so on the 25th of each month, it's free. I have four bank accounts. I forgot to say that you can only get one refund per household. My four accounts have slightly different addresses, all legal. This allows me to buy each item four times. So on the 25th of each month, I go and buy my 4 sausages, and that's how I met Dave the singer, in my supermarket.
Dave, a famous singer: I was there for the same thing!
Tina Kieffer: Did you know this method Dave?
Dave, a famous singer: Yes!
Matthieu Laurette: No, he doesn't do it the same way. I watched him. So I go to this supermarket, or any other one selling that item, and up to February 1997, I get my four sausages every month.
A guest on the set: You must be full of sausage!
Matthieu Laurette: That's just one a week, and if you invite friends round...
The Journalist: Really, are there many products? Do you have enough to eat?
Matthieu Laurette: There's plenty. In a supermarket, there's at least 40 to 50 items.
The Journalist: There's food but also...
Tina Kieffer: So you have a shopping cart filled with 40 to 50 items for which you get your money back!
Matthieu Laurette: Yes, then you ask for the receipt at the checkout, and if people get annoyed, just explain what you're doing to the person behind you and generally they like it and want to try it next time!
The Journalist: What Matthieu hasn't told us yet, Tina, is that although it seems very easy, it requires very rigorous management. He showed me his laptop...
Matthieu Laurette: Well, I use my computer for it...
A guest on the set: You also have to eat things you really don't like!
Matthieu Laurette: No, there are so many things that you have a choice.
Tina Kieffer: That's household consumables like food or shampoo, but what about more expensive things like cameras or clothes? Or a bed? You buy those, don't you?
Matthieu Laurette: No, because if you have friends coming to stay, you buy a bed in one of those big stores, and they give you, let's say, one week to a month to return the item. For example, I once needed a VCR, to duplicate some of my works, so I bought one at...
The Journalist: What about clothes?
Matthieu Laurette: Clothes? Look: my shoes, my trousers are refundable. My pullover was bought in one of those big department stores near the Opéra, it's British. The trousers are from a mail order catalogue, you just have to send the thing back. It's easy. I'm wearing at least 500 francs worth of clothes.
Tina Kieffer: Tomorrow, there are going to be long lines at the supermarket.
A guest on the set: Tomorrow you will send back everything you are wearing?
Matthieu Laurette: Sure.
A guest on the set: No need to wash them?
Matthieu Laurette: No need, listen, I just wore them today!
Tina Kieffer: It's hot though here on the set.
Matthieu Laurette: Well, maybe the T-shirt then. But don't worry, they check them all...
Tina Kieffer: Anyhow, you really are "The Freebie King!" Thank you, Matthieu.
Applause
Tina Kieffer: Speaking of shopping carts, here are the commercials. We will be right back!
Applause



The secret of free shopping

Man who lives on cash-back offers

HOW TO DO YOUR MONEY-BACK SHOPPING?

BETTER THAN "SAVE 1 ON 3", "BUY 1 GET 1 FREE", "MONEY OFF YOUR NEXT PURCHASE" OFFERS, HAVE YOU EVER TRIED FULLY REFUNDABLE PRODUCTS? FOR A FEW YEARS NOW THERE HAVE BEEN OFFERS LIKE: "100% REFUNDED", "TRY IT FREE", "FIRST PURCHASE FREE", "SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR YOUR MONEY BACK", "NOW NOT JUST FAT FREE; TOTALLY FREE"...

1 HOW TO CATCH THEM?
Most of the time these offers are easy to recognise by looking at the packaging: special logos, big print, stickers, bright colours... It's up to you to locate them in the aisles of your supermarket. These offers have a time limit, so watch out for the closing date.

2 HOW TO PAY?
Caution, you need to ask for a till receipt for each product if you buy several refundable products. So, you should pay for each item separately. Take some change...

3 PROOF OF PURCHASE
Generally you keep the product but must send back:
- An application form printed on the packaging (back of the product, sticker, collar...).
- And/Or a regular sheet of paper with your name and address.
- The original till receipt with the purchase encircled (no photocopy will be accepted)

4 REFUND
You will receive a cheque back for the total purchase price. Sometimes they ask for your bank details to directly transfer the refund to your bank account. So check your bank statement to see if the refund has gone through.
Caution: all offers are strictly limited to one application per household.
So think about friends or family living outside the home, you can also use the address of your house in the country or by the sea...

5 POSTAGE
At the most, there is the cost of the stamps for which you're not reimbursed but sometimes the company will refund Second Class Postage.

6 SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
Write stating the reason why you are not satisfied with a product: not practical, too sugary or salty, not very effective

Discover more: www.moneybackshopping.net

Matthieu Laurette, *The Freebie King,* flyer, 1999.



ROW: St Nicholas's steeple

Minister loses bid to black out Xmas

PUBLIC protests have forced a council to light up a church steeple with the message "Merry Xmas".

They have decided to ignore a minister's claim that it is not religious and the word "Xmas" does not convey a Christian message.

Anger erupted in Lanark when St Nicholas's minister Rev. John Thomson objected to South Lanarkshire Council erecting Christmas lights on the High Street church.

The display read "Merry Xmas" on one side and "A Gold New Year" on the other.

People were doubly upset because the steeple – where the festive lights have been displayed each year since 1975 – is not owned by the church but by the town's common good fund.

Local councillor Dugald McDonald – who was the town's surveyor when the lights were first put up – said yesterday he had been inundated with calls from people upset by the decision.

He said: "The lights are a local landmark and residents were rightly angry that they should disappear at one person's whim."

He protested to the council and yesterday they backed down, saying: "The message will go up next week once a fault in one of the light sets has been repaired."

A BRIT TRIPLE

BRITS scored a triple whammy last night at the US National Board of Review film awards.

Quills, the story of the Marquis de Sade, starring Kate Winslet, was chosen as best film.

Traffic – based on a British TV series about the drugs war and starring Catherine Zeta Jones and Albert Finney – took second place and Jamie Bell won the award for best young actor for Billy Elliot.

Polly-lingual

Marilyn and Philip Jarrett, of Norfolk, hope their stolen African Grey parrot, Monty, will pipe up if thieves try to sell him to unsuspecting pet shop owners. The bird, worth £800, barks like a dog.

THE FREEBIE KING



By RECORD REPORTER

FRANCE'S King of the Freebies has arrived in Scotland to teach us how to live with an empty wallet.

Artist Matthieu Laurette has lived for a decade by obtaining refunds on the products he uses to eat, shave, wash and dress.

He has barely paid for a meal since he started living on supermarket cash-back offers when he was a student.

And while the French are known for their chic, Matthieu is known for his cheek – he has a wardrobe of mail-order clothes he returns just before the guarantee date is up.

Trawls

He has a home of constantly updated electrical goods, such as a television, hi-fi, toaster and microwave, which he uses and sends back before the end of the guarantee – to replace them with brand new items.

The 30-year-old starts every day at home in Montmartre, Paris, with coffee and pastries and promptly awaits himself of the maker's "free if not happy" pledge.

Then he cleans his teeth with a return-able electric toothbrush.

Every week Matthieu trawls shops looking for promotional packs with labels such as "free purchase refunded" or "satisfaction guaranteed or your money back".

Now he has revealed how Scots can survive this Christmas without spending a penny. On his visit to Edinburgh, he filled a supermarket trolley with £75 worth of refundable goods, from food to shampoo and cleaning products.

They included Honey Nut Shredded Wheat ("deliciously nutritious or your money back") and Stickers Spread, with a "100 per cent cash back offer".

He said: "Some products say if you're not happy you can claim so it's not about whether it's working or effective.

"In France we know that the Scots are renowned for being tight so it is a bit strange more people don't do this here."

Matthieu's theft is celebrated in an exhibition at the Edinburgh College of Art.

But manufacturers yesterday warned that people who abuse their refunds policy would just push up prices for everyone.

Money-back master reveals all his secrets

YOU CAN SAVE WITH REFUNDS

MONEY-BACK PRODUCTS
Most of the time these offers are easy to spot by looking at the packaging. Special logos, big print, stickers, bright colours. Once you have located them in the supermarket aisles check for closing dates on the offers.

REFUND
You will normally receive a cheque back for the total purchase price.
Sometimes you will be asked for bank details and the refund will be put directly into your account. Check your bank statement to ensure the refund has gone through.
Caution: All offers are strictly limited to one application per household. Ask friends and family living outside your home or you could use the address of your house in the country or by the sea.

PAYING FOR YOUR ITEMS
Caution. Many manufacturers ask for separate till receipts before they will refund items. You need to ask for a till receipt for each product if you buy several refundable products. Pay for each item separately so have some change.

POSTAGE
At the most there is the cost of the stamps for which you will not usually be reimbursed but sometimes the company will refund Second Class postage.

PROOF OF PURCHASE
Generally you will be able to keep the product but you must send the manufacturer the application form printed on the packaging, and/or a sheet of paper with your name and address along with the till receipt with the purchase circled. No photocopies will be accepted.

GUARANTEE
Write stating the reason you are not satisfied with the product eg: it is not practical, not effective, too sugary, salty or foul smelling.

"free minidish & digibox from Sky"



pick up the phone and order now.

08702 42 42 42

sky a digital vision for everyone

RC0812

You pay for installation. You do not need to subscribe to Sky digital to get a free minidish and digibox.

To take up the free minidish and digibox offer from Sky you must be eligible for and subscribe into the Interactive Channel. Contract with Marketing Contributions Ltd (a Sky Company) and agree to keep your digibox connected to a fixed telephone line for at least 12 months. Standard installation (a 240 if you choose to subscribe to Sky digital (or £150 if you don't). Additional charges may apply for non-standard installation. Installation may be subject to availability delay. Sky will select the make and model of equipment supplied under this offer. Offer not available to the Republic of Ireland. Further terms and conditions apply.

Matthieu Laurette, *The Freebie King,* news article, 1999.

THE APPEARANCE OF FANTASY

Henrik Schrat



The peculiar story of how the stock market was set up in Germany begins – as most things do – with the Third Reich. After "Black Friday" in 1929, and the following recession, was the "Recovery" – one of the promises and goals of the NSDAP, which meant: against speculation and the "bourgeois degeneration," which later became the "Jewish high finance system." Hence, during the Third Reich, the stock market got a bad rap, and was rigidly monitored under a good many restrictions in Germany. That destroyed the whole – let's call it culture – of the stock market in Germany. Most Jewish bankers left Germany at the time.
In English-speaking countries, you have an unbroken tradition of trading, and it is very common to talk about stock values. For instance, in Sweden nearly 30% of the saved money is in the stock market: in options, shares, bonds, futures, or whatever. In Great Britain it is (if I remember correctly) 17%, while in Germany at the beginning of the 1990s it was only 1%.
I talked to the guy who reestablished trading with options and other derivative finance instruments in the 70s for the Dresdner Bank. He told me that in the 20s shares were on sale in Germany just as they were at the beginning of the 90s. For refunding the derivative trade, he needed to get specialists from overseas and other countries: the knowledge was lost in Germany.

So that's the background.

In the 90s, with globalization and the WWW, the "New Economy" started (in the 80s there had been a process of deregulation in the markets, providing a base for "free trade"). Then, in 1996, Deutsche Telecom, within the process of privatization, morphed into a public company and the shares had to be sold. So they staged a huge advertising campaign, with posters, ads in newspapers, TV commercials, etc. This aspect of the offensive was the reason I got involved with this project. Never before in Germany had a "SHARE" been advertised like a consumer items like butter or a car. It used to be something for the "specialists." The truth was that the stock market back then had the tawdry reputation of a casino or a gambling hall.
With the Deutsche Telecom campaign – the mounting situation was ready for that – a gigantic popularization process escalated. The campaign was a huge success, people bought the shares, and a *Volksaktie* (People's share) was established. The stock market was suddenly popular. Now the media, who had formerly only had dire predictions (if there was a stock market report at all), covered the excitement of the "New Economy" daily. Even BILD-Zeitung was recommending what to buy and what to sell.
There was enormous hype. Even the "man on the street" was caught up in the frenzy. On a street corner having a bratwurst, I heard construction workers sharing stock tips. Then I found out that my parents had bought shares. It was time to find out what the hell was going on - not that anybody really KNEW anything, it was (and still is) a mixture of faith, hope and superstition. Most people believed that the stock market was some sort of slot machine where you always won the jackpot. Enormous amounts of money, by now the aforementioned 1% had become 4% (and rising), went into shares and the "New Economy."

The "Neuer Markt" – comparable somehow to the NASDAQ (but not really) – now constitutes about 80% of the new economy's cash flow in Europe! For something founded as recently as 1997, these figures are unbelievable. The basis for this is simply a changed relationship of the common people concerning money and what to do with spare cash. For instance, there are a couple of companies in the TV and movie business (EM-TV is the biggest), trying to break into Hollywood, with enormous amounts of cash but hardly any experience. In Hollywood this is known as "silly money" because they are financing nearly anything (John Travolta's Scientology movie, for instance).
As all this is a cultural process, I thought about switching the perspectives: usually, while selling an art piece or trying to get a project financed, the financial system's values are placed on culture. Instead, cultural values are placed on the Stock Exchange. So it's the other way round. Besides, I find it a necessity for artists today (as many other artists have before) to fight to instill cultural values in society rather than stand back timidly, self-satisfied behind the protection of galleries and museums.So that was the basis.

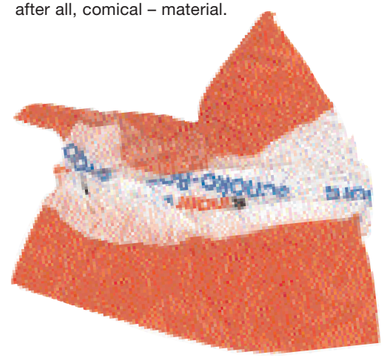
The Research Phase/The Book

Doing work about the stock market, the most logical thing for me to do was to approach the art foundation of a bank. I applied for a grant which the Kulturstiftung Dresden der Dresdner Bank gives out every year. I had no precise concept, just an idea that it was important to do something about the Stock Exchange and its changing public image.
I did not get this grant, but they where curious and found something else for me: a very small grant to spend three months in Frankfurt. So somehow I had carte blanche, which was very nice, because neither of us had the slightest idea what would happen. (They must have had some expectation since they had material about former projects of mine.) First, I staged a research phase: reading books, etc., and talking to the people, which means I interviewed both stock market insiders and outsiders. I developed a questionnaire with the same 5-7 questions for everyone:
Do you think that the Stock Exchange is the center of the world?
Why?
What do you think the "common people," the "consumer," thinks the Stock Exchange is?
Does the Stock Exchange have anything to do with morals?
What does "Fantasy" mean in the market?
Does the market have a mythic component?
How does the Stock Exchange smell?

I tried to develop an informal conversation around these questions. Focusing on the "fantasy" issue, the place of expectations and belief, quasi-religious phenomena, and their transformation into real cash for the companies. Mostly I would introduce myself as an artist and cultural scientist working on these issues, and I would try to get an interview. A few wanted to see the questions beforehand, which astonished me a great deal. Mostly there was a mixture of vanity and conceit at being asked, also a certain professionalism (never fight with the press), and then, curiosity. I got nearly 80% of the people I asked. Some I got through recommendations from the Kulturstiftung der Dresdner Bank – as you will see in the book, there are a lot from Dresdner Bank. I would always ask the interviewee to recommend other people to get in touch with, and so I moved along.
Most of the bankers and brokers had no idea who I was or what would happen. Usually they started by explaining to me how the market works, and what their own function was – things I already understood. For most of them it was an "easy appointment," I guess. No stress, no business, and no "dirty" journalist sniffing out bad news, and "no financial analyst, who knows more than me" – just a half hour with some kind of artist. I tried to be positive – without the "you rich asshole" attitude. This would not have been a good basis for conversation, and basically I wanted to view this situation outside of a typically moralistic, left wing tradition. We have to find new and more flexible ways of transforming this profit - thinking, without dialectically pitting one ideology against the other. I was born and raised in the former Eastern Block and my parents are Jehovah's Witnesses – an ideologically closed, religious system within a communist one – quite a schizophrenic situation. So I have a nose for this "we are the better people" complex, which I also see a lot in left-wing art culture. It is a very difficult and interesting theme, because I like most of this work and learned a lot from this kind of critical art.

But back to the story.

They would spend about 10 very stiff minutes explaining the Stock Exchange to me. Then the ice would break and things would get interesting: "Well, here is somebody who wants to hear my personal opinion." A fat broker, who was really hard to get an interview with, began reciting witty poems about how overjoyed he was to own his own company now, because now he lets the others do the hard work of sitting in front of screens (he did not like computers), and how his grandmother started out with gasoline lamps before electricity, etc. I liked him a lot. So the atmosphere often got very personal, and they chatted and asked the secretary for more coffee, and lost track of time, so that after an hour I wanted to leave. Sometimes I found it touching. One high level executive from a bank thanked me for the talk. He shook my hand and said, "People like you and me, we should stand together, to REALLY renew the system!" Sure, I had some bad and not-so-warm experiences, but most were friendly.
And the conclusion I reached about "fantasy" is that there is lots of fantasy, in every imaginable way. First, nearly everybody denied that the Stock Exchange had anything to do with fantasy. The word, as commonly or regularly used – "There is fantasy in the market," or, "There is fantasy in that company or in the share," etc., means something technical.
I would say that it is "what you believe could happen to the share." You have a lot of information but the system is far too complex for anyone to know exactly what will happen, so we call that range of possibilities "fantasy...." So it turned out that, basically, there is a huge imaginary framework (just like in the art world), used for aspects not at all related to numbers and mathematics, as most of the ads try to make you believe. This aspect, which nobody could verify, is a very nice tool for advertising and awakening expectations. One exact quote: "Growth is a quantification of trust not only in the economy, but in the whole world." TRUST in what the chairman says, or what the chairman probably really believes. No one really knows. I feel okay with this, but it is not what most people think.
There was another very interesting interview with a journalist who specialized in stocks. He was in his fifties and had worked since the early 70s, which means from the time when nobody in Germany, except for a few specialists, was interested in the stock market. So he represents one "face" of the Stock Exchange in Germany. He introduced himself immediately as a strong neo-liberal who was incredibly happy about the developments of the last few years: "Finally, society starts to understand that an economy without borders is the way, and not social economics. The broader use of the stock market is an instrument for the democratization of the market, because now everyone could be a part owner in production." Following my skeptical line of questioning about the liability of the market to society, or in a global way of thinking about the Third World/First World problem, (that the democracy of the market in his sense means a democracy for only the 1% of the people allowed to go to elections), he said, "Well, look young man, we all know that the world is bad, but that doesn't help us. I understand myself as a voice for the 'little guy who buys three shares or so, to educate them about economics and to protect them from big business, so I have a MESSAGE to bring to the common people, and to save them. But at the same time, I know precisely, that this "ordinary guy" who protests if he is not treated with respect, blatantly understands that it turns the wheels of the devil to buy shares. It does not matter where the profit comes from..." And so on. Things you know and I know, basic but harsh when you hear it straight like this. So after all the interviews, I knew a bit about what's out there and decided to do something with this – after all, comical – material.





Preparations for the Installation

To go ahead with the project, I decided to do an installation inside the large trading room of the Stock Exchange. This is the place of projections, the real physical place (astonishing that there is still such a physical place in these virtual times), and that room is the interface, with actually more media presence than traders. It is the information point, producing pictures. Live from the altar. Here, a shape is found to materialize the flow of virtual money.

Well, I had my idea, and then I had to realize it. So I set up a slideshow in the Kulturstiftung der Dresdner Bank to introduce the idea, and tried to get people from the Stock Exchange interested as well (to persuade them before asking them directly). But nobody came, except the nice people from the Kulturstiftung, one of the people I had interviewed, and some media. A guy from *DER SPIEGEL* was quite interested, but I asked him not to write anything before my actual contact with the Deutsche Börse AG, the Stock Exchange.

After my slideshow, the reaction was:

"Really nice project but, Schrat, you're not serious are you? How will you realize it?"

The Kulturstiftung is not big, it's basically four people. And they were quite enthusiastic.

"We'll do what we can, but this project is too big for us. We will see if we can find more support within the Bank." So I prepared a couple of portfolios, and the Kulturstiftung sent them to people inside the "real" Dresdner Bank, the "Big Mother." They tried especially to get the elder chairman of the bank, known both for his cultural interests and his contacts with the Stock Exchange.

The portfolios which I had sent directly to the Stock Exchange did not have any effect.

"What the hell is that?" The old Chairman found the project to his liking (I actually never met him or spoke to him: like a lot of processes in the project, he was invisible).

He put in a call to the Chairman of the Stock Exchange to recommend the project. So I met with the head of Public Relations from the Deutsche Börse AG, accompanied by Karin Heyl and Ralf Suermann from the Kulturstiftung. There I had to "give the parrot" – explaining the project but not knowing exactly what he wanted. After I finished the presentation we realized there was already an okay from top management. No exact idea why – but there it was. "We need some decoration in the trading room. It is so ugly and boring there, so the idea seems nice to do something there. The questions are: when, who is going to do the work, and how much does it cost us?"

I must confess that after trying for 3 years to realize my highway project, this month with a couple of phone calls and making some portfolios seemed like a joke. I realized that they had not the slightest idea what the project was about, in terms of content. I found it all a bit too fast, and got quite suspicious.

I mean, the aim was to do a project about the Stock Exchange and money, and to use the infrastructures and the cash of the companies to make them do a project about themselves. But there is always this suspicion of getting caught and bought by them. But there were no requests for modifications, nothing. At this stage, I can tell you, I was HAPPY.

I could not believe that the real problems would start at that point. The Kulturstiftung had said: "Well, the project is too big for us to finance, we need extra cash from the Big Mother." But since it was decided that "we will do the project," they thought that wouldn't be a problem.

One nice day in September, I drove down to Frankfurt again to meet with the Kulturstiftung and to set up a schedule and logistics.

5 minutes late, I entered the meeting room, and instead of the two nice people from the Kulturstiftung there where seven: one from the Public Relations Outside, one from the Press Office, one from the Intelligence Service (something like the Think Tank of the bank), and one from Communications inside of the bank. All very straight, never before in touch with art. That's how business works: if you have the "yes" from above, the problem will be solved very professionally.

The ladies and gentlemen were looking at me with great expectations. I hear a question from one manager: "So, Mr. Schrat, we, the Dresdner Bank, die 'Beraterbank' (the popular slogan of the Bank, "The Bank of Consultants"), are collecting candy wrappers for you. Could you please explain that to us?" Aside from being mistaken, HE had to collect them.

The strangeness of the situation was obvious.

I explained and explained, but there was the bottom line: they had to solve a problem. How to organize 50,000 used candy wrappers?

So they looked for the most effective ways to get them: carnival, kindergarten, and the candy-producing factories. Difficult to explain that this was exactly not what I meant. I just wanted to ask ordinary people to do this and see how long it takes for the wall to fill up. If it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out.

I remember that specific meeting very well.

So they came up with this suggestion: to ask the 1,200 branches of the Dresdner Bank all over Germany to collect wrappers for me.

FANTASTIC! I WOULD NEVER HAVE ASKED FOR THAT! It was perfect. They were afraid of being involved in a project that would not be perfect or good enough, so they came up with this idea.

With information folders in all the banks, the project penetrated the whole banking structure. I am not sure if anybody really looked at what it was actually doing there.

But OK so far.

There had been two basic differences, as hundreds of times later (two times nearly killing the project): me as one person, and a huge company on the other side with all its impersonal functions. I would develop a relationship to somebody, make him understand what this was about, and then get an automatic email back: "Madam X is not at her position at the moment. Your mail was passed on to Mr. Z who is taking care of her business." And then, for sure, the idea of being effective in a business and being "effective" in a cultural way are extremely different. I had to find a way of dealing with this hydra, and created an area of tolerance for myself: whatever happens inside the area is OK, and if the project goes outside, I simply cancel it. I realized that the project started to go up and down inside of the Dresdner Bank and the Deutsche Börse AG like a bad sausage in your guts. Because it had been an extremely swift "YES, we'll do it!" but when most people heard of it for the first time, they emailed the Kulturstiftung or the people involved about how good or bad

they found the project. Before long, quite a strong wind was blowing in my face.
The problems started with a press release and the folder they wanted to put in their 1,200 branches. Receiving the text for the press release, I thought to myself, “I'm in the wrong movie.” My project had turned into a charity project. At one meeting I had agreed to donate a part of the installation to an auction, which I find quite in order – as a shape or form to transfer the accumulated cultural value again into money. But in the press release, this had become the reason for the project. We were outside the area of tolerance. What happens if somebody calls the public relations of a bank and asks, “What is this crazy project all about?” The girl is under pressure and looks for some explanation everybody could accept: charity. Well, this is a charity project. For doing good things, you know. So I traveled down to Frankfurt and tried to explain, “If this is called a charity project, this is not my project, and I'm not going to do it.” That time the whole thing nearly crashed, because most people in the Bank and the Deutsche Börse did not find a real reason why the hell they should be involved in the project. The question of how important that auction is in the communication of the project became crucial. If it is not a charity project, it could at least involve something in the “non-profit-sector.“ Charity is an important point of image transfer, as we know, and one of the most problematic things nowadays (I would like to do a project about charity!).
I said, “Well, no problem if the bank leaves the project. We (Kulturstiftung & Börse) will realize the project by ourselves.” But the Börse said, “If the bank leaves, we leave too.”
I said, “Well, then that's it!”
After a lot of calls, they agreed to communicate the project the right way. Don't ask me why. I rewrote every text and every word leaving their press office. It was amazing. I mean, that was only one part of the collecting phase of the wrappers. Besides that bank, I talked to millions of people and tried to persuade them to communicate the project and to collect for me. The press was quite interested in the project, so I could communicate it through newspapers, etc. And once in a while the question popped up: “How come you realize these cynical or critical ideas? You are making fun of the stock market, aren't you?”

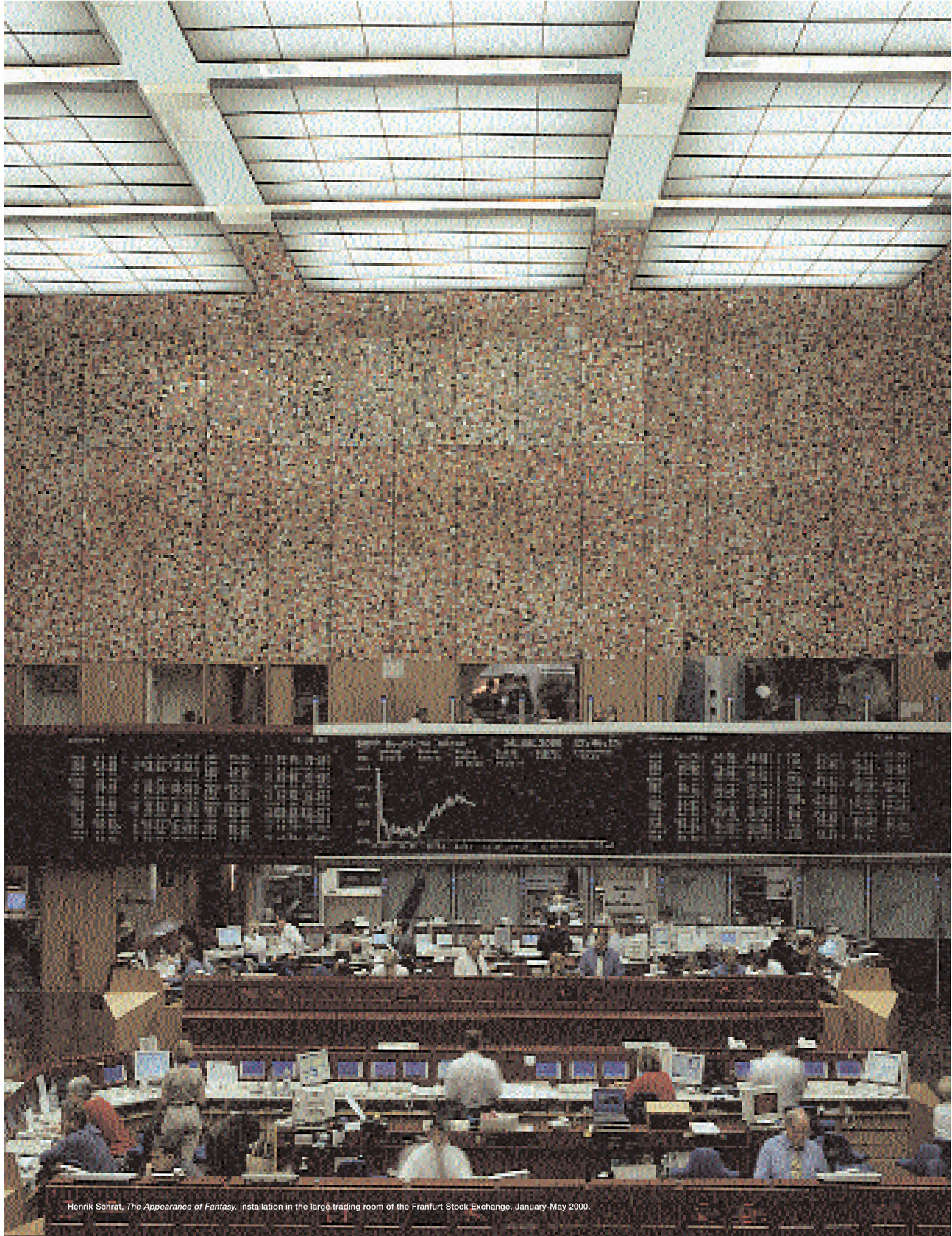


Henrik Schrat

The Installation

Little by little, the first envelopes with wrappers appeared in my post box, and at a special post box at the Stock Exchange. Some helpers and I start to glue them on panels. I must confess that I did not really know how large 160 square meters was or how long it would take to cover them with candy wrappers.
After the huge amount at the start, not much came in the over next few weeks, so it looked like a disaster. I took to buying large quantities of sweets myself, but this was like a drop of water in the ocean. That was at the end of January. The first 7 of the 68 Panels were already hanging on the wall. Technical problems occurred with the dry air in that room. The hanging panels started to bend. I had to change the materials and to use different glue. No screws were allowed in the wall, so a special, very light construction was necessary. The TV station from ZDF had to be removed so that I could install the panels with the lifting gear (the room was 18 meters high).
Then came the first parcels full of wrappers from Frankfurt, and then masses more. I could not believe that children were sending me their miniscule contributions of wrappers. I got a wrapper from the Hoffmann collection from a Gonzalez Torres stack. A mother sent me 15,000 chewing gum wrappers collected by her daughter over the years (with a bottle of homemade liquor packed between the wrappers). The female museum guards at the Berlin Museum had been collecting theirs. I got a large parcel from a woman with a long letter: “Finally, a kindred spirit! Candy wrappers nearly saved my life...“ Among the best were wrappers hand-painted by an artist.
All this was simply a question of organization, time and cash. To get it done, to calm down if problems arose, and to be motivated. The installation was finished at the beginning of May, and on May 28, a grand finale and opening of the show took place in the Trading Room. It was quite funny, to have so many people there who had never before been in the Stock Exchange. On the other hand, the VIPs were never sure if I was making fun of them or not. But trust me, I never make fun of anyone. Fun is not enough.

HENRIK SCHRAT, BERLIN, 2000



Henrik Schrat, *The Appearance of Fantasy,* installation in the large trading room of the Franfurt Stock Exchange, January-May 2000.

Ekkehard Altenburger, the trading environment after trading hours, photography at Winterflood securities, London, May 9, 2001.

YUCCA TRADING PLANT

Ola Pehrson



All living organisms, plants as well as animals and human beings, constantly emit electric impulses. The amplitude of these impulses varies depending on the interior and exterior environment of the organism. Stress or tranquility in any nervous system can be read by bio-electricity sensors.

Yucca Trading Plant combines this electric information with stock market know-how.

A Yucca palm tree has been chosen as representative of the typical, young urban businessman (since it doesn't need a lot of care). The plant has endured six months of intensive market education, during which it has been fed with stock market rates encoded into electric currents, combined with an index related conditioning diet of either rich or meager rations of water and sunlight. This is an attempt to stimulate a market-adapted behavior, similar to that which years of financial transactions develop in the nervous system of the experienced stock broker.

The currents of the plant are subsequently transformed into currency, as, via computer software, they are interpreted as investment strategies for the stock market. The YTP thus generates its own welfare according to market rules: the financial result of its transactions is converted into a plant's essential currencies – water, light and air.



Ola Pehrson, *Yucca Trading Plant,* installation at Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, 1999.

> From: ola pehrson@spray.se
> To: aleksandra_mir@hotmail.com
> Subject: yucca trading
> Date: Wed, 11 July 2001, 19:39:21 -0400 (EDT)
>
>
>
>
>
> Here's an account of where things are at the moment. The project has developed quite a lot since I started it in 1999. In the beginning I was mostly interested in making a media product - after sex, I would say money related media is the most popular. My father was a day trader so I grew up, so to speak, Index-related. A good day at the stock market was a good day at home and vice versa. His job gave him a heart attack and he died two years ago, just before the opening of the yucca show. This made the whole project quite sad for me. After that followed quite a big media boom for yucca. Reactions were intense, especially within the economic news media. *Frieze* and some other arty magazines wrote about it too, but it generally seemed most useful to places like the *Financial Times* or the Brazilian Marxists who made leaflets. Everyone described it from their own point of view. The project was covered in over a thousand stories, all over the world.
>
> One of the stories is about how you get encouraged by attention and that is a story about me. One is a story about how far you can take a one-liner and how much the media will fill in what they want from an object. One is a story about the art world and its reactions to exposure in the media (other media than its own). I think it's a good idea that you want to document the project, Aleksandra. Apart from a few catalogues and a thousand forgotten news fragments, it hasn't really been documented as far as I know. I am working on a couple of new projects at the moment that are still unclear to me, maybe just thinking, but it feels at least like I am onto something. If you like, we could do an interview about yucca but then you would need to spend more time and I don't know if you have that. I'm enclosing an image of the failed project "bio electric source no2" where I used a human instead of the yucca. The program went nuts and started swing trading like wild. We humans have much stronger bio electrical currents.
>
> bis spater
>
> op



Ola Pehrson, *Bio Electric Source No2,* studio shot, Stockholm, 1999.

> Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2001 10:55 PM
>
> By the way, the yucca beat the OMX-index by 12% three months in a row when first exhibited at Tensta konsthall.
>
> best
> op

> Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2001 11:23 PM
>
> “The market” (not to be confused with “agora”:)), what is it? I used to wonder when the market had been naughty. You could imagine it to be a collective version of the pure clutch-and-relax reflex among primates when they seek protection high up in the trees. The forest is a good metaphor for the circular pattern of the economy. At the tops of the trees the reflex no longer has anything to clutch and consequently clutches for thin air. In psychoanalysis, dealing with money is likened to playing with one’s own excrement. I don’t deal with that aspect of it. I am more interested in technical market analysis. You know, the point-and-figure method or Bollingerband, etc. How you can, with the help of the developments of earlier market rates, predict the future ones. It falls on the problem of induction. How was that again? A limited number of outcomes (the statistics) are divided by an unlimited amount of utcomes (the future). That should become zero in all probability. Once the method exists, it automatically subverts itself: whoever develops it naturally will trigger signals and the slower ones will lose. We know all of that, of course, but I grew up with it. I ate it.
>
> It is important to point out the pseudo-intellectual characteristic in financial analysis. My dad used to feel in his gut when to buy or sell, so there is some kind of negative groove in the market, whether it’s a reflection of mass hysteria based on greed, envy or fear (some kind of real time report of at least two deadly sins), so maybe it has some kind of frequency.
>
> I am making the project “NASDAQ online opera” to move on with those ideas. But I want to point out that this is not an “investigation.” It is not a metaphor, nor particularly funny. I am just trying to rid myself of something personal. That is why my presentation of this material always has been quite unprofessional and uneven. It is a bit problematic from an artistic point of view to let other people take over too much rather than being alone with your ideas.
>
> “NASDAQ Online Opera”Work Description
>
> The libretto is created online by the rates and transactions of the NASDAQ 100 stock list.
>
> Stock rates are instantaneously downloaded from the Internet and converted by software into a visual libretto presented on a computer screen to a singer. The opera can be performed full scale with one hundred stocks for one hundred singers, or partially, by isolating fractions of the list – the chip manufacturing sector, for instance, or telecom, etc. Every company is represented by a singer whose voice (pitch) is determined by the size of the company (large companies – deep voice etc.). A note on the libretto represents a financial transaction. As the price of the stock moves up or down, so does the pitch of the specific voice connected to the stock.
>
> Requirements for the performance:
> One computer per every two companies (singers), with a maximum of fifty computers and a minimum of four.
> A very fast Internet connection.
> An amount of singers corresponding to the desired scale of the performance and the pitch of the selected companies (pitch list will be available).

> The opera should be performed on a stage, in an environment similar to a regular opera. It should involve no physical movement from the singers, only vocal performance.
>
> The opera must be performed sometime during NASDAQ’s trading hours. If in an unsuitable time zone, a delayed version could be an alternative, but simultaneity is desired.
>
> The length of the piece is forty-five minutes to an hour.
>
> The singers should wear business suits or business dresses. The name (logo) of the company should be presented visibly but discretely on their chests.
>
> hejsvejs
> op

>> Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2001 11:24 PM
>>
>> OK, How do you visualize a description for the opera in this book?
>>
>> Aleksandra

> Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2001 11:31 PM
>
> With a stock chart next to a libretto.



> you see on the chart:
>
> la   la
> la
> la la   la
> la   la
>
> la
>
> op

>> Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2001 11:33 PM
>>
>> Ooooh, pretty! Can you make more?
>>
>> A

> Sent: Wednesday, July 11, 2001 11:33 PM
>
> I'll leave that up to the market.
>
> op

>> Sent: Friday, July 27, 2001 11:15 AM
>>
>> Ola, do you see the project as continuously active (1999 - ongoing), Or, is it dated to its
>> origin (1999)?
>>
>> I am thinking about whether yucca is still actively performing as it's being exhibited all around
>> and if there might even be some kind of continuous statistic or evaluation or something like
>> that going on? Is it one specific yucca that is especially dear to you and that you have rewarded
>> in any extra way now when it has performed so well? Or, can any new exchangeable yucca do the same
>> trick? How about trading in all day traders for a forest of yuccas?
>>
>> A

> Sent: Friday, July 27, 2001 7:56 PM
>
> I see the piece as continuously active and every new yucca is being trained like a new
> employee into the project. I also like to try other local plants in other places. The first
> yucca has now retired and since then, three new specimens have graduated. But the results
> are very uneven. Some plants are simply better economists than others. I've also noticed
> they react differently to media. Some are very media friendly while others maintain a more
> introverted position.
>
> It would be interesting to keep it all on the vegetable level but creating a forest of yuccas
> would demand much more organization and information.
>
> hej
> op

DEPARTMENTS OF...

Gareth James

Museum's ruins? Fuckinbollocks. That's what we used to call a fucking tautology in my day. If the museum ever really did embody the public sphere we would all've jumped off a bridge a long time ago. The museum was always only already a ruin of a public sphere, a bourgeois privatization of public space made safe enough to venture into. Everyone equal under the munificent gaze of "Oh fuckin' no - they're not getting away with that." The real modern public sphere all along was the workplace. The place where everyone had to go and push for their share: I'd rather not go at all, but if I have to, I'm bringing my steaming great hungover downer with me - bringing my last night into your today. Quadrophenia. That's the public sphere - that place where social conflict gets its say.

"Good day to you young fellow, back for a little more exploitation?"
"No chance, pal. Strike."

Alright, it's not always like that. Sometimes it just kills you. But you get the idea. So, 1997: office products (photocopy paper and pen); office environment in three dimensions (with a touch of boredom-inspired paper-airplane craft); office iconography (water fountains, pneumatic chairs on wheels, filing cabinets, photocopiers, suits, big windows); and everyday, get up and go to work, make a new department even if you don't want to. The lexicon of instrumental reason perhaps, but spoken in a daydream, or while misbehaving with one eye out for the boss. *The Department of Finding the Strength To Carry On. Of Making Small Changes. Of Making The Same Old Mistakes. Of Thinking About Fucking The Secretary. Of Promiscuous Presidents. Of Once Promiscuous, Now Dead Presidents. Of Dead Princesses. Of Fucking The Mercedes Up Against The Wall. The Department of...* series lasted for a year starting in late 1997, each one 4 1/4 x 5 1/2 x 4 1/4 inches, their facades the size of a postcard or a photo of the kids. Each one filling the fortress of instrumental reason with something small enough to evade it.

But that wasn't the whole thing. Just figuring the everyday was never enough: figuring out what was everyday about the everyday...that's something to do. Syndicated daily cartoon strips got me all jealous, Herriman's *Krazy Kat & Ignatz* especially. The daily cartoon, limited to a space of only three of four frames in which nothing of any great consequence could be said, took its comfort in having already had the chance to say something the day before, and the day before that, and from knowing that everybody busily anticipated something that would be said tomorrow. Don't get it today? Don't matter. Herriman told you stories like your favorite after-work drinking buddy: always reminding you that no matter how serious or terrifying dotting your "i's" and crossing your "t's" might be, the horror of labor was encircled by laughter and permeated by its echoes – "Stick 'em up, you're surrounded...haHA hahaa!!"

In Herriman's cartoons the same thing happens day after day – Krazy hit by a brick thrown by Ignatz – but nothing stays the same. An expert could tell you when it begins, whether Herriman went nuts, but all I can tell you is that at some point he no longer cared for scenic continuity and day and night became interchangeable. In the course of 3 or 4 frames and a single conversation between Ignatz Mouse and Offissa Pupp, Herriman could throw us from day to night and back again. But I shouldn't give him all the credit or I'll never get that damn promotion: there was also music. It seemed to me that I should start to appeal to the way people use their ears rather than the way they use their eyes; where the modern spectator turned the eyes into a technology of order, tripping and stumbling over the incongruous, the ears remained in the gregarious social realm, where their rhythmic talents effortlessly accommodated conflicts. Chorus and verse.

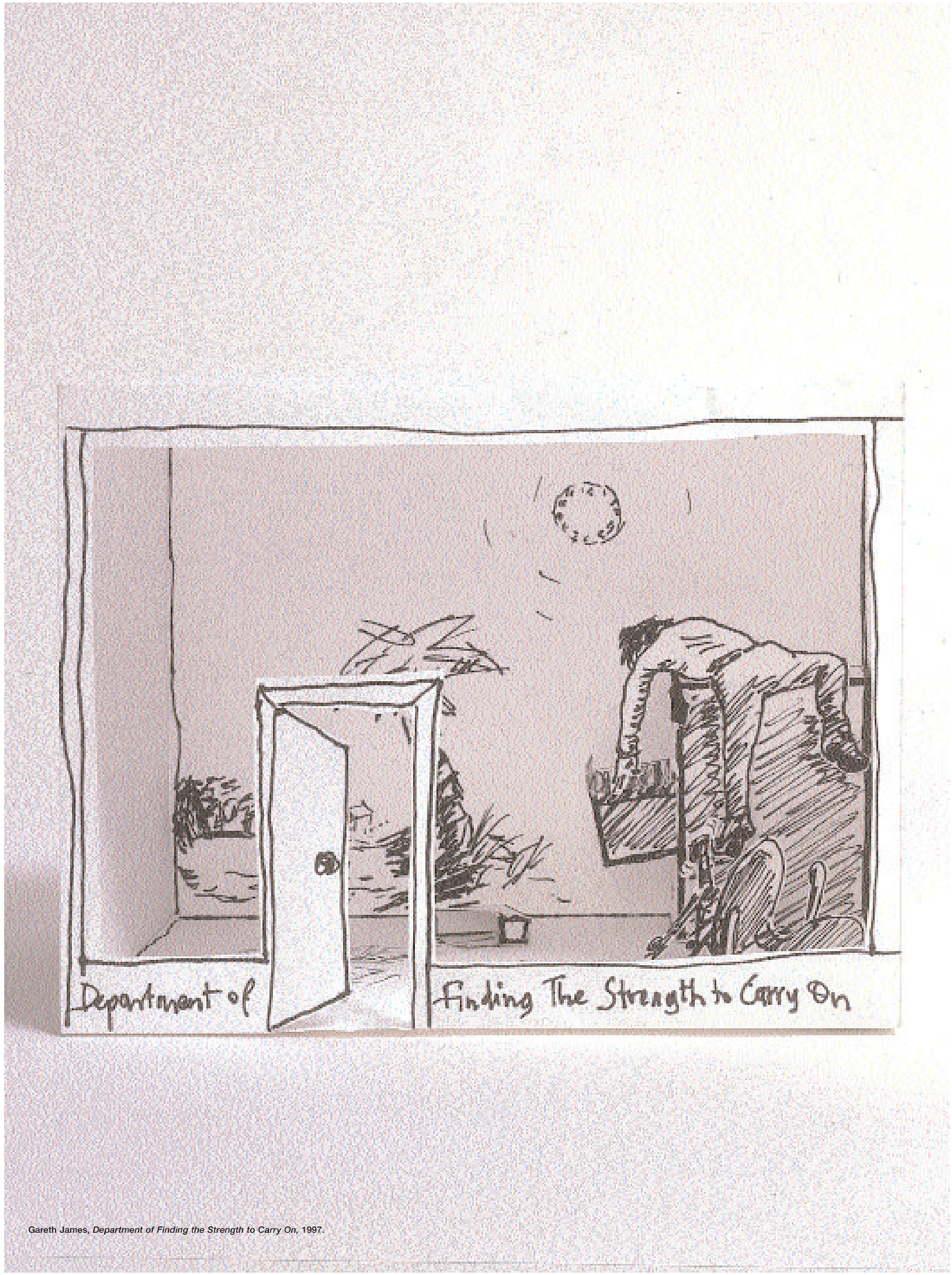
It felt like there was something enormously clumsy and laborious about art. Culture was quicker, healthier, and more pervasive. Countless small events of culture permeate the days, stimulate and generate our responses at a level far below the reaches of the banal, but unless they achieve a certain mass (normally understood as a very large and weighty object – death, revolution, sex and so on) they remain too small to be caught by any net created in art. I wanted to claim of my practice and the objects it spun out, that it existed in the world with all the complexity of any other object – a spoon, a pen, two manila folders and some paper clips – but so much of this small culture didn't seem to warrant the large amounts of time needed to make work of it, leaving my practice suffering from a kind of myopia. But as every school kid learns in physics, great mass can also be generated by a very small thing traveling at great speed (sometimes between the big things) so the departments were an attempt to speed up. Working at sub-banal speed, not the speed of light.

And now, if I get all excited and want to tell you how the latest work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on radical democratic politics and its relation to a notion of universality that supports a foundational structure of rights helps me better understand the intuited thoughts I had in '97, that at the heart of any claim to the universal and any pragmatic construction of a real public space there must exist a comprehension of the radical negativity of the universal as the guarantor of the capacity of the public sphere to negotiate and resolve conflict, please don't stop listening. But also don't stop reminding me that Quadrophenia told me first when I was a kid, or stop gluing my pen to my desk, taking sick days with me to go watch a game, or make me stop doing an impression of the boss as she walks in behind me.

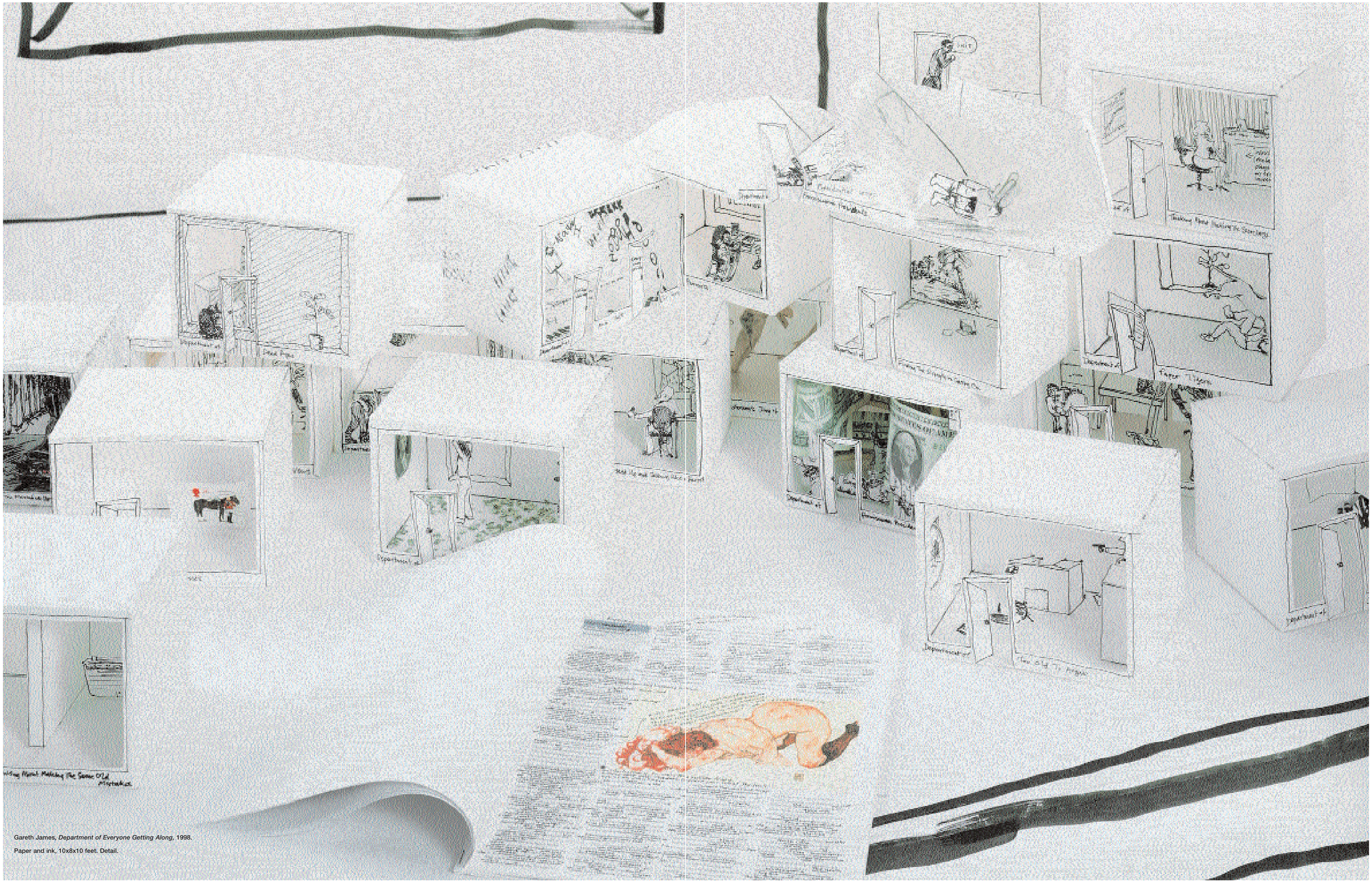
See you tomorrow.

GARETH JAMES, NEW YORK, OCTOBER 2001

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROE ETHRIDGE



Gareth James, *Department of Finding the Strength to Carry On*, 1997.

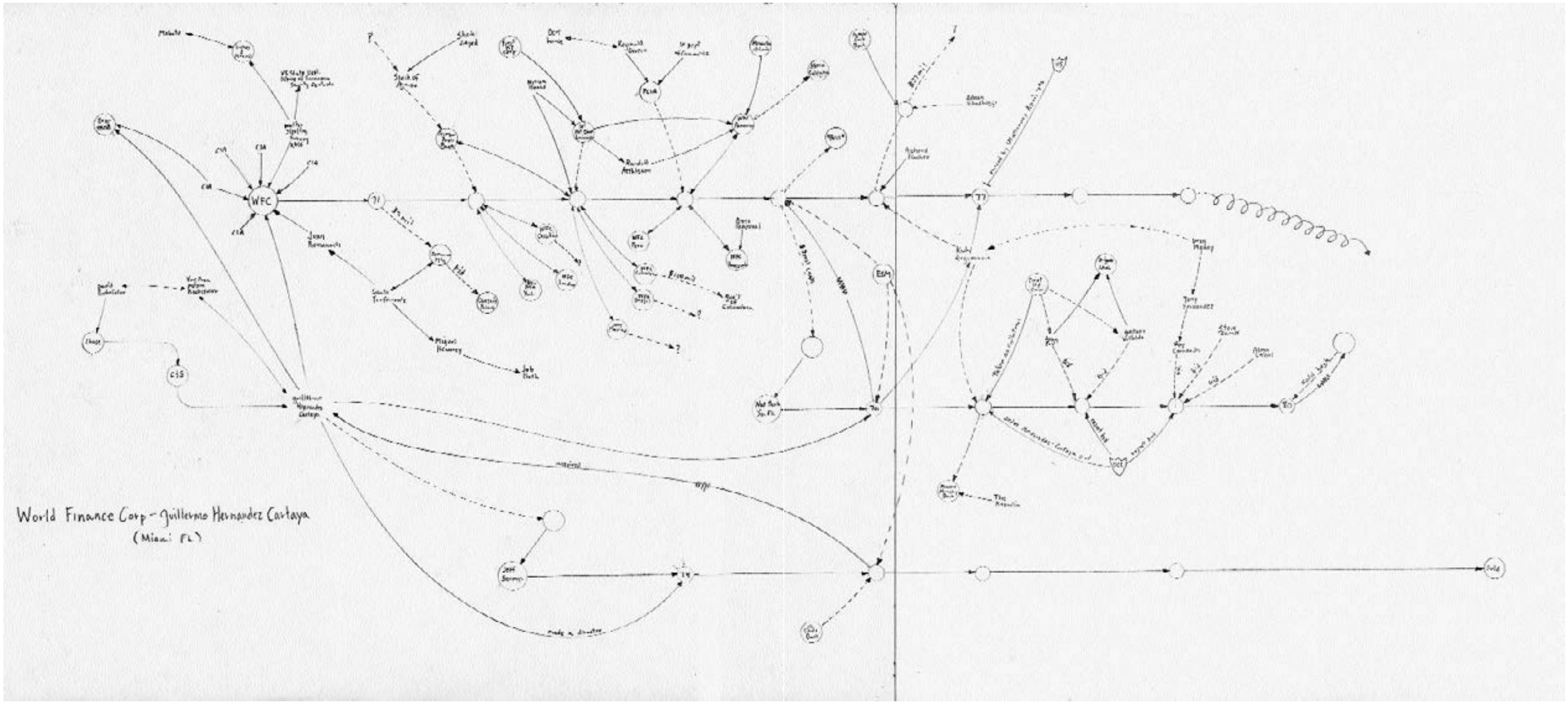


Gareth James, *Department of Everyone Getting Along*, 1998.

Paper and ink, 10x8x10 feet. Detail.

NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

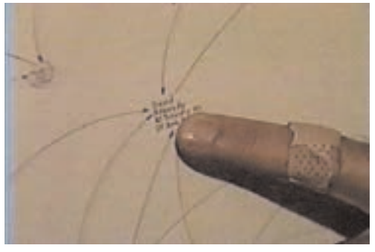
Mark Lombardi













I've been involved in this project for four years. The research started four years ago and I've been drawing for three years. The first drawings were done in January 1994. Previous to that was painting, and also writing in a political vein, some of which was published under pseudonyms in small press operations. I was never really satisfied with painting and was searching for something that had the graphic impact of a painting but could convey a story. I call these "narrative structures." I wanted to tell a detailed story, one that had some dark passages perhaps, and was looking for a vehicle that was more than just text – or text and a photograph – which are probably the predominant ways of telling a story.

I was getting this information from a number of different sources, which I was getting confused by. I was losing track of a number of connections I thought were vital to the story, and simply out of sheer necessity, began doing sketches of corporate organisations, hierarchies and various political structures. I used the drawings to refresh my memory, as a prompt, and as I began doing them I realised their potential to become a fully-developed format. The primary aspect of it is this diagrammatic character. I feel I'm borrowing or pillaging part of the corporate vocabulary – diagrams and charts are very common in business law and what not; people use them to visualise deals and information.

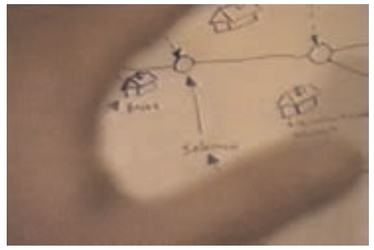
Essentially what I've done is simply laid down information and tried to make connections between things.

This one is a story about the founding of La Costa, which is an up-scale resort community in Southern California in Palm Springs in the desert. What interested me about it is there are a number of books that refer to its Mob origins. It had been founded with Teamster money and had Mob-connected people on the board of the initial development company. You see Armhalt Smith, who was a banker from L.A. and an advisor to Nixon in the 40s, when Nixon was running for Congress. He took a hundred million dollar stake in the property. So what I'm trying to do here is lay as many connections as I can between the Southern California financial community, the Mob and the Nixon machine. So it's a limited scope – I'm picking off a fairly limited series of connections. For instance, you have Moe Dalitz, who belonged to the Cleveland Mob and goes back to the 30s, and did bootlegging – he was a partner of Lansky. This guy here, Alard Roen is a friend of Lansky's, and Moe Levinson is also part of the same crowd, and Fast Eddie Susalla who was a partner of a man from Louisiana who was alleged to have been close to Carlos Marcello. This guy here is a former Lieutenant Governor of Nevada, Clifford Jones, who later became a lobbyist for the gaming industry and got tied in with some of these same people. This guy here, Les Winkler, defrauded a bank in Kansas City.

What I do is survey the major published texts. If there's a book or chapter or recitation about a particular development or bank or political activity that I'm interested in, I will first of all come up with a bibliography. These four books are the major books written on BCI, which is a bank that operated in Luxembourg and worldwide, and was the mother of all bank scandals – something like $14 billion dollars disappeared in the process. Now these two books are the major books on Robert Vesco, who was a politically-connected American financier and business man who took over a mutual fund in Geneva that had various very strange connections and looted it of 250 million dollars. He was on the run, was a friend of Nixon and Mitchell, and was eventually indicted by SCC for an alleged 250 million dollar fraud scheme, and fled to the Bahamas, the Antilles, Costa Rica and finally Cuba. There he lived as a semi-free man for twenty years. He was recently indicted, and is incarcerated. I don't know on what charges.











What I will do is read all these books and many more. The process is I will Xerox the index and then begin to pick through looking for corporations, government agencies and individuals in whom I already have an interest and that are in my database. I will make a card of each one, then in the back of the original book I will follow the index and transcribe the information that I think is relevant onto the cards which form a database. So I'll make the little sketches, and a starter sketch, and use this as a basis for what becomes a maquette. What I'm doing is translating this information into a more developed or finished type of image that will convey the expanding information here.

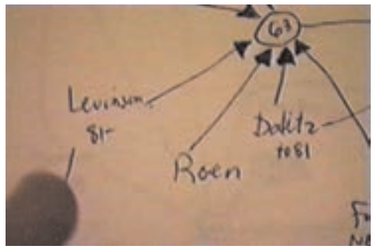
Here I'm developing a maquette for a more finished drawing which will be 52" by 140." I enjoy doing them as much as the finished piece. The full-bodied work allows you to walk into the narrative, which I find very appealing, and I think the stories are conducive to that. They're very expansive.

Eventually I get up to two layers of information: a black layer and a red layer. The black layer is the nucleus of the story: I'm simply trying to hit the highlights, show what I think are the most important elements. This one here is the Lincoln Savings. This black line shows the chronology going back to the 70s and up to 1989, when the bank was seized by regulators, so these are all various people that were plugged in somehow. The red layer is what I call the restraint of the activity, and consists of brief notations indicating when and if any of the various parties where sued, indicted or somehow sanctioned by a regulatory apparatus – in the U.S. it would be the Interests Department, or the SCC, or the Federal Home Loan; all have some kind of jurisdiction over Lincoln Savings and various parties connected to it. So I'll show that Michael Nohan was instrumental in Charles Keating getting control of Lincoln Savings in the first place. So it says, for instance, here in 1989 he's indicted on 96 counts and pays a 600 million dollar settlement to the government. Or I'll show that the law firm (that was one of a hundred law firms Charles Keating had at one time on retainer), in 1990, was sued by the FBIC for their role in Lincoln, and in 1993, eventually paid a 75 million dollar settlement. This bank here, Savings and Loans, lost something in the order of $2 billion because of the mismanagement and outright theft that went on there. So this is a maquette for a much larger piece as well.

This is the one way I'm able to build up the information. I like the tactility of the pencil and paper.

I like being on top of the paper, which is why I work on the floor. For the 52" by 140" works, what I'll do is lay out a sheet by the roll. I'll lay these sheets of paper on top so I don't get my finger prints all over the work I've already done or an area where I'm eventually going to work. Sometimes the maquette will be there as well. In a very conventional way I will take measurements and literally blow up the image laying on top of it. I use an adjustable ship's curve to create a flow to the drawing that I feel is appealing and very organic.

I guess one of the issues I'll be facing in the future is the potential for computers, both as a research tool via the Internet and as a means of producing some of the work. The information now is almost exclusively from paper sources. I find a book much more comforting than the computer screen. I can take a book anywhere with me; I can go backwards and forwards; I can essentially dissect the information much more readily with a book or a newspaper article I've Xeroxed – something that's paper and tactile, that I can look through and rearrange until it begins to make sense to me. I'd rather have the information central than the keyboard in the way and my eyes over there on the monitor. With these I can sit in the car, take them on the plane, work on them in bed, whereas on the computer I would feel physically restricted. The Internet is to me a vexing challenge in the sense











that the information I'm dealing with will just explode logorhythmically. For every connection here, the Internet will be able to pull out six more. I needed to get down the basics before going full-throttle into Internet research. But now that I've reached phase one of the work, it's coming very shortly.

Essentially what I do is researching and sketching. Until I've done that I don't have anything viable to say. So that is really where I get a buzz, and where my energy is renewed everyday, because I'm able to deal with issues and information I think have an impact on my life. This is my way of coping with it, by more or less visualising the connections that I think have power and influence through politics and finance.

So I'll take the cards, read them, sort them out and begin to come up with an arrangement in my head, and distill what I think are the essential ingredients of the story, and then I'll set about sketching to get the story going. Here, with the Kissinger associates, I want to show how Kissinger was connected to an advisor to a state-owned Italian bank called Banca Nazionale del Lavaro with a long relationship with American intelligence that were involved in the arming of Iraq in the 80s, literally right up to the invasion of Kuwait. In the 80s, they established a branch of the bank in Atlanta, Georgia which lent five billion dollars to Saddam Hussein, guaranteed by the United States Department of Agriculture, supposedly to be used for the export of American grain to Iraq. Of the five billion, it's alleged that between one and two billion dollars was diverted by the Iraqis – I think with the complete knowledge of the American government, the Italians and the Brits – first of all, to off-shore banks, where the money became anonymous, which was then used to purchase weapons and even finance certain aspects of their nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programmes; apart from which it is said that 750 million was skimmed directly into accounts that were controlled by Saddam, in his own name, or by Saddam's family members.

What I'll do is set a hierarchy here with what I call the client, which is the government of Iraq, and show that Saddam Hussein is the dictator – he's the one that can be shown with a direct line; everything else is intermediate to it. Here will be the Defense Ministry, which I'll show to be a subsidiary of the Iraqi Government. This will be a time line: Saddam comes to power in '79, the deals with Italy start in '81/'82, and it continues that way. This one company called Vassal Iconic, somewhere in Russia, was a contractor for the Defense Ministry. In fact, they sent millions of plastic land mines, many of which are probably still buried all over that part of the world. As it turned out, Vassal, after the first contracts had been awarded, was bought out by Fiat, the chairman of which is Gianni Agnelli, who is known in that part of the world as the "King of Italy" – he's certainly the most powerful man in Italy. If I know the names of some of the other directors I'll add them. I do know one. His name is Count Borletti, one of the powers behind Vassal and remains on their board, and joins the board of Fiat, so I draw a line down here. Fiat in turn is being advised by Kissinger's advisors (I show advice going in both directions, because it's not a hierarchical relationship, it's more a contractual give and take), but they also, as it happens, have a contract with Banca Nazionale del Lavaro of Rome.

I can't remember the official name for this instrument. It has an adjustable spine. You can adjust it to any arc.





The earlier drawings were more rectilinear. I found all those right angles were slowing down the flow of the information, and were harder to read and less pleasing to the eye than a drawing that consisted of radiating lines. So I will take this spine, use templates, keep my pencil very sharp – for the BCI drawing, which is 52" by 140" I went through 6 pencils doing that one drawing. I'll sharpen all these before I get started. So we put Henry Kissinger in a predominant position. I want the information on this level to be legible – I don't want to be interpreting myself, because there are a number of passages that are obscure. Every one of these drawings has a sketch under it that has been erased, so I've already sketched this line between Kissinger and Fiat before re-drawing it with this template. The circles represent a corporation or government agency so that the names stand out. The larger drawings are on a very substantial paper – actually a water-colour paper. I think of the computer-generated images as more of a notebook which I can change and I guess the way I work is to make different versions, often four. Every time I make a new one I keep it up to date and add new information. One way I do that is to use a computer image, so I can adjust it, because once I get to this stage I like to think it's pretty much settled, so the computer works in a different mode for me.

There's nothing on any of the charts that I cannot substantiate with a major published source. If someone was to ask me what this connection means, all I have to do is pick up the card showing the biographies and corporate biographies. The people who have written the stories that I derive my information from are still walking around. Now in a few minor instances there have been journalists assassinated; it has happened. But I'm not introducing new information that could get anyone indicted or in trouble. It's all public information. I am just re-processing it, rearranging it, in a visual format that's interesting to me. I'm certainly thrilled that other people want to look at it as well, but I essentially do it for myself. This is one way in which I can map the political and the social terrain in which I live.

MARK LOMBARDI IN A VIDEO RECORDING BY ANDY MANN, HOUSTON, TEXAS, 1994

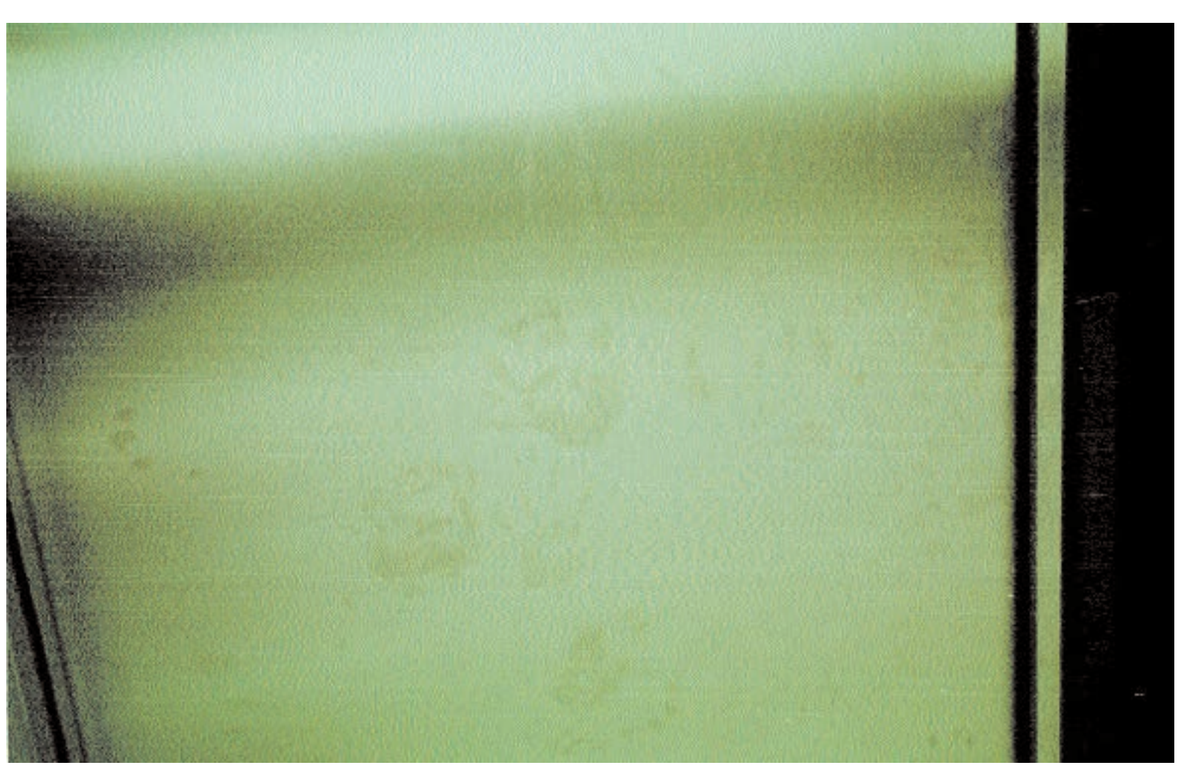
TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED BY ALEX FARQUHARSON, LONDON, 2001

COURTESY: PIEROGI, NEW YORK

LIFTS

Sandy Nicholson

Sandy Nicholson has been photographing interiors of corporate elevators in Australia, Europe, Asia, and the U.S. since 1998.



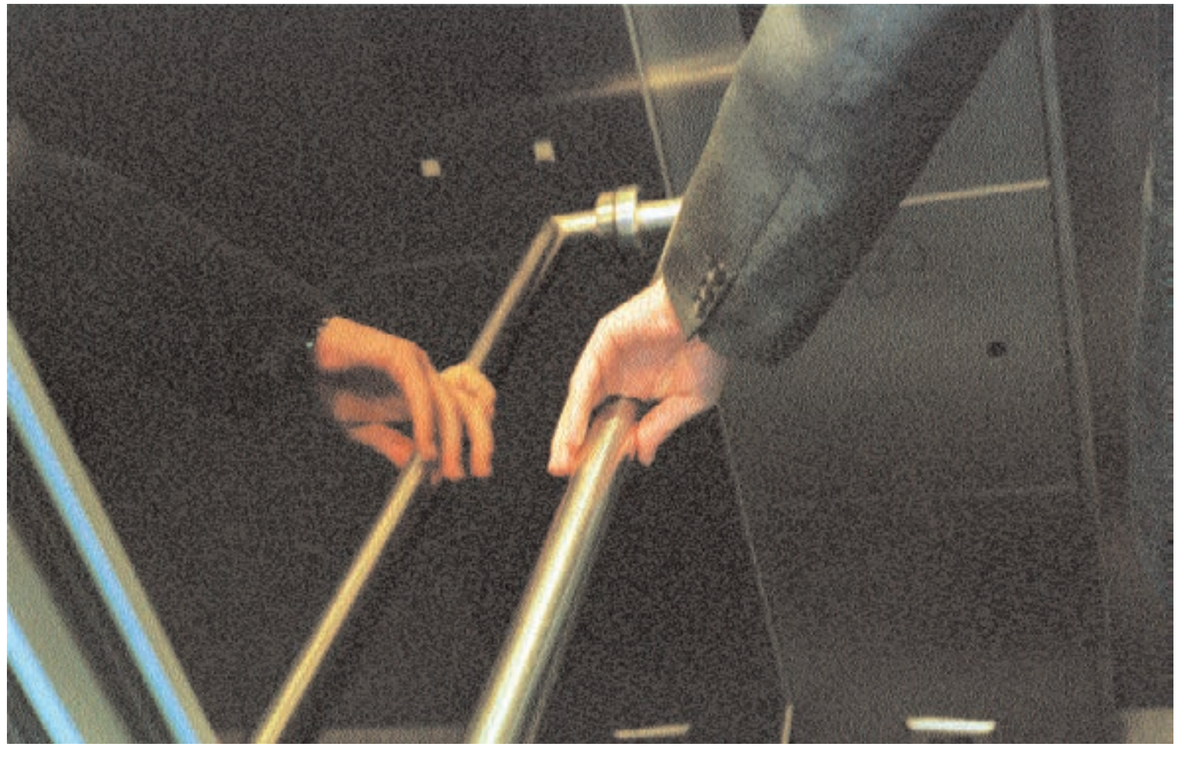












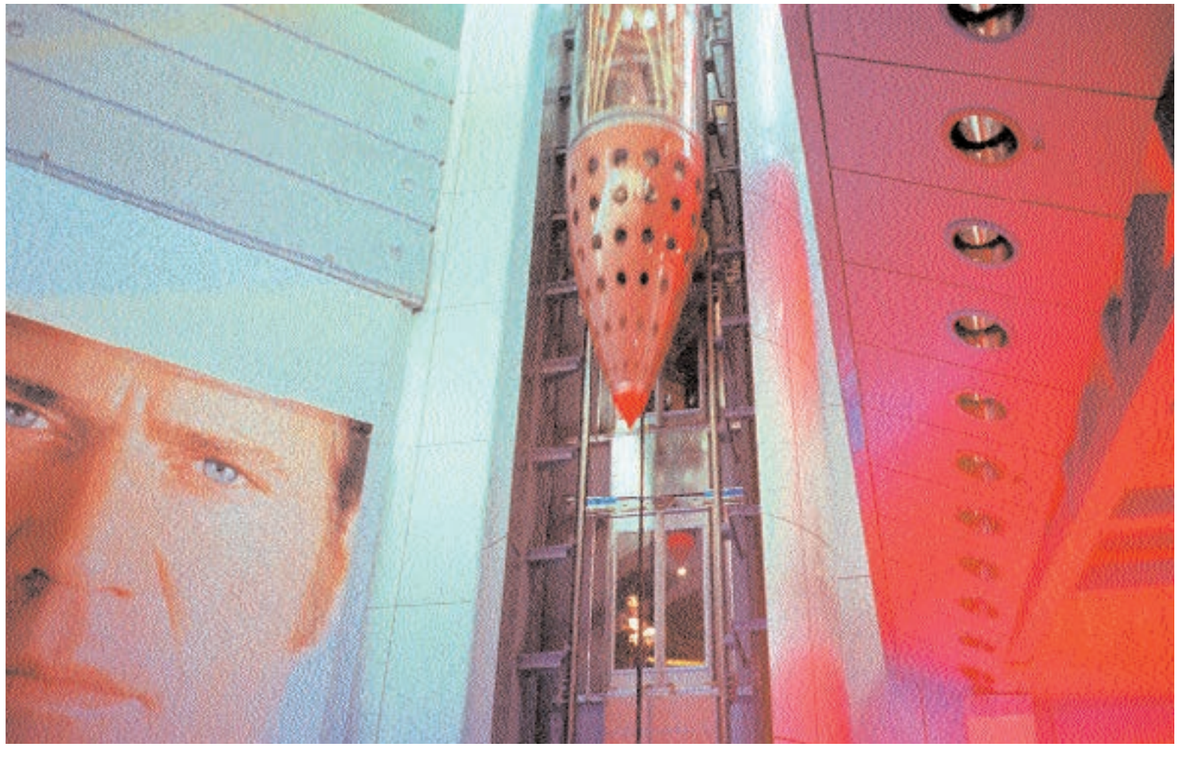

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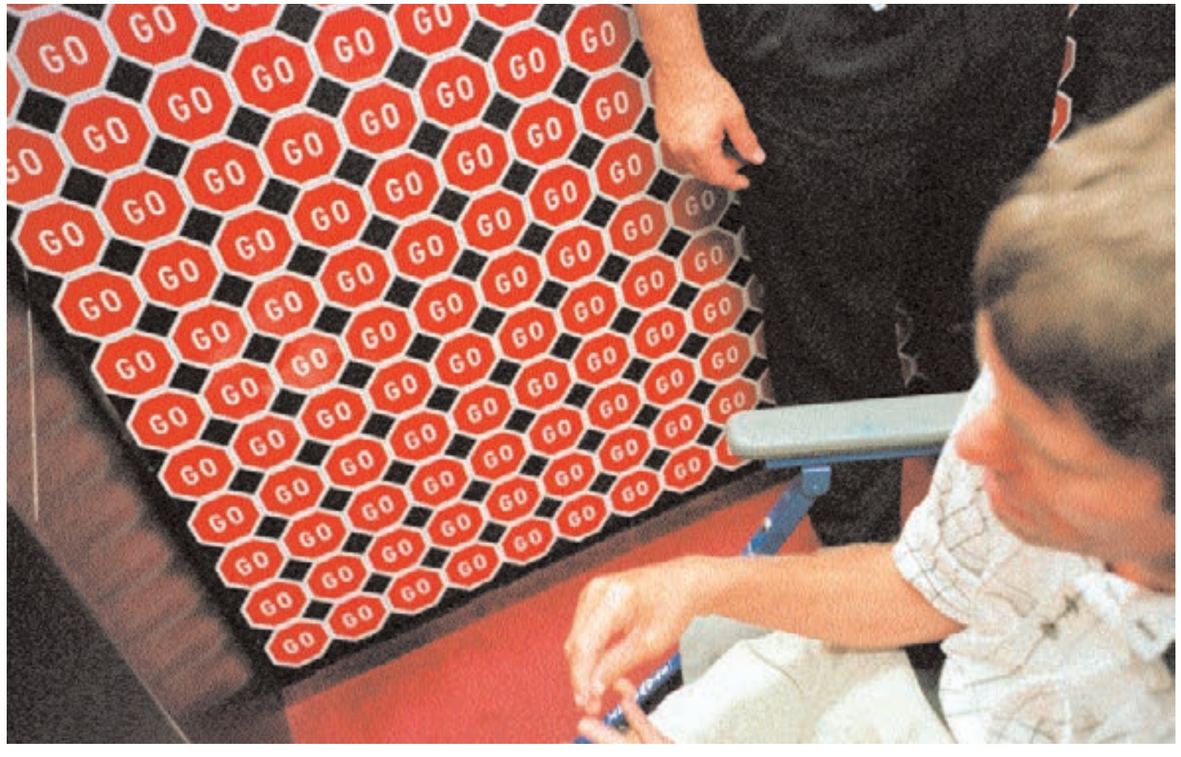









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ONE YEAR EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT MCDONALD'S

Tuija Lindström in conversation with Aleksandra Mir

Aleksandra Mir: Tuija, you were born in 1950, in Kotka, Finland, and graduated from Konstfack, Stockholm in 1983, where since 1993, you have been represented by the Schaper & Sundberg Gallery. You have had 25 solo exhibitions, including the Ars Nova Museum of Contemporary Art in Turku and Moderna Museet in Stockholm. You have had five books published about your work. In 1992, you became professor and Artistic Director at the School of Photography & Film at Gothenburg University, generally considered the most important educational institution for photography in Northern Europe. Last year, April 1999, you decided to show at the local McDonald's here in Gothenburg. Why?

Tuija Lindström: I was approached by the PR agency who handles McDonald's because of my reputation. They wanted someone established. Of course, it wasn't an obvious thing to do, as I had all those classic, petit bourgeois ideas of approval in my head – of having to be validated by important institutions rather than by a hamburger joint. But then I considered the alternative: the perpetually introverted art world establishment where (at least here in Europe) not much has changed since the 19th century. And while the museums are practically empty, the restaurant offered an audience of 5000 per day. It was something else.

My work was never any direct protest art. I came of age in the 80s, believing in ART as an autonomous thing, so it was carried by a more sublime aesthetic, one that could even appeal to a fast food chain. When I arrived on location, the decorator had already set the interior of the space. They had made these very exclusive-looking light boxes, already waiting for me, prescribed in size, with elegant teak frames. I agreed to all that with pleasure. But when they asked for the photos of the flowers and naked women, I brought in the *Post Nuclear Landscapes Series* (1982-88) instead.

I had carte blanche in terms of my actual work, so that is what came up on the walls. One image, *1984*, was taken in 1984 in a desolate factory in Stansted, England. While we were hanging it, these teenage boys came up and said, "What the fuck is this? Is it going to be all Kosovo here now?" I said, "It is England 15 years ago" and something really clicked in their heads.

With prestige, you can do whatever. So you play double cards. It is exciting, and of course that's the way you have to work. If you want to get at the power, you have to speak the language of power itself without losing your own. Which can be tricky, there are so many temptations on the way.

At the opening they served champagne and two hamburgers to everyone invited. The cultural bigwigs of the city came, my daughter, Laura, and her friends were there. But what surprised me most was the reaction among my colleagues, who were really bitter about the whole thing. The art world is the environment I thought I shared a discourse with, so I expected my colleagues to "get it," which they didn't at all. What emerged from that end was a failure of any critical analysis – just a blunt understanding that I had simply cashed in on a situation. So that was my last illusion.

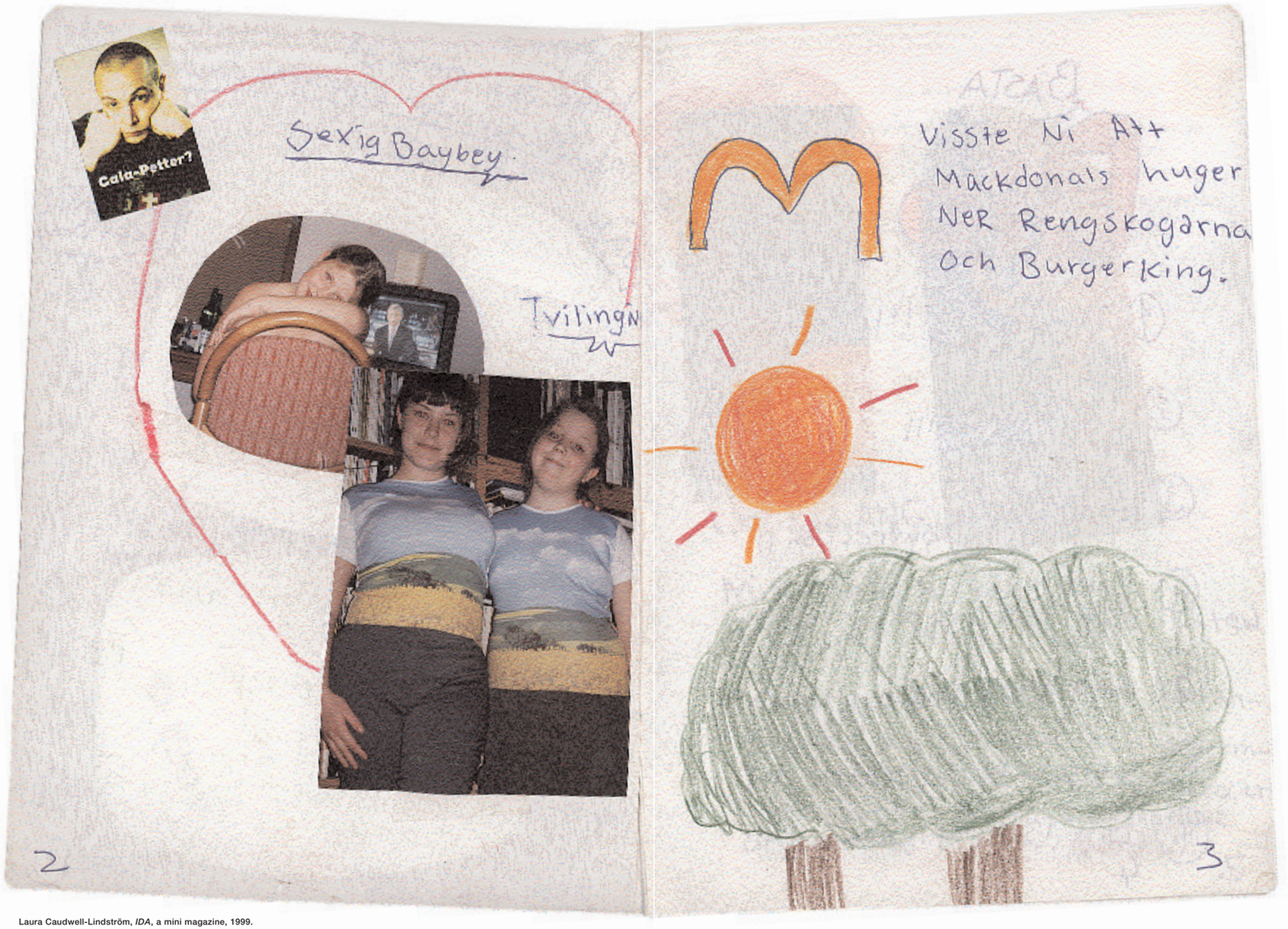
Following my show, McDonald's made a five-year agreement with the Gothenburg School of Photography where I teach, to exhibit the students' work in the same teak frames they had initially built for the environment. It is not such a clear-cut path for the students because they are younger and more vulnerable to censorship. This year, some made it in and some didn't, for seemingly arbitrary reasons. One student was rejected even though the subject matter was very entertaining: falling action heroes caught in mid-air. The reason offered was the film stills were from X-rated movies and could not be displayed in a space where children eat. The other rejection involved two female students who took staged pictures of their own messy homes, in a cute Pippi Longstocking kind of way. It may possibly have come across as an idealization of chaos. So the fear of resistance is never far away.

TUIJA LINDSTRÖM/ALEKSANDRA MIR, GOTHENBURG, 1999.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ÅKE E: SON LINDMAN



Translation:
Sexy Baby
Twins
Did you know Mackdonals cuts down
the rain forests and Burger King.
LAURA CAUDWELL-LINDSTRÖM, GOTHENBURG, 1999.



Laura Caudwell-Lindström, *IDA*, a mini magazine, 1999.



Tuija Lindström, “The ‘M’ is disappearing. In a couple of years it may be gone altogether. This environment will be as neutralized as the air we breathe.”

Tuija Lindström, *One Year Exhibition of Photography at McDonald’s*, installation view, photographed by Åke E:son Lindman, on assignment for the PR agency Ytterborn & Fuentes, Stockholm for McDonald’s Avenyn, Gothenburg, 1999.

