ART
LINE
a Baltic collaboration

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Contents

INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTIONS

ART IN PUBLIC SPACE

ART IN DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE – CROSSMEDIA

DIGITAL ART PLATFORM

TELLING THE BALTIC, COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING PROJECT

THE CULTURE TOURIST

THE END OR THE BEGINNING

Collaborate! Creating an infrastructure for art and interdisciplinary cross-border projects around the Baltic Sea

by Torun Ekstrand

Proximity
1. the state, quality, sense, or fact
   of being near or next to closeness
2. nearness in place, space, time, relation

There is an infrastructure for cars and ferries in the Baltic area, but not for art and culture. We wanted to change this and build a network to connect resources and expertise in the art institutions, museums and academies involved. How can we coproduce projects, create opportunities for artists and bring people together in the macro-region of the South Baltic area? There is a tradition of collaboration around the subjects of, for instance, environmental issues, law enforcement and safety at sea, but there have been few professional cultural exchanges between cultural institutions. A long-term interdisciplinary cooperation anchored in several institutions was missing. We are neighbors who want to get closer to each other not only geographically, but also culturally. Art and cultural exchange plays an important role in the European cooperation as a whole and in a more broad-minded Europe. The joint efforts and a lot of work by individuals in all of our partner institutions made our joint ownership of Art Line visible and possible.

Art Line was an international art project with the main goal of creating a cooperative platform for art and academia in Poland, Sweden, Germany, Russia and Lithuania. The important outcome is a growing network between art halls, cultural centers, museums, an institute of technology and an art academy where the art scenes of the Baltic institutions has been developed and strengthened.

The project has led to opportunities for artists, who have been able to present themselves in new contexts, interacting with people in public space, on the internet, in exhibitions, in workshops and on the Stena Line ferries between Gdynia and Karlskrona. The project period and its extension period was January 2011–March 2014, but the network and the platforms the project has created will live longer than that. A new cultural landscape without borders is under development.

3,000 characters is the strict limit when describing a project in our EU-project report summaries. 3,000 characters to sum up an extensive interdisciplinary cross-border art project which included many projects within; to describe a cooperation with fourteen partner institutions from five countries around the Baltic Sea; to present the work of the art institutions, museums and academies involved; to reflect upon art projects in the public domain - in physical and digital space; to analyze workshops, seminars, conferences, installations, exhibitions, contests, lectures, meetings, art tours, study visits, presentations, interviews and experiments and to describe the many artworks presented in exhibitions and in projects. It is a limitation that we are going to exceed in this catalogue. If you are holding a printed version in your hand, you can read, see and hear even more in the online catalogue. If you are reading this catalogue online, it's possible to get a printed version to hold and to keep. The two versions are in a dialogue. Since the Art Line projects have revolved around art both in physical and digital space, the cross-media factor is important. The catalogue contains artworks, texts and reflections from different fields connecting art, digital media technologies and public space.

It is an unusual experience to have several years to explore and learn the culture of countries in a defined geographical area around the Baltic Sea. It creates a fertile soil for art projects, which are rooted in the area. We had the privilege and luxury to focus and dig deeper and to have a chance to grasp and understand parts of the history, society, culture, values, traditions and politics in the countries of our partners. Our countries have similarities and differences that stimulate and develop working methods. A sharing and linking of knowledge and experience added new unexpected perspectives, enriched and cross-fertilized. Our frames of reference tied us together.

We were not looking for a common expression, but were in a curious search for identities.
It is not easy to talk about one common identity in a specific geographic area, since global and local identities are in constant flux and transformation. Geographical limits are pretty uninteresting in the digital world - at least in Europe where access to the internet is easier than on other continents. We need to disregard the mental boundaries between our countries and instead see where we share experiences.

Art Line was an international art project investigating and challenging the concept of public space in the physical and the digital domain. How can one engage the "new" public audiences and digital spaces supported by the internet for the creation and the communication of art? How can physical public space and digital space coexist in art practice? Can temporary interactive art projects in public space be called public art? Can a temporary interactive art project on the Internet be compared with a bronze sculpture in a city square?

The partner institutions formed a coproducing hybrid, a social and spatial organism of academy, white cube settings, public space, workshops, technology, digital media, artists, faculty, curators, and seafarers. We organized a wide range of art projects: workshops, exhibitions, public space projects, contests, conferences and seminars about art and science, art and technology, art and digital media and about art in public space. We also arranged tailor-made art tours to Gdańsk and its surrounding neighbourhood.

The partner institutions worked with different methods and in different arenas, in order to examine questions revolving around the public domain, among other things. The institutions stepped out from their safe havens to meet and interact with a new and broader public and to reach people who normally don't attend cultural events, through, for example, public space projects, digital media projects, the many interviews with storytellers and civil cooperators around the Baltic Sea and through projects onboard the ferries.

Artists showed their works in the public institutions of our partners, in art museum/art hall settings and relocated to other types of museums or industrial technological parks in the cities, regions and countries that the Art Line partners represent. Works were presented outside the gallery and museum context in the public spaces of our cities, in housing areas, in parks, outside shopping centers, on the sea, on the ferries touring in between Sweden and Poland and on the internet and on smart phones or tablets - Art Online and Art Applications. Artists created works in cross-media projects combining digital and real space and performed experiments in technological laboratories and beyond. Groups of people in our tailor-made art tours to Poland visited art projects in public spaces, as did politicians and cultural bodies.

There is a short distance over the sea between the fourteen art institutions, museums, academies and the shipping company, which were partners in the project. The geographical proximity facilitated meetings, itineraries, transport and the common development of all projects. Not long ago, during the Cold War, the Baltic Sea was a border between countries. "The Baltic is not what separates us but what connects us" is a phrase we have carried with us from one of our first meetings where we exchanged stories about our shared cultural history.

The ocean is more than a view. We have worked in concrete form with the sea both as the theme and subject in several projects and we have worked on, and even under the sea's surface. We traveled on the sea to meet and work. We spent the very first joint workshop onboard one of the ferries and since then the ferry has been an arena for exhibitions, sound installations and for interactions and workshops.

Many ways to explore the sea have been undertaken in artworks. The sea as a domain for artists' studios, the sea as a graveyard, the sea as a "playground", the sea as a source of superstition, the sea as a place for battles and emigration, the sea as an underwater world for divers and environmental researchers and much more has been a subject for artists.

The sounds of the sea were collected for a joint artists' composition in the project, *Baltic Sounds Good*. The movements of ships in the Gdańsk Bay were transformed into the live sound installation *Baltic Sea Radio*. The augmented reality installation *Barbarum Fretum* made it possible to virtually swim and dive into the Baltic Sea. The *Water Memory* application remade the reality, history and choreography of a river area in Gdańsk. Artists in the project *Art & Apparatus* experimented with waterjet cutting. The rivers of our Baltic countries were cut out as fragile blood veins connecting our countries in one artist's work. The sea front was symbolically used to show 24-hour art videos commenting on public space in *Space Matters*. The stories told by hundreds of storytellers from sea areas around the Baltic and the artwork created for *Telling the Baltic* are all connected to the sea and we got to re-think the traditional version of European history. One visitor even revealed a story about an encounter with a mermaid…

The interactive digital artwork *The Baltic Agora* by Mateusz Pęk and Klaudia Wrzask can be looked upon as a symbol for the cooperation as a whole. They created an agora made up of the bottom of the Baltic Sea as a 3D topographic map in reverse. The agora served as a forum for meetings where all the input from people in our Baltic countries became a visible and changeable structure.

The series of conferences and seminars on art, science, digital media and technology have all given in-depth knowledge and offered different perspectives. For instance, *Augmented Reality* has been a topic as well as a technique used in art projects for public space and in research. Familiarity with digital media, tablets and smart phones has been an intermediator between contemporary art and the public, especially the young audience. *Mixing realities (#Mixitup!)* was not only the title of one seminar, but also the atmosphere of the events arranged.

There were many new and unforeseen projects as well as unplanned side effects within the Art Line project. Every meeting created butterfly-effects of new exhibition collaborations, new contacts with other cultural institutions, advice given to institutions that wanted to create an international culture project, new applications, new collaborations and study visits.

We applied for funding from the EU program, the South Baltic Cross-Border Co-operation Programme. In the beginning of 2013 the European Commission appointed our project to be a Flagship project. Art Line is now a proud part of the Action plan for the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), which is the first macro-regional strategy in Europe. Culture has been acknowledged as an important part of the development in the region and culture will have a larger role in the new Baltic Sea Strategy. The European Commission selected Art Line as a role model for cooperation in the arts. For the Art Line partners, not one of which is a national authority or state museum, it is important to be recognized in such a selection process where the European Commission is very restricted. To be appointed a Flagship as a culture project is rare. Art Line is seen as a project that focuses on quality with a concentration on contemporary art, digital media and technology. Important criteria were that the partnership is based on mutual learning and the exchange of knowledge; that it shows how cooperation has made the results stronger; that the results achieved are of interest beyond the specific local and national context; that the project focuses on "life after the end of the project" aspects and on creating a network for collaboration; that many of the projects have a visibility in the regions through different types of public projects; that the emphasis is on culture and cultural heritage in our regions; that contemporary art is combined with technologies and digital media; that it employs interdisciplinary working methods; that there are variety of partners in the partnership, and that Art Line involves as many as five countries. Art Line took part in the historical, first meeting for cultural Flagship projects around the Baltic Sea and our project was the only appointed Flagship project under the cultural heritage priority with results and experience to share so far.

What difficulties did we anticipate before deciding to write an EU application? In some notes made during the first large pre-Art Line workshop in Gdańsk we stated the following difficulties: No Money. Lack of time. Developing ideas takes time and to create ideas in small institutions is difficult. Finding common subjects. Bureaucracy. A lot of paperwork. Geographical distance. Different art policies. Little experience in EU projects. Language.

We continued with the question: Why should we cooperate? What we came up with was: Inspire. Exchange ideas. Broaden our experience. Change the mentality. Borrow practice and working methods. Take part in the experience of other audiences. Search for new audiences. Mix and share national habits and culture. Gain a better understanding of one another and get to know each other better. Create a community through actions and joint events. Create new opportunities for artists. Change the mentality of where we can show art as public art - on a political level too. Create a platform for the future. Curiosity. Self-confidence.

The matters we saw as obstacles were transformed into something opposite. For instance, we had already gathered a base of ideas that could be fruitful for all of the partners to develop and we had found common subjects in earlier visits and in research. If we were granted funding we would capture valuable knowledge of EU projects and grasp the potential for the future.

It was a challenge to think of realistic goals. What could we change in society, in the institutions, in ourselves – in terms of an art project? We composed an agenda from the perspective of art and thus boldly claimed the independence of art. There are many aspects of a complex and wide-ranging project. What is its relevance to European problems and issues? Is it possible to bring together European, national, macro-regional, regional, local and institutional viewpoints and goals? How about the artists' work? How about the cross-borders aspects? How can we construct and find synergies between different disciplines in our practices?

The European economy looks bad and sad overall. The rule seems to be to cut funding to cultural institutions, rather than increasing it. The Finnish philosopher and professor Pekka Himanen gave a talk in Wrocław during the European Culture Congress and compared creativity periods with the cultural politics of yesterday and today. "It is no coincidence that Athens and Florence flourished", he said. "Why do we look back at those times in amazement? Because 1/3 of their city budgets were spent on culture. What city would do that today?" The photographer Oliviero Toscani talked about art as subversive and contrary to the system and existing rules. How can bureaucrats deal with that? "Money needs culture. Politics needs culture. Culture needs money".

The European Union made it possible to co-finance our cooperation, to co-create and to do something institutions normally don't do in their activities. We found that the networking gave us another kind of wealth: an understanding and a knowledge.

Europe is based on differences and this means diverse culture. The Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman said during the EU Culture Congress in Wrocław "that Europe is a multicultural mosaic and that 'the other' is not an abstract figure, but a neighbor" and he continued to talk about the equality of the other in a limited space. "Look at Europe as a research laboratory", Bauman continued, "and see the ability to learn from one another. Don't compete to be the best in class, don't fight each other as nations, and cooperate instead".

In a later discussion during the forum, two experts in cultural industries and cultural economics, Pier Luigi Sacco and Philippe Kern agreed that culture is more cosmopolitan than the politics in Europe: "Cultural practice precedes policy by approximately ten years". One of them added: "No healthy brain would come up with the idea that the state should not subsidize the arts".

Art Line offered a context, a framework, ideas, research and possibilities during an extended period of time. Our project may have formally ended in March 2014, but will continue in new shapes. The network will be sustained with programs arranged by two institutions yearly and people will continue to cooperate on different levels. The project idea includes a plan for the future, which is to expand the network with new partners and new forms of cooperation and to find new creative ways of exchange and financing. We have created an interdisciplinary "think tank". The European culture expert Chris

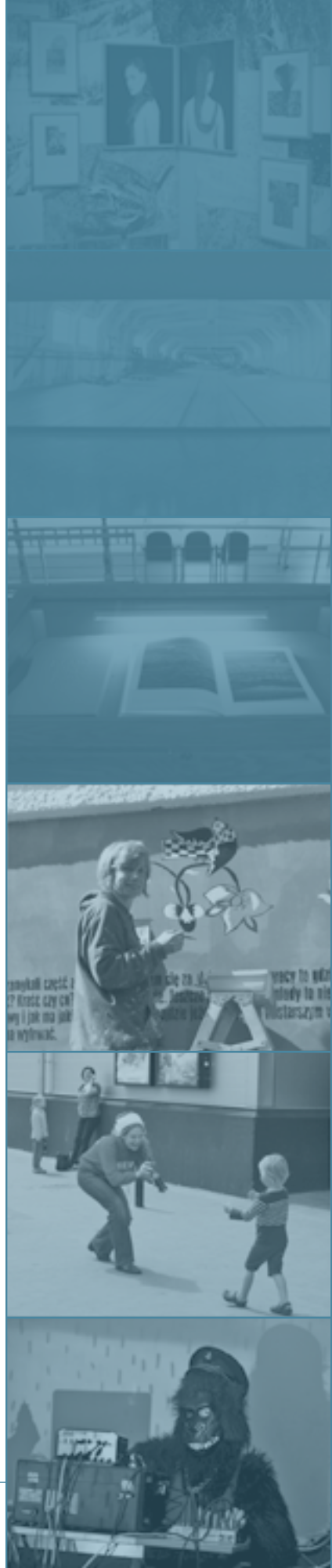
Torch gave us advice for a future collaboration, which was to be courageous and take the idea all the way. We have, for instance, continued the long discussion about creating a Baltic Biennale, with the tradition of the Ostsee Biennale at the Kunsthalle Rostock during the 80s and 90s in mind. A dream scenario would be a vessel that constantly traveled around the Baltic Sea. Artist residencies could be arranged onboard in interdisciplinary collaborations with experts, curators, researchers, digital media technologists, people from the partner institutions, collaborators and audiences – a multinational vessel arriving in the harbors of the Baltic cities and connecting activities and people to each site.

The main issues in art and science have nothing to do with geography, but rather: What is it to be human? What connects us? What creates a real community?
I hope that many of the partners and artists can feel that we belong not to just one but to several places around the Baltic area. The continuity in the dialogues between us has been valuable. A little bit of Poland lives in Sweden, a little part of Russia lives in Germany and so on. It is both foreign and familiar at the same time.
We coproduce.
We coexist.
We have new insights.
We have an understanding of the world beyond.
We are heading forward towards new adventures.
We are interconnected.
We are changed.

I express my warmest thanks to each of you partners, artists, collaborators, storytellers, experts, and lecturers. Thank you to all of those who contributed to this catalogue. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,
Torun Ekstrand

Torun Ekstrand is a project leader of Art Line, she has been a freelancer since 2002, working as a curator and a project leader for public art projects in Artland.




YOU
ARE

The weak and strong term "European arts project"

by prof. dr. Gernot Wolfram

The term "European arts project" sounds convincing. It expresses promise and hope, but perhaps it has not been properly backed up by reality. Reflecting on the term, one might think: artists from various countries on this huge continent come together, share their ideas, exchange their knowledge and create new aesthetic experiences. This fascinating idea is very much present in the speeches of politicians and on the websites of art foundations and funding programs all over Europe. It also embodies an important approach to cultural programs in the European Union. But does it accurately reflect visible reality? When we look at the fields in which European artistic exchanges take place in practice, we can see many forms of sustainable cooperation (such as the Art Line Project around the Baltic Sea Region), but the potential for new possible art projects remains much greater than one might expect.

Economic factors very often lead to forms of European culture suffering from serious imbalances. For example, we are currently facing a wide gap between the countries of northern and southern Europe. Many art projects in Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy find it difficult to present their ideas to audiences due to a lack of money. Have we so far had a serious discussion about solidarity between artists and art projects? I fear not. The term "European culture" at present does not embody the necessary spirit for a holistic approach to common values or a strategy for artists working together in Europe, even in a time of economic and political crisis. What we have instead is a broad approach towards the so-called creative industries on the continent. Based on the recognition that creativity is not only part of the arts, many countries believe that a solution for art projects is to encourage creative people to reflect more intensely on the economic potential of their projects and ideas. This is in general an important idea, but does it really improve relations between artists? Or does it divide the art scene into areas of economic success and areas seen economically as "losers"?

Artistic projects today are often seen as an important part of the creative industries in different countries. The symbolic and economic impact of the term "art" leads to new strategies of representation. One such example is the new orientation of the official funding program of the European Union, which is closely connected with this development. The title of the 2014–2020 program is *Creative Europe*. This means that projects should demonstrate not only an artistically innovative approach, but should also present a concept focused on their economic goals and the means of realising them. This is a tremendous change, leading to a completely different understanding of cultural projects in Europe. This orientation towards economic success will probably change the perception of events within artistic circles and with their audiences. On the other hand, this change also reveals new potential for artists to prove their broad knowledge and to present their work in a more comprehensive way. As in the United States, different art scenes will transform into complex areas in new economic fields. This also has consequences for arts management, as Gordon Torr states in his book *Managing Creativity*.

> We are used to imagining music, dance, theatre, literature, crafts and the visual arts as the most significant aspects of our cultural experience. Around them we visualize those newer forms of artistic expression that include things like performance art, video art, installations, computer and multimedia creations. (…) Underlying this way of looking at culture is the romantic assumption that the activities at the centre are somehow worthier than those at the circumference because they are less tainted by commercial ambition. (…) The trend is clear. The high-end cultural stuff that survives only through the beneficence of state or municipal subsidies – the opera, ballet, national theatres, public galleries and museums (…) – has had to make way as the products of the creative economy claim centre stage.[1]

This critical approach towards the traditional structures of so-called "high-culture" is at first sight very convincing because there is undoubtedly a growing problem in terms of the acceptance and resonance of these artistic areas, especially among the younger generation. On the other hand, one of the tasks of the arts and arts management is to prevent the cultural sector from completely changing into a profit-oriented creative business. It is necessary to find solutions for managing the special needs of those who explore new aesthetic values, innovative art formats and new personal interactions with audiences. Otherwise, every theatre would offer musicals - one of the most successful formats of the last 20 years. But would theatre represent cultural developments in the proper way by fulfilling the momentary desires of the dominant majority? Or, looking at the visual arts, do we believe that paintings which suit the current tastes of a large audience and would quickly lead to buying behaviour are automatically the right developments for this field? Viewed from a conventional management perspective, one might agree. Just following the needs of the market would lead to a purely customer-oriented perspective, which would not fit into the self-understanding of the Arts and Arts management.[2] Perhaps it is necessary to remember at this point that innovative artistic ideas need time and space to present new aesthetic values. As Pablo Picasso once said when he turned to cubism as a style of painting: "New things in the arts are always ugly, like a newborn baby. After a while people understand why they are worth discovering within a new kind of beauty". Do we give artistic projects today this time? Do we bear in mind that creating artistic products is different from the production of perfumes and shoes?

Innovative artistic formats need a smart concept, funding opportunities, marketing activities, a media presence and a proper time schedule, as well as a knowledge of how to implement new approaches to audience development.[3] Within the non-profit-sector, cultural and subcultural developments grow under completely different circumstances than the creative industries, where conventional management approaches are a generally accepted basis for all issues concerning creative products and services. The gap between the for-profit-sector and the non-profit-sector is very often not properly reflected when it comes to questions about how to organize artistic projects.

Here we face some exciting challenges for artists. To avoid pressure from institutions outside genuine fields of culture, artists should find definitions for how they see their capacity to promote and "sell" their products. Not every artist, especially early in their career, has the opportunity to have a manager at his side. So artists are forced to organize for themselves a space in which they can survive - without losing their values and - let's use here an often underestimated word - their ideals.

European projects can help to encourage artists to see their strength, their power and their abilities to stimulate the awareness of people to transcend borders. But to have real cooperation, artists should concentrate on discussing artistic ideas which are strong enough to attract the attention of audiences in different countries. At the center of cooperation there is always an idea! Not a concept about how to bring people together or how to fund cooperation! These are also important factors, but a strong idea will lead to audiences - and fascinated audiences, as we can observe in the area of crowdfunding, are able to push an idea forward. So, the term "European art projects" is weak when it is used to endlessly repeat the historical shifts in memory and politically correct patterns of being one community in harmony. The term is strong when it is an expression for lively new artistic ideas which bring people from different countries together, and, perhaps much more importantly, fascinate audiences beyond national borders.

Prof. dr. Gernot Wolfram works as a journalist, writer and professor for Arts Management and Cultural Studies in Berlin at the MHMK University for Media and Communication.

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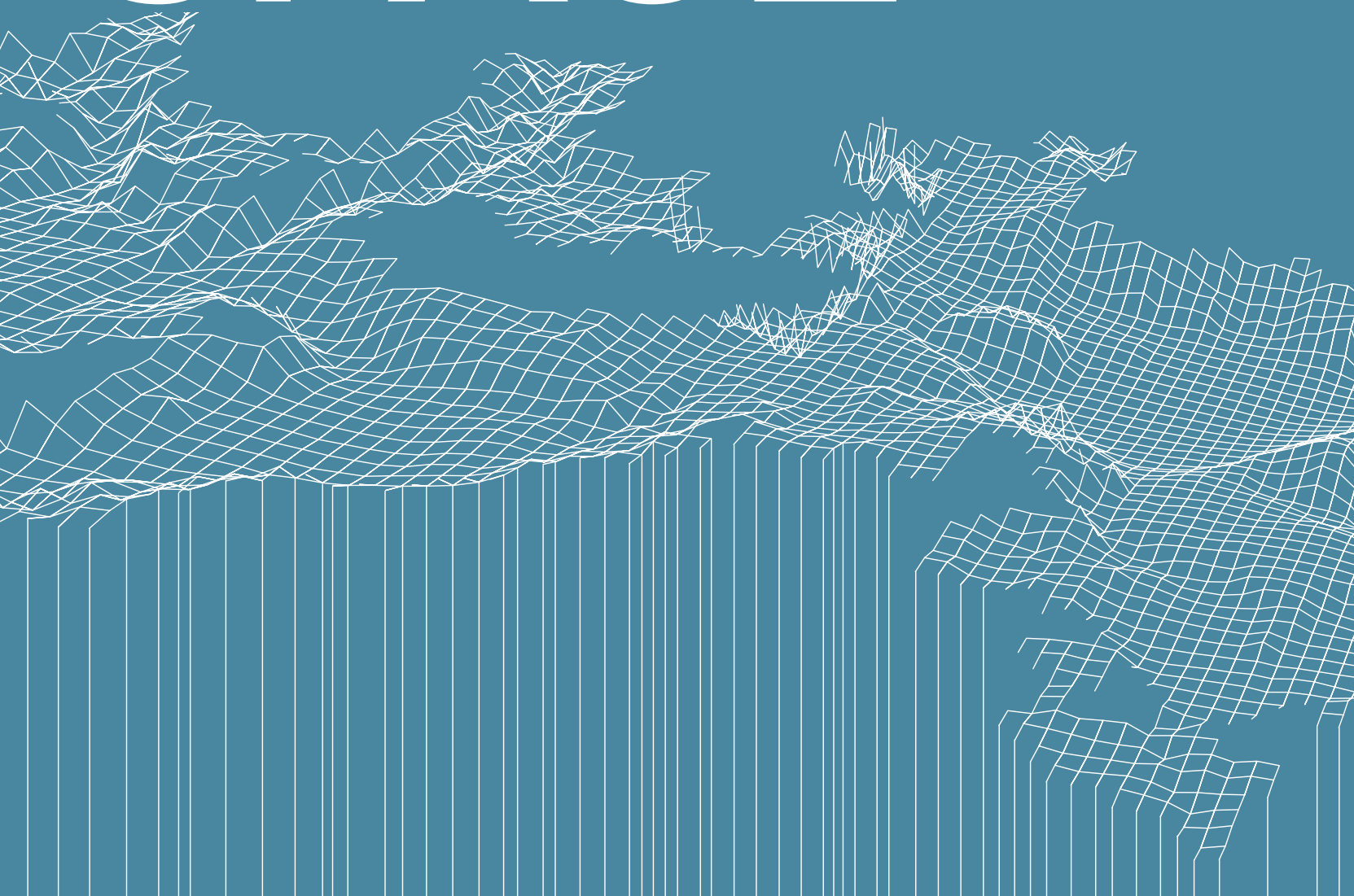
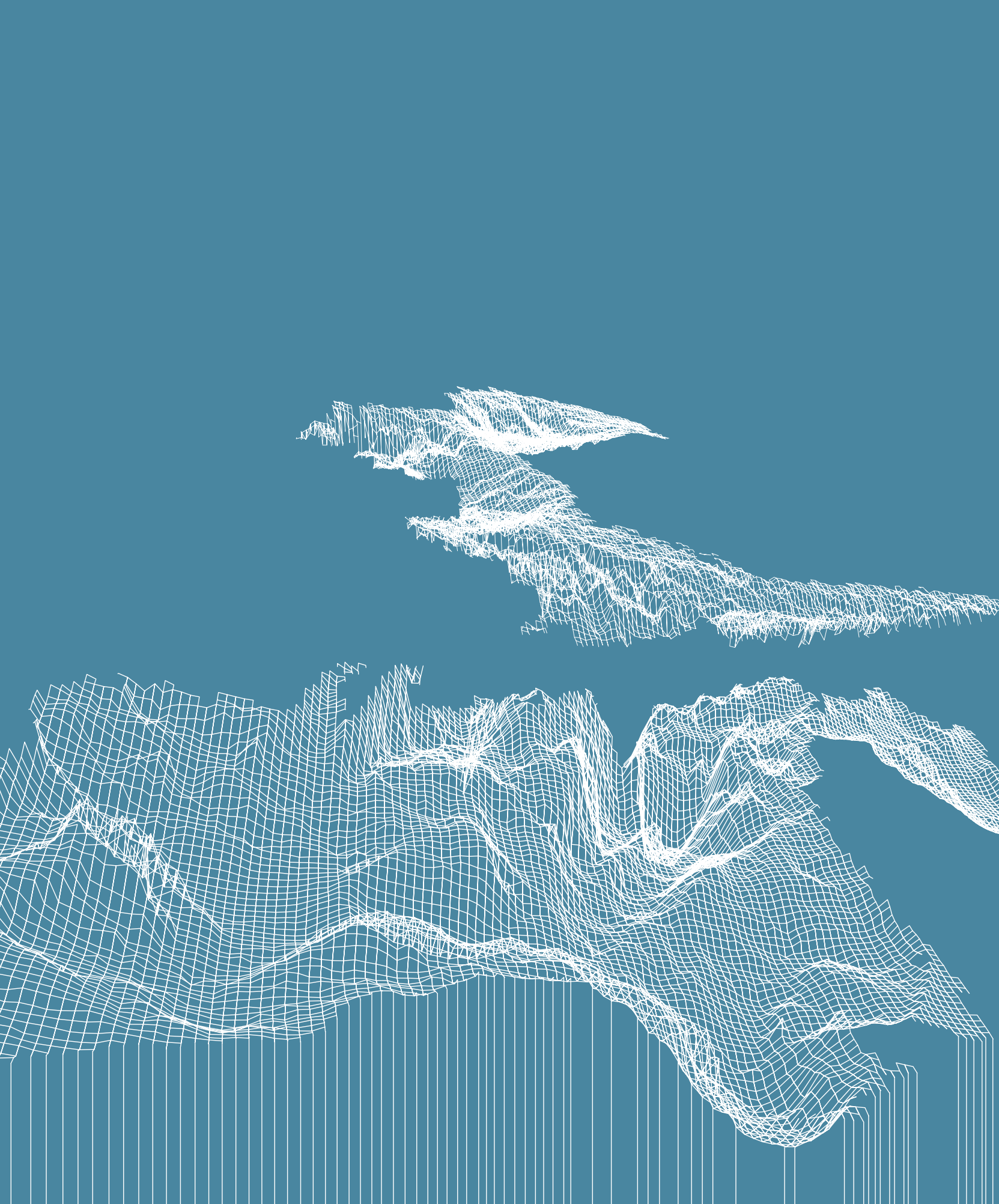
ART IN PUBLIC SPACE





Finally, a woman on the horse! Art in the public domain – where?

by Torun Ekstrand

For most people the prevalent idea of art in the public domain is a bronze sculpture in a city's main square, but can a temporary art project in a public space be called public art? Can interventions by artists using digital media technologies, actions, interactions and processual work be called public art? Can an artwork that is commissioned for the internet be called public art? In Art Line we investigated and challenged the concept of art in public space to expand the boundaries. Public art can be a diversity where hybrids of social work, political acts, sculptures, activist actions, subversive ideas, collaborative projects, risk-taking, site-specific installations, new urban landscaping and temporary and permanent artworks mingle.

In Art Line we focused on temporary projects in different arenas, and concentrated on the links between the digital and the "real" public space. Works using digital media technologies and works shown on our digital art platform were presented as public art.

Art in the public domain has different traditions and histories in our regions and countries around the Baltic Sea. This was one of the starting points for Art Line. What can we learn from one another and what practices can be employed, and what new methods can we instigate?

Conferences and seminars

The conference *Art in the public domain – festival or not?* was arranged by the Gdansk City Gallery and was part of the Art Line project as one of many programs examining questions revolving around art in public space. As the curator, Michaela Crimmin said during the seminar, temporary art projects can be disruptive in the everyday, or a part of an everyday, and added that temporary projects seem fitting to impermanent time. During the conference the topic was about the idea of spectacular festivals and temporary interventions in public space versus long-term art projects; in conclusion both working methods are needed for a variation of expressions and addresses.

During another art-in-public-space seminar arranged by Kalmar konstmuseum, the lecturers focused on art as a catalyst for social change, activist interventions, collaborative projects and also for political acts. For instance we learned about the transformation of public space in post-soviet territories when the Moldovan curator and artist Vladimir Us showed a historical overview of different sculptures of men which had stood on the same central pedestal in Chisinau during different times in history, where each replacement thereby erased and created history. He meant that today, public space in Chisinau is mainly a political or commercial area. Together with other artists, architects, curators and activists he ran the project, *Kiosk*, in which they created an alternative to the traditional culture institution in Chisinau. *Kiosk* was built as an open arena for inhabitants and cultural workers in the city in the format of an apartment from socialistic times. Apartment exhibitions were a part of art-life in the former Eastern Bloc, when artists who didn't follow the rules weren't allowed to show their work in public art institutions.

Towards the Third Culture conference arranged by Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art (Laznia CCA), focused on the relationship between art, science and technology and presented, among other things developed in collaboration with scientists. One example was the interactive, *Blue Morph* butterfly by Victoria Vesna and the Nano scientist Jim Gimzewski. It was magic to enter St. John's Cathedral in Gdańsk, to step inside the installation, to put on the turban connected to the soft proboscis hanging from the ceiling and by the sound, movements and color try to imagine the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. We suddenly experienced and actually heard the silent act.

Netzspannung.org is the ground-breaking digital public art archive by Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss where one can take part in interactive media, interdisciplinary projects, lectures, artworks and a community. They also presented their public space projects in which mixing realities and participatory environments are vital. In this catalogue you can read a text by Fleischmann and Strauss presenting their work.

In a series of international seminars arranged by Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH) the focus was on the relationship between artworks created in digital space and its transition to, or relationship to, the more familiar format, the physical space. As curators, artists and researchers we lis-

tened, for instance to the pioneer artist, Teresa Wennberg, who presented her early computer-based works and videos. The curator and art critic, Jacob Lillemose, talked about how to translate computer-based art into physical space by using two different strategies. The first showed online work in offline space, the second created a mixed IRL and online-experience and went beyond the white cube setting. The researcher, Rebecca Rouse, talked about the similarities between immersion and interaction in historic panoramas and Augmented Reality panorama environments.

Mateusz Herczka spoke about his artistic practice as a mediator between art and science and between art and nature and asked what would happen if an artwork provided an answer, would it still be art? His work does not need a label but continues to get labeled. We can think of him as an artist driven by curiosity who has experience exploring different media and subjects. In his experiment *Out of body experience* you use your body as a joystick to move and follow an avatar in front of you in a city space, an avatar which is actually yourself seen from behind. Gradually you become the avatar and your physical body is not important. Your perception and mind are as much a part of the situation as the readily available technology. We recall 3D action games where your character is at the front of the screen in order to shoot and how modern warfare uses unmanned aerial vehicles, where the shooter is in another place.

Laznia CCA in Gdańsk arranged a symposium that reflected upon the experience of the *Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk*, which for many years has commissioned public artworks as part of a long-term revitalization of the Lower Town area. The conference, *This troublesome, uncomfortable and questionable relevance of art in public space. In search of a possible paradigm*, concentrated on how public art projects can be a complement or alternative to museums and the idea of self-organization, as well as strategies to access existing knowledge systems and how to foster collaboration between different stakeholders.[1]

Ephemeral installations and semi-permanent works

In this text I present examples of Art Line projects for public space and also share experiences about public art with examples from Sweden and Poland from my practice as a project leader for both temporary and permanent public artworks and as an independent curator before starting up Art Line, as were presented during our conference in Gdańsk. Two of the speakers during the conference were the first artists from Poland that I curated solo exhibitions with in different art halls around the Stockholm area more than ten years ago, and with whom I have done other projects since then. Julita Wójcik made a unique semi-permanent public artwork outside Karlskrona, Sweden, in a preschool some years ago. Her work has a special feature; it diminishes every year, at least from the perspective of the municipality. Julita Wójcik installed two hundred handmade birds on one of the walls in the main room. Each child may choose one of the birds to bring with him or her when they reach six years of age and leave the preschool for elementary school. In addition, Wójcik built a bird table, for "real" birds outdoors, which thereby allowed both children and birds to take an active part in the work.

The artistic practice of Julita Wójcik is actions in public space outside the traditional realm of the arts. She made one action when we worked together in the project *Sew together*. The ephemeral, *The Loop*, was made on a ferry in between Sweden and Poland. Wójcik sewed together the countries by having the captain of the ferry do an extra maneuver in the middle of the sea, a loop. Wójcik embroidered an insignia on the sleeves of her captain's jacket, a loop, and stood with the passengers on the aft deck with a pair of binoculars during the action. Only a few minutes later, all traces of the action had disappeared from the surface of the sea and lingered only a little longer on the GPS monitor. Although very transient it seems like the work is still on the minds of many people and this is interesting to bear in mind. It will stay in the memories of the people who took part, or on memory cards in cameras and mobile phones and will be shown again in new circumstances and on other occasions, reinterpreted by people who look at the photos and who did not see the actual work but rather only the representation of it.

The ephemeral is also part of the work of Dominik Lejman, whose works alter our idea of space, scale and time. His video murals and façade frescoes revolve in the borderland between architecture, locality, spatiality, reality, metaphysics and digital space. In his installations, the projections merge with the locations and open the possibilities for the public to become part of an imagined space, blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction. There is a certain electricity between the visitors and the projections when light transparent figures move on the pavements, streets or facades and hence stage the viewers' movements. Many years ago we discussed that we should propose a permanent video mural that would be the first of its kind in Sweden, a work that was not "there" when you turned off the lights. The idea

preceded the era of the video projector and after calculations it turned out that the entire budget for the commissioned work would only cover the equipment and 10 years of maintenance.

Questions about art in public space

Public space projects are an almost unquestionable part of biennales all over the world today. The list of questions about art in public space: What? Where? When? How? can be continued: Who is the audience? Do we expect the audience to not just be observers, but also participants and collaborators? What function can public space have?

Does every work in public space have to be site-specific? Can an artwork in public space have the right to be itself with no connotations to the area around it? Does a public artwork need to be involved in the problems or discussions of the place? How can one talk about the local, regional and international context at the same time as being site-specific?

The architect, art historian and curator, Miwon Kwon, defined three public art practices and shifts within the United States during the past thirty years, changes, which are visible in Europe too. In brief, she wrote about the decorative abstract sculptures in plaza areas as the first practice and about the collaboration between artists, architects and city planners in urban development projects as the second practice. The third practice was art in the public interest in which collaborations to develop an area together with a community or marginalized social groups are in focus.

> These three paradigms of public art reflect broader shifts in advanced art practices over the past thirty years: the slide of emphasis from aesthetic concerns to social issues, from the conception of an artwork primarily as an object to ephemeral processes or events, from the prevalence of permanent installations to temporary interventions, from the primacy of production as a source of meaning to reception as a site of interpretation, and from autonomy of authorship to its multiplicitous expansion in participatory collaborations.[2]

Are there other and more descriptive words which can be used to entitle the public space/the public domain/the public sphere? The artist Łukasz Surowiec suggested the words "Community space" or "Social space".[3] He asked - "Who needs who?" and went on to say that both artists and institutions want to go out in the streets to participate in the problems of a place/a city and to get involved in its structures and the expected effects.

There is a lot of art in public space made outside the public art funding system. Activists or guerrilla artists make interventions in public space like actions, murals and installations. The main body of permanent public artworks, however, are paid for by an official body, a city, a company, a region or a state. Does it mean that an artwork belongs to everybody when it is placed in public space, our joint living room? Who has the power over public spaces, over semi-public spaces and commercial areas in a city? Who has access? Can you do anything you'd like here?

Few people walk out into a main square and look upon it as a free stage for art. The increased commercialization of public space creates a silent consensus to allow, for example, a multinational company to put up a large neon sign in red and yellow on a central building in a city center or by the main road, but if the same place is used for an artwork the debate can turn aggressive. Does it only have to do with who funded the sign or the artwork, if it is a private business or local or state money? Who is the natural sender of installations of any kind in the public domain?

Why do art institutions, or artists, want to show art in public space when there is an almost safe haven in the gallery space? Temporary art projects in public spaces have a long tradition to look back upon. In the 1960s, artists wanted to break free of the restraints of the white cube, often for ideological reasons. One can think of land art, performance, actions, murals or artists' books for instance. It is brave of the artists to go outside the context of art. An expanded audience or participation is important in the decision to work outside museum or gallery locations. Work in public space can however be a risky and vulnerable process, seen from the perspectives of artists and the art institutions.

The Greek Agora is often used as a symbol of public space. The ideal and idea of democracy prevails in our minds when imagining public space and we often think of it as a meeting place where people talk in a civil manner and where everybody has a say. However, the philosopher, Sven-Olov Wallenstein reminds us that historically not everyone has been allowed to speak freely in public space. Women and slaves, for example, were not allowed, as it was only a space for free men.[4] The idealized construction of public space needs to be challenged and reinterpreted over and over again. A civil uprising where masses of people meet in a square has been actualized during last years in the Middle East. The symbolic power and provocation of people gathering is strong.

The connection to social media and digital realms is also interesting to note here. The curator Simon Sheikh argued for the art institutions as embodiments of the public sphere and that consistency and consensus do not have to be the vital ingredients in the public.

> (…) we need not only new skills and tools, but also new conceptions of "the public" as relational, as articulatory and communicatory. I would suggest that we take our point of departure in precisely the unhinging of stable categories and subject positions, in the interdisciplinary and intermediary, in the conflictual and dividing, in the fragmented and permissive - in different "spaces of experience", as it were. We should begin to think of this contradictory and non-unitary notion of a public sphere, and of the art institution as the embodiment of this sphere. We can, perhaps, think of it as the spatial formation of, or platform for what Chantal Mouffe has called an "agonistic public sphere": According to such a view, the aim of democratic institutions is not to establish a rational consensus in the public sphere but to defuse the potential of hostility that exists in human societies by providing the possibility for antagonism to be transformed into "agonism". In her work on the agonistic public sphere, Mouffe, significantly criticizes Habermas for his separation between the private and public realm.[5]

Finally, a woman on the horse!

"– Finally, a woman on the horse!" one of my daughters exclaimed when we drove around a roundabout in northern Germany.[6] The exceptionality of seeing a bronze sculpture of a woman on a horse as a public sculpture was astounding to her. We are all so used to seeing male kings and heroes riding forward on their horses or standing on a pedestal pointing with firm hands in one direction.

If we come across a woman represented as a bronze sculpture in Sweden, we meet her in the bushes. She is a virginlike, young, teenaged nymph; the commission probably went to a male artist during the time when the Swedish welfare state was being created. She is not placed in the Main Square, but in the parks, in what traditionally belongs to a woman – nature. She is not making history, she does not take the lead and she is anonymous or maybe a mythological figure. These sculptures were mostly made between the 1930s and 1970s, and were a part of the new welfare state and the idea that art is the property of everyone. In her doctoral thesis the art historian Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe stated that the nude nymph is the most common representation of a woman in public space during the 20th century in Sweden.[7]

There is a Swedish institution, which has made an imprint on society in terms of public art, Statens konstråd, Public Art Agency Sweden (formerly The National Public Art Council Sweden, founded in the 1930s). They are "Sweden's largest commissioner of public art. The Council commissions some 40 professional artists every year."[8] Art in public space was referred to as "public decoration" until some years ago when the new formulation "to give artistic form to public space" became more widely used to tell more about the work of an artist.

Public Art Agency Sweden used to work with a rule saying that whenever new public buildings were to be built or reconstructed, 1% or more of the building costs should go to art. The content of it was easy to understand and remember and the 1%-rule has spread and is often used on a regional level and sometimes in municipalities. Today the Council has a broader responsibility to cooperate with national, regional and municipal bodies. The creative practice, experience and knowledge of the artists should be used in city planning processes together with the skills of architects, builders and users, etc.

As of a few years ago, the handling of permanent public art projects in Sweden is regulated by law, and the public procurement process is difficult. According to the law, proposals for public artworks are supposed to be presented in a process where it is open to all artists as a fair competition and there have been several lawsuits in Sweden lately when that law was not followed.

A dedicated art program has to be written for each public art commission and procurement, in which an artwork that is sustainable is important. The Hippocrates proverb, "Vita brevis, Ars longa" - Life is short, Art is long, fits the situation. All the works commissioned by public bodies should withstand graffiti, destruction, being touched, etc. In my work as a project leader for public art projects I have been able to try some new perspectives of the idea of eternal artwork, as with Julita Wójcik's birds, for instance. Klara Kristalova realized another project for a preschool, a labyrinth with a hare and a fox. The artwork has one changeable feature and one sustainable; it is functional and plays with all of the senses. The artist planted different plants in a non-symmetrical maze in the yard by a dense spruce forest. You can taste, touch, pick, smell and plant yourself. The children can run, hide and take different paths when facing difficul-

ties. Traditionally, there is often a monster or a Minotaur at the end of a labyrinth, but there could also be a reward of some kind, as here where a hare and a fox are shaking hands as if making an agreement. Labyrinths were already present in ancient Egypt and in Greece and stone labyrinths were made during the Bronze Age. Today, labyrinths are a common feature in many computer games.

Poland and the former Eastern Bloc had a complicated history of public art during the socialistic era. Large monuments and wide boulevards were dedicated to celebrate the leaders and manifest their power in public space. Public space was a political place, not a personal place and the commissioned public art was a tool for agitation and propaganda. Art should raise and praise the official reality to the skies. The division and breakdown between the official and unofficial art scene was prevalent and the most creative ways to use public space for art were invented by artists. Performances, concept art and actions were some of the strategies and art could be shown very temporarily in, for instance, private apartments or in the trunk of a car. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, art was free from national obligations and it was time to take public space back from the state and alter mindsets about ownership and the possibilities of public space. Commercial interests in public space had a paradisiacal time at first, but artists were fast to intervene in many different kinds of projects. One can linger over the history of Poland and on its changing borders when it was divided and annexed by other countries. Whose identity or which ethnic group is being represented in respective official public artwork? Whose cultural heritage is it?

Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art has organized *The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk* since 2004, a long-term project where new large-scale public art projects revitalize run-down areas of the city. The first art commission is a large truck seemingly stuck under a bridge close to Laznia, a stone's throw from the old city center but in a neglected area by the Wisła river. All kinds of cultural activities, especially for young people, in the Lower Town area and beyond, have been organized inside and outside the truck, since known as the *LKW Gallery*.[9]

The modernist tradition is visible in European cities. Certain types of abstract stone or bronze sculptures are familiar to many. It is like a monopoly stemming from the modernist tradition and still new sculptures are erected today as if stuck in a mind loop. The traditional role of art in public space still prevails.

The public domain has been a male territory and art and city planning has been a mirror of society. If we fly over Europe and look at the cities we will find an astounding number of pillars and obelisks. Traditionally public art has also been a tool for cultural politics, predominant aesthetics and values of European societies. Today, hopefully art is not a parade and presentation of the power of the government, nor a manifestation of the welfare state.

The monument and the memorial tell a story about the past and urge us to remember and learn. In their anthology about European memorials, Jonas Frykman and Billy Ehn write that memorials are contradictory, and continue to say that monuments should symbolize things that are and that continue to be: states, nations, ethnic groups, gender, power and dominance. And, at the same time, everybody knows that life is changeable and nothing is solid. Our time is characterized by variability, complexity and diversity, and yet new monuments are erected.[10]

What do we want to say with art in public space today? Do we want to give people some resistance in everyday life? Is the art we present in the public interest? Does everybody really have to understand all art in public space, or does art have its own right to be complex? Public space belongs to everybody, but art in public space has no obligation to cheer every person up.

Site-specificity and debate

Public artworks often evoke debate in Sweden and hopefully it makes more people aware of art. The debate can depend upon where the location of an art installation is or how 'public' an artwork in public space is.

SAFE, was an international art project I curated soon after I had moved to Karlskrona, Sweden, in 2005. The idea for the project *SAFE* came from thoughts about Karlskrona as a city of military and defence. In 1680 it was decided that a naval base should be built in Karlskrona to serve as a Baltic military center. Some areas in the city center were strict military areas until 20 years ago. Most of the islands of the archipelago were military defense areas, forbidden places for "foreigners" and "aliens". Was there still a feeling of being secure and protected, or being a target? International events like 9/11, the Bird Flu and terrorist attacks created an atmosphere of uncertainty. *SAFE* included exhibitions in the art hall and museum, and several public space projects and interdisciplinary projects.

I introduced Artur Żmijewski in Sweden at the fortress Godnatt, a solemn place at sea only accessible by boat. Visitors

go directly inside after being dropped off, and the boat leaves for almost an hour, leaving them trapped. The fortress is a seemingly scary place where you can easily get lost. Two film installations by Żmijewski were shown there. One was, *Berek / The Game of Tag*, in which nude adults of various ages play a game of tag in a claustrophobic cellar. You learn later that it is a gas chamber in a former Nazi death camp. The location in the fortress was similar to the room in the film. In the other film, *KR WP*, the Representative Guards of the Polish Army parade and march outdoors in uniform and then in a dance studio, where they undress completely, but still present arms. People who visited this public space were engaged and sometimes strongly disturbed, and the connection between the military site and the films was strong. Since the installation mostly reached people who knew they were going to meet art, there was no upset debate around these works. The installation by Żmijewski was in a public space with limited access. The audience had to make an active choice to go and also stay for an hour. They expected art installations in an unfamiliar place and to be challenged.

Another installation in *SAFE* was made by Peter Johansson and was constructed on a small island in the city center where a small bridge led to the island. The installation, *May I?*, was a prefabricated house with major additions like wooden details and was painted both on the facades and in the interior in a screaming red-orange color similar to the color of lifeboats, and at the same time close to the color of the National symbol of Sweden, the Dala horse. The house was in a large scale compared to the island, creating an unreal atmosphere as if being photocopied onto the island. ABBA's song, *Dancing Queen*, enhanced the installation.

You could not miss his work when in the city; it was "like a red pimple on the ass of Karlskrona" as one art critic wrote in a major newspaper. It was a very big contrast to the UNESCO World Heritage Site and its historic monuments. The site for the installation was on an island where small red allotment houses and gardens served as a background on another island. The same red wooden houses are on many postcards entitled *Sweden* and were visible in IKEA warehouses all over the world as the picture of Sweden. The safe haven of Sweden and the proverb "My house is my castle", or Sweden as a gated community, came into mind.

There were many reviews, articles, radio broadcasts and letters to editors. People loved or hated it. Few people were unaware of it and the installation turned into a symbol of change. It led to a well-attended lecture series about city planning and discussions on what it is allowed to do in a World Heritage city. It is a recurrent reference point in new debates. Recently it turned up on a nostalgic Facebook site: "You know you are from Karlskrona if you remember the red house." The installation by Johansson was in an open area and people who usually don't go to art halls and museums were reached just by being in the city, and they stumbled over something almost familiar. It was a catalyst for discussion about the possibilities of public space and still vibrant in people's memories.

The Baltic Goes Digital

The internet is a rather new social meeting place, and it has a role similar to the idea of the public square, the Agora. We meet there and we share information and content, rather than in the main square of a city. Our private realm is a vital part of the digital public realm, but not in the physical public realm.

The presence of art institutions and museums on the internet most often means that they use the internet as a marketing and information tool and it has the same function as former printed invitation cards. In Art Line we wanted to use the internet as an extra exhibition space for online artworks and as a platform for artistic exchange. In the future, the next desired step could be to offer open source tools for creation, sharing and publishing. When listening to the curator and critic, Jacob Lillemose, during one of the BTH seminars I scribbled down his words, "Technology is a human right", when he spoke about a hackers lab and how to introduce people to free software. Digital media can be part of communication with an audience and can reach out to people in all the participating countries, locally and internationally. We did research and learned that there is a high percentage of people in our partner countries who are internet users and the highest percentage of those people are part of the young population.

The contest, *The Baltic Goes Digital*, was announced by the Gdansk City Gallery and the Baltic Sea Culture Centre in Art Line. The winning projects were to be realized and exhibited cross media, in both the virtual and the physical space. The projects aimed to involve the audience – both in situ and online – and the artworks were incident to and formed by the interventions of the visitors or by unknowing participants.

Baltic Agora by Mateusz Pęk and Klaudia Wrzask was a piece in two parts, one online work and one installation at Gdansk City Gallery. One part still exists as an online art-

work. Everyone who logs into the work is presented with a 3D topographic map of the Baltic Sea in a reverse way, the deepest sea bottom is the largest mountain on the map. The server gets information on where you are situated geographically and starts to build on a structure, using different colors depending on where you are. When anyone from cities around the Baltic Sea logs in new arches are built and the Baltic agora under constant construction and open for discussions over the internet and the sea. The new meeting place, the online Baltic city, is being built by you and it is in a constant state of change. Mateusz Pęk and Klaudia Wrzask examine the dialectic borderland between real and virtual, between body and computer, between artist and participants, and between countries. Technique extends the human body and becomes more and more an integral part of us.

AudioElsewhere by Marek Dybuść was an artwork also using an interaction between people on different sides of the Baltic. There was a chair, a table, a computer and headphones at Gdansk City Gallery and a robot in disguise as a mannequin with a golden face installed at the café in the Blekinge Institute of Technology. The robot transmitted film and sounds from Karlskrona to the visitors in Gdańsk. When in Sweden, you could pass by the café and see the mannequin suddenly move her head, since each head movement of a person with the headphones in Gdańsk created the same movements for the robot. You could also spin her head around. The languages spoken when I visited both sides were Urdu, Indian, Chinese, English, Swedish, Polish and body language. It was a work about human interaction, both existential and humorous. The political side of it recalled the situation of surveillance cameras and people around felt familiar with her movements as with most digital supervision today.

Baltic Sea Radio by Varvara Guljajeva and Mar Canet Sola symbolized and transmitted a soundscape of the vessels and ships travelling on the Gdańsk Bay in real-time in an installation including a rowboat which had been sawed in two. The movements of every ship were followed and transformed into a sound installation, which was meditative, disturbing and unpredictable at the same time. Unknowing participation and the uncontrollable situation are vital parts of the work of Varvara Guljajeva and Mar Canet Sola. The listeners became the sounding board for the real-time movements of the ships.

Hydro Active City

Participatory, interactive and relational artworks involving people in the Baltic countries were looked upon as especially interesting when the *Hydro Active City* contest was launched by the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre and Gdansk City Gallery in Gdańsk. It was a contest for an artwork using digital media technologies in a location anywhere along the Radunia River in Gdańsk. The relationship between digital/virtual space and the physical location was vital. A requirement was also that the works should be able to relocate to any other location close to water in the Baltic countries.

The works are within the idea of anti-monuments. In an interview, the Mexican artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer spoke about this works as temporary creations between the site and the public. People meeting and sharing an experience together in one place, at a certain time, was the most important part and the outcome is not programmed into the work. The anti-monument is an alternative to the prevailing fetish of using monuments as a representation of power.[11]

The works created a personal and intimate atmosphere in the area and the possibility to talk to neighbors and passersby. Participation is a necessary part for the creation of the work in situ.

Piotr Wyrzykowski orchestrated the movements of people in a specific area of Gdańsk where his augmented reality piece, *Water Memory* was presented. People walked around in deep concentration carrying borrowed tablets in front of them to see objects and text appear in the same locations where they were situated. A kind of double vision was required, as the physical real world merged with the objects, texts and digital memories on the tablet. Through GPS coordinates different objects, notes and photos, like an old carousel, whirled up on the screen, and created a virtual space in the place you were standing. Local references and also stories from other places appeared. The work layered multimedia content onto a place, and it layered past and contemporary times, and different locations on one spot. Its narrative is not only local but also universal. It is like reading the scattered thoughts and memories of another person walking the same route as you.

To physically throw a message in a bottle into the sea is an uncertain project. You never know if or when it is going to reach anyone. With the help of technology the communication was faster in the *Message in a Bottle* project by Maciej Wojnicki. Anybody with a smart phone or a tablet could send a message at certain locations connected to a sign of a water bottle, close to graffiti on the apartment build-

ings and close by the Radunia River. A person coming to one of the spots could receive the message, answer it and also send a new message by a virtual throw of the bottle into the river. The participation of the public and the new connections that occurred was the essence of the piece and the trigger to more events.

When entering a bridge over the river people stopped or backed off because of a sound in the "wrong" place, a loud sound of ice breaking. The sound was triggered by their movement and escalated when several people walked over the bridge. It was springtime, the river was flowing, and the sound relocated people in time and space in the installation, *Little Ice Age* by Olga Zofia Warabida & Mariusz Samól. The American bio acoustician Bernie Krause has recorded natural soundscapes over decades. He estimates that 40% of the places he made an inventory of were disrupted by sounds made by humans, called antrophony. The word biophony was invented by Krause to describe how the world sounds without the presence of humans.[12] The sound of nature is no longer natural in many environments today, at least not in urban areas. With the sound installation, nature was brought back to the city by technology and we get to experience nature in the city. Can the city sound like nature? Did you know that people once walked on the ice in between Poland and Sweden? The installation recalled the ice as a symbolic bridging between the countries.

The jury, which consisted of Jacob Lillemose, Ryszard W. Kluszczyński and Peter Hagdahl together with the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, stated that it was "a surrealistic intervention into urban reality – a pragmatic function of a bridge, understood as an architectural construction, is transformed from communication to experience".

I remember an artist who made parallels between fly fishing, creating art and flow. It came to my mind when trying out, *Post-Fishing Post* by Justinas Gaigalas and Rytis Urbanskas which got a honorary mention by the jury. The idea was to stop by for a moment, hold a fishing rod and not wait for a fish to bite but concentrate on listening to the sounds of the underwater world. Fishing is a familiar practice which made it easy for a passersby to try.

Space Matters was a series of projects in three parts by the Karlskrona art hall and the curator Oscar Guermouche in urban space. It was shown in physical locations and at the same time on different digital platforms to connect and examine ways of connecting these public realms. The first intervention emerged from the large main square in Karlskrona where the possibility to use this public place

Krzysztof Żwirblis, *Social Museum*, 2012

seemed difficult at first. What is public here? The works were screened on facades, in a private restaurant and on local TV-channels. A live blog, artists' books and videos were shown in the city library and a launch of a mobile art application was presented.

Offspring Taking Off by Performing Pictures, Geska Brečević and Robert Brečević, was an application for a smart phone. The artists had it for a month on AppStore until Apple said that it was not entertaining enough, that it was not a game and it was not entertainment. There are no headlines for art, Apple said, and we can't create headlines for everything. Geska Brečević and Robert Brečević call their work "pictures that perform" in a meeting with a visitor. The story can begin, but only when somebody starts moving in a certain way or stands at a certain distance from their artworks. There are children waiting for us in the mobile application and each of them stands in a in a different environment with a large balloon in their hands. Waiting to grow up, waiting for answers? We have to physically jump to get them flying. Geska Brečević gave a lecture during one of the BTH seminars and also talked about other public space projects and a research project where they investigate how different types of large events in public space are received and reinterpreted by social media and digital media.

It was logical to perform the next phase of *Space Matters* in various places in the city of Karlskrona. Three yellow shipping containers were placed by the sea on the main island as temporary exhibition spaces. If there are few public places to show art, let's create more. The containers were meant as a symbol of the sea lane connecting the participating countries and the video works about digital and physical public spaces were screened 24 hours every day during some months.

The third part was the *INTER-ACT!* workshop with the artist Nicola Bergström Hansen, "Art and activism in social media" where concepts like "counter gaming" and "culture jamming" were explored and experimented with. Students created interactive subversive projects for auction sites, online games, social media, company sites and online contracts.

Kalmar konstmuseum started to arrange *Beta Tests* in the close vicinity of the museum, in the city park by the museum and the castle, and continued with a crescendo of a series of different public art projects.

Artists made projects for shopping malls, in the city center, performative works like city tours or actions in a greenhouse, workshops in the tree tops, on the sea outside the museum, in the city park – posing the question – what are the possibilities for public art today? Artists and art students tested different methods of working in public space. How does art in different environments function? Where can it be shown? Some works were very visible as art, others were not. Some lasted half an hour, others the entire summer.

One is still there, as a part of the museum, a parasite architecture camouflaged into the building. The work of Gustav Hellberg, *In Your Head* makes the visitors to the park or the museum uncertain of a slightly opened door on the back of the museum, from which both sound and light stream. Connotations of a safe public space and the curiosity of passersby can collide. Is anybody there?

IKOF, Ingvar Kamprad Order of Friendship, was initiated by the San Donato Group from Kaliningrad when they recreated the Kamprad Volvo into the official honorary car to transport people between the museum and IKEA and at the same time recording a road movie of passengers.

Krzysztof Żwirblis made *Social Museum* in the suburban area of Oxhagen in Kalmar, together with the tenants. The tenants collected artifacts; they painted, and filmed and finally had an opening of their own museum in one of the yards. Everyone "became their own personal museum", said Krzysztof Żwirblis during the public space seminar Kalmar konstmuseum arranged, and continued by talking about the desire to create activities with people who usually don't go to art galleries and instead meet them in their own everyday environment. Every person is her own museum and private stories moved out in the public. Żwirblis was inspired by the writings of the modernist architect, artist and educator, Oskar Hansen who said that art is not space in itself, it needs viewers and participants.

Karolina Breguła conducted a city-tour, with interpretations of public art, a performance in which the artist talked about permanent artworks in Kalmar. She suggested translations of the artworks, by taking inspiration in contemporary society and from history. Both fact and fiction were presented as obvious and natural and the audience was invited into a dialogue.

Ingela Ihrman performed *The Giant Waterlily Victoria Amazonica*, which blossomed in Kalmar in the middle of a fountain in a greenhouse during two exclusive evenings. The visitors could watch the waterlily go from a phallus-like bud to full bloom, first in white, then in pink. There was a scent of pineapple and a garden expert talked about the exotic plant as it moved and blossomed. A newspaper placard accompanied the stunning news as part of the artwork.

Helle Kvamme created her own public sphere in her float-

ing studio space, *The artist's eye*, on the water in front of Kalmar konstmuseum. Visitors were welcome to row to her studio for a dialogue with the artist while looking at the castle, the museum and the sea, and the artist was ready to cast off.

During the *Art & Apparatus* workshops, where artists worked together in laboratories with waterjet cutting and 3D modeling, several artists made proposals for site-specific public art projects. Jakob Ingemansson presented *Sun and Rain Pavilion*; Kordian Lewandowski *Nerds' Thinker* and Izabela Żółcinska *The Body of Rivers*.

#Mixitup was a transdisciplinary event with performances, a seminar, a workshop and an online worldwide reading marathon that were arranged by the Department of Culture and Communication at the Blekinge Institute of Technology. Installations where the artists deployed digital media technologies in their practices were shown outdoors and indoors at the Blekinge museum.

Barbarum Fretum is an old name for the Baltic Sea, but also an interactive installation created by Elektro Moon Vision, Elwira Wojtunik and Popesz Csaba Lang, together with Magdalena Pińczynska, for the yard of the museum during the *#Mixitup* event. The black cube architecture was both alluring, like a brilliant diamond, and mundane, as it was made of foil. It reflected parts of the outdoor environment and at the same time acted like a black hole sucking all light into its' surface, that was in a constant state of minimalistic movement. On one of the walls, peepholes were arranged so that the visitors could watch four different Baltic city harbors in real-time. The threshold for people to enter a secretive digital installation can be high, but the artists lowered it because of the familiarity with the material and with the telescope-like peepholes that most people know how to use. Upon entering the dark cube, one saw seawater in the far bottom of three walls. Not the wild dark grey water from the Baltic Sea, but rather an imagined sea that created a sense of tranquility. As one continued further inside, the water level rose. The visitors swam in the water which virtually engulfed them. Random texts about the Baltic Sea appeared on different spots.

The work *Light clock (25 901 514 031 485 metres in 24 hours)* by Jesper Norda was screened indoors during the *#Mixitup* event. The light summer evenings in Sweden made an outdoor screening difficult. Norda wrote about his work: "A video starts with a single white frame - a flash of light - followed by a counter measuring how far the light will travel during the following 24 hours. The counter is updated every second, like a clock. A meditation over time, speed, light, wideness - eternity". Nothing can move faster than light waves, although when learning about how many minutes it takes for the light from a star to reach us we imagine light a bit slower. The speed of light is the same no matter how fast you are moving - and when you accelerate, time slows down.[13] "A traveller, moving at the speed of light, would circumnavigate the equator approximately 7.5 times in one second".[14] *Light clock* would be a fine monumental public artwork for the facades of the world in our impermanent time.

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SPACE MATTERS I and II

Type of project: public space project

When: 13 October 2011 and 30 June–19 August 2012

Artists *Space Matters* I:
Nicola Bergström Hansen (SE) & Valdemar Lindekrantz (SE), *Excavation II*
Grant Watkins (SE), *Go Beyond Conceptualized Thought*
Pike & Nug (SE), *Best Things In Life For Free*
Thomas Broomé (SE), *HellHunt 666 sekunder*
Iris Smeds (SE), *Estetiken.com*
Performing Pictures, *Offspring Taking Off*
Andreas Sandström, Undantag Förlag (SE), *Saving Clones*
Ghost Writers, Undantag Förlag (SE), *Ghost Rider – Fuck Police*
Undantag Förlag (SE), *Stockholmopen.be*

Where: Facade of the Concert Hall, inside the City Library, Karlskrona, Sweden; Online, Mobile Application, TV-channnels, Artists Books

Artists *Space Matters* II:
Nicola Bergström Hansen (SE), *Over the Rainbow*
Dmitry Bulatov & Alexey Chebykin (RU), *That Which Lives in Me*
Nug & Pike (SE), *Best Things in Life for Free*
Mateusz Pęk (PL), *Windows Eclipse*
Grant Watkins (SE), *Go Beyond Conceptualized Thought*
Ruben Wätte (SE), *Space Control*

Where: Square of Karlskrona, Fisktorget, Bastion Aurora and Skeppsbrokajen, Karlskrona, Sweden

Curator: Oscar Guermouche (SE)

Organizers: Art Exhibition Hall of Karlskrona City, Karlskrona, Sweden


DEVELOPING
HOME
MARKETS


KONSERTHUSTEATERN

Space Matters
by Oscar Guermouche

Art is spatial. The starting point, as well as the perspective, has as many variations as there are artists. But artistic practice is invariably oriented to both real and imaginary space. This applies regardless of whether it is an exhibition of paintings, a performance, a video work, an artist's book or a sculpture in a park. Even in an expanded definition of the concept of art, including, for example, tattoo artists and graffiti artists, the focus is space.

> I think I understand something about space. I think the job of a, so to speak, sculptor is spatial as much as it is to do with form.[1]

Art Line is a cultural exchange project involving five different countries in the South Baltic area: Sweden, Russia (Kaliningrad), Germany, Poland and Lithuania. The aim of the project was to "investigate and challenge the concept of public space" from a "digital platform". For the artists and curators involved in the project, it was obviously central to sort out which space was intended. What is the definition of "public space"? Where can we find it?

> A public space is a social space that is generally open and accessible to people.[2]

According to Wikipedia, public space is a social, "open and accessible" space. A picture of a town square is used to illustrate the article while streets, parks, and libraries are also examples of public space. The town square in particular is regularly used as a symbol of the urban society's common space, a shared place for meetings and expressions.

> One of the most powerful symbols of that tradition is to be found on a parcel of land which lies roughly between the site of the old Tyburn gallows and the Reform Tree in London's Hyde Park. There for over a century men and women, some famous (including Karl Marx, William Morris, Vladimir Lenin, George Orwell, Marcus Garvey and Lord Soper) but most not, have dissented and denounced, canvassed and converted, preached and proselytised, and in so doing given expression to the fundamental rights of citizens to gather together to hear and be heard.[3]

But how well does that image fit reality? Are there spaces for public meetings and expression? Spaces where we can walk, stand, sit, lie wherever and however we want? Spaces where access isn't limited by clothing, age, consumption or sobriety? Spaces for vagrancy and oblomovism? Spaces for mental illness? Spaces for art?

> One day I woke up feeling sleepy, sluggish and sour. I drew the bedcover over my head because I didn't want to get up, look around or talk to anyone. Under the covers I said to myself, I'll lie like this, completely still, without saying a word, as long as I want. I'm not going to do anything, just close my eyes and let my thoughts come and go. Now, what would happen if everyone did this?[4]

The lines of text above ran on a digital display, which hung over the bed into which Elin Wikström was tucked in her work *What Would Happen if Everyone Did This?* performed in 1993. For three weeks she lay in bed in a supermarket in Malmö, Sweden, during store hours, surrounded by products, customers and staff.

Today, real public spaces are taken over, bit by bit, by sidewalk cafes, advertising campaigns, and supermarkets ensuring predictability. For the last couple of years, we have witnessed protesters beaten down both on the Tahrir Square in Cairo and on Wall Street in New York. Stortorget, the great square, in the centre of Karlskrona, which has been claimed to be Northern Europe's largest, is occupied almost entirely by parking lots.

In parallel with the development of our town squares and streets, different kinds of spaces for meetings and expression have emerged on the internet. It has developed into an integral part of our society's infrastructure with its own public spaces. Wikipedia, YouTube and Facebook are just a few examples of digital rooms that are

Nug and Pike, *Best Things In Life For Free*, 2012

increasingly taking over the role of our town squares. The concept of virtual spaces must be reconsidered as they are evolving into locations where people gather to socialize, exchange knowledge, and express themselves.

> Sign Up. It's free and always will be.[5]

Nowadays, digital medias are an accepted, if not inevitable part of our everyday lives. For many artists, it has become natural to live and work in relation to them; they utilize the same media and forums that characterize the society that they intend to question. Digital technologies, along with the internet, have created entirely new forms of distribution, offering artists access to an endless resource of inspiration, material and forms of expression. Questions about the original and the copy, time and space, the artist and the viewer, fiction and reality, are at the same time ignored and highlighted, becoming even more complicated.

> Initially, from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s, public art was dominated by the art-in-public-places paradigm – modernist abstract sculptures that were often enlarged replicas of works normally found in museums and galleries. These artworks were usually signature pieces from internationally established male artists (favored artists who received the most prominent commissions during this period include Isamu Noguchi, Henry Moore, and Alexander Calder). In and of themselves, they had no distinctive qualities to render them "public" except perhaps their size and scale. What legitimated them as "public" art was quite simply their siting outdoors or in locations deemed to be public primarily because of their "openness" and unrestricted physical access – parks, university campuses, civic centers, entrance areas to federal buildings, plazas off city streets, parking lots, airports.[6]

But the accessibility even of these places is uncertain. The operating companies can start charging, they can go bankrupt, their activities may be censored or completely stopped by states or other companies. Everything we, the users, share at these forums, a tremendous amount of personal information, is registered and we're constantly being monitored. The question recurs, is there such a thing as public space?
In autumn 2011 the first *Space Matters* exhibition was set up in Karlskrona. It included works with artists from Sweden and Kaliningrad, Russia. The works consisted of publications, websites, videos and a mobile application, with public spaces in relation to digital media as the common denominator:

Nicola Hansen Bergström and Valdemar Lindekrantz (SE): *Excavation II* (video)

Thomas Broomé (SE): *HellHunt 666 sekunder* (video)

Dmitry Bulatov (RU): *Evening star* (video)

Common Vince Group (RU): *Yasnoye* (video)

Yevgeny Palamarchuk (RU): *Half Kampf* (video)

Performing Pictures (SE):
Offspring Taking Off (mobile application)

Pike & Nug (SE): *Best Things In Life For Free* (video)

Andreas Sandström/Undantag Förlag (SE):
Saving Clones (artist's publication)

Iris Smeds (SE): *Estetiken.com* (video blogg)

Undantag Förlag (SE): *Stockholmopen.be* (website)

Yuri Vassiliev (RU): *Russian Red Grove* (video)

Grant Watkins (SE):
Go Beyond Conceptualized Thought (video)

Ghost Writers/Undantag Förlag (SE):
Ghost Rider – Fuck Police (artist's publication)

During the preparations of the exhibition in 2011 several public and semi-public spaces were examined as possible exhibition sites. Based on the square's links to public space, Stortorget in the center of Karlskrona outset the given location. The feedback from the various institutions and establishments, public and private, adjacent to the square, was highly variable. It was interesting noting that the private establishments who were asked to par- ticipate immediately said yes, without any of them even asking to first get to see the content of the works. Trefaldighetskyrkan, the church of the holy trinity, also located by the square, however, couldn't take a stand about whether to participate or not, without seeing the contents of the works.
Finally we decided to show some of the works at Karlskrona public library, in the southwest corner of Stortorget. A reading table was established for the publications, *Saving Clones* and *Ghost Rider – Fuck Police*; monitors were set up for *Best Things In Life For Free* and the Russian videos, and also for the live video blog, *Estetiken.com*,

and the website, *Stockholmopen.be.* At the restaurant Castello, in the southern end of the square, the video *Go Beyond Conceptualized Thought* was screened, and on the facade of Konserthusteatern, the concert theater, in the northwest corner of the square, the videos *Excavation II* and *HellHunt 666 sekunder* were projected. In the lobby of the concert theater, visitors were assisted by the artist duo Performing Pictures in installing the mobile application *Offspring Taking Off.*

Site-specificity is not of value in itself. Works which are built within the contextual frame of governmental, corporate, educational, and religious institutions run the risk of being read as tokens of those institutions. One way of avoiding ideological cooptation is to choose leftover sites which cannot be the object of ideological misinterpretation. However, there is no neutral site. Every context has its frame and its ideological overtones. It is a matter of degree. But there are sites where it is obvious that an artwork is being subordinated to/accommodated to/adapted to/subservient to/required to/useful to… In such cases it is necessary to work in opposition to the constraints of the context, so that the work cannot be read as an affirmation of questionable ideologies and political power.[7]

Within the *Space Matters* project a Facebook page was also initiated, for the public to share perspectives and experiences on public space. Furthermore, the artist Nicola Bergström Hansen held a workshop, *Art and activism in social media,* together with students at Blekinge Institute of Technology:

Marshall McLuhan began his book *Understanding Media* with the statement that every media always contains a different media. Although the book was written in the 60s, it is more relevant than ever in today's society. The digital world, with its abundance of information, has created a copy-paste culture where everything is reusable. Mash-ups, cut-ups, edits and remixes are just some examples which highlight the "paraphrase condition" manifested in today's society.

The purpose of this workshop is to go one step further. Instead of creating new contexts and meanings by sampling two different materials we will be using the same material to create something new. The only ingredient

Space Matters II, Karlskrona 2012

Performing Pictures (Geska Brečević & Robert Brečević), *Offspring Taking Off*, 2012

required for this is the popular and somewhat worn out concept of interactivity. We start with the record player (changing the pitch or playing a record backwards can change a gospel recording into a Satanic manifesto) and land in today's advanced computer games. We will look closer at concepts like "counter gaming" and "culture jamming" in which digital software in the public space are used (or abused) to create social and political awareness. The purpose of the workshop is to get students to analyze a digitalsocial media platform in the public space (an app, a community, a game, etc.) and then use its interactivity to comment upon, develop or criticize the platform in itself or its context. The idea is that students are free in their choice and that the results will vary from the performative and practical to the theoretical and visionary.
Throughout the summer of 2012, on various places in the city of Karlskrona, shipping containers were placed as temporary exhibition spaces where video works by artists from Poland, Sweden and Kaliningrad, Russia were shown. This was the second Space Matters exhibition, and again the works included were examples of relocation or perhaps even the dissolving of the boundary between real and virtual space. The containers were meant as a symbol of the sea-lane connecting the participating countries.

Nicola Bergström Hansen
***Over the Rainbow*, 2012, 6:57 min**
In the classic film *The Wizard of Oz*, the main character Dorothy is asked to go someplace where she cannot cause any problems. Dorothy wonders if there is such a place and bursts into one of the world's most famous film

songs: *Over the Rainbow*. In Nicola Bergström Hansen's video, the same song is performed by the BAE Systems Brass Band - the partly Swedish-owned arms industry giant BAE Systems' own orchestra. The video contains a storm of news images from distant lands where fighter jets and blue skies are not always associated with festivals. Campaign texts taken from the arms manufacturers Saab AB's and BAE Systems' marketing are integrated into the composition. The texts convey the weapons industry's views on their own contribution to a safe and protected environment.

Nicola Bergström Hansen (SE); born 1983 in Vilhelmina; Master of Fine Arts 2012, Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm; lives and works in Stockholm.

Dmitry Bulatov and Alexey Chebykin
***That Which Lives in Me*, 2011, 4:38 min**
That Which Lives in Me uses Augmented Reality technologies to enable the dynamic rearrangement of real and virtual spaces. Dmitry Bulatov and Alexey Chebykin have "augmented" the shells of Achatina Fulica snails with an electronic presence, adding an interactive layer of digital visual information. The image of the snails in their constructed environment is given an extra layer of interpretation determined by the snails' behavior and the intensity of their inter-communication.

Dmitry Bulatov (RU); born 1968 in Kaliningrad; Master of Science 1992, Aviation University, Riga, Latvia; lives and works in Kaliningrad.
Alexey Chebykin (RU); born 1961 in Lysva, Perm Krai; Master of Architecture 1987, Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture, St.Petersburg; lives and works in Kaliningrad.

Nug and Pike
***Best Things In Life For Free*, 2002, 2:17 min**
In their films, Nug and Pike create a balance between fiction and reality, while bringing up one of graffiti culture's most recurring subjects of discussion: what is yours, mine and ours? *Best Things In Life For Free* shows a masked person that enters a store and proceeds to shoplift six-packs of beer. The person then goes to the train station and grabs onto the outside of a commuter train, drinking the beer. The images are filmed in different fixed perspectives from above, resembling documentation from surveillance cameras.

Nug (SE); born 1973 in Stockholm; Master of Fine Arts 2008, Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm; lives and works in Stockholm.
Pike (SE); born 1972 in Malmö; Master of Fine Arts 2006, Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm; lives and works in Stockholm.

Mateusz Pęk
***Windows Eclipse*, 2011, 6:18 min**
To daydream about reality, a journey through digital reality and back. Based on the anthropologist Marc Augés' idea of "non-places", Mateusz Pęk uses images from YouTube, the virtual platform *Second Life*, and his own mobile phone to investigate visual effects in this borderland between real and virtual places. *Windows Eclipse* merges fragments from a fleeting digital world and provides an insight into its internal landscape.

Mateusz Pęk (PL); born 1978 in Lębork; Master of Fine Arts 2002, Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk; lives and works in Gdańsk.

Grant Watkins
***Go Beyond Conceptualized Thought: urban remix* 2012, 3:33 min**
Ghost Rider is a motorcycle rider who drives on public roads at speeds far exceeding the legal limits in order to produce exciting and provocative videos. Using cameras mounted on the motorcycle and helmet, public space is portrayed at angles and speeds beyond the grasp of common man. In *Go Beyond Conceptualized Thought: urban remix 2012,* Ghost Rider videos have been edited, slowed down and given a new soundtrack, all inspired by the slow "chopped and screwed" music initiated in Houston, Texas by DJ Screw.

Grant Watkins (SE); born 1973 in Irving, Texas, USA; Master of Fine Arts 2009, Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm; lives and works in Stockholm.

Ruben Wätte
***Space Control,* 2011, 2:45 min**
Somewhere in the woods, an automatic feeder is transformed into a rocket ship and a hunting tower into the control station. A rocket takes off from Earth in the service of humanity. In *Space Control* different aspirations compete for control over "space", whether it be outer space, the forest, or the urban environment. Social constructions such as recreation, art, and ownership are temporarily put on hold when their boundaries are ignored.

Ruben Wätte (SE); born 1985 in Hudiksvall; Master of Fine Arts student at Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, Stockholm; lives in Järna and works outdoors.

During the exhibition, some of the Karlskrona residents reacted to the fact that all the containers were closed. According to them, it would have been nice, and even in accordance with the concept of the exhibition, if the containers had been open. They had wished for the possibility to enter the containers, as a public space. But the intent of *Space Matters* wasn't to open up spaces for the public, but to create a space for art. If we want to experience and explore a public place, accessible to everyone, we must find ways to create it ourselves; we must take it. Neither capital, the municipality nor European Union funded cultural projects will do it for us.

It is 2015. Art is almost completely instrumentalised – regardless of whether its financing is private or public. Art services either national or European interests, where it is especially useful in the construction or reinforcement of specific identities. At the same time, art is a desirable commercial product. It is ideal for collecting and it contributes to regional development whilst providing society with new creative employment opportunities. Visiting art museums and centres is a popular, easily digested leisure activity.[8]

Oscar Guermouche is an artist who lives and works in Sweden.

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FOR THE PROTECTION OF ENTIRE NATIONS

Nicola Bergström Hansen, *Over the Rainbow*, 2012

Ruben Wätte, *Space Control*, 2011

HYDRO ACTIVE CITY
presentation of the contest and winning artworks

Type of project: public space project

Where: Gdańsk, Poland

When: 31 May–02 June 2013

Artists: Maciej Wojnicki (PL), *Message in a Bottle*
Piotr Wyrzykowski (PL), *Water Memory*
Olga Zofia Warabida (PL), and Mariusz Samól (PL), *Little Ice Age*
Justinas Gaigalas (LT), and Rytis Urbanskas (LT), *Post-fishing Post*

Organizer: The Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, Gdańsk, Poland

The exhibition was accompanied by a Festival of Digital Forms

Artists: Iwona Zając (PL), Marcin Dymiter & Ludomir Franczak (PL), Honorata Martin (PL), Alina Żemojdzin & Artur Trzciński (PL), Kamila Chomicz & Krzysztof Topolski (PL), Hertzsmertz & Ebola Ape (PL), Mazzoll & Fluidations (PL), C4030 (PL)

Contest organisation:
Aleksandra Kminikowska, Anna Zalewska-Andruszkiewicz, Marta Korga-Bistram

Exhibition and Festival curators:
Aleksandra Kminikowska, Anna Zalewska-Andruszkiewicz

Exhibition and Festival production:
Aleksandra Kminikowska, Marta Korga-Bistram, Aleksandra Musielak-Dobrowolska, Magdalena Smolak, Anna Zalewska-Andruszkiewicz

Maciej Wojnicki
***Message in a Bottle*, www.o.bzzz.net**

Message in a Bottle is an interactive art project based on a communication tool, designed specifically for this purpose, which combines an application to the Android system and a web page. The project is similar to the idea of an urban game. Participants explore the area along the Radunia river channel - from the Town Hall to the Motława River - looking for wall graffiti and tags. By pointing their mobiles or tablets at them with the downloaded application, participants encounter virtual bottles with messages left by their predecessors participating in the "game" /stories, short sentences, questions and photos/ which they can answer. Each message is virtually packed and "thrown back" into the stream of the Radunia. *Message in a Bottle* is an attempt to create an alternative communication network. With the use of modern technology a new meaning of the communication function of water is revealed.

Cooperation: Fab Lab Trojmiasto

Piotr Wyrzykowski
***Water Memory*, http://peterstyle.eu/**

Water Memory is an interactive art project that uses a specially designed app for tablets, through which the viewer is transferred into a virtual world - "augmented reality". The inspiration for this art piece was a pseudo-scientific hypothesis stating that water has an ability to collect and store information. *Water Memory* offers viewers a sentimental journey into history, which will be rediscovered, when wandering streets of Osiek. By using the programmed application, the real image captured by the tablet camera layers with an imaginary underwater world, full of memorabilia and signs of the past. Water becomes a perceptual filter through which the viewer is visually and audibly "immersed" in a non-linear narrative created by the artist.

Application for Android: Toucan Systems / **Audio:** Krzysztof Topolski - Arszyn / **Narrative path:** Mieczysław Abramowicz

I wanted to make an application which virtually floods the square with water. There used to be a pseudoscientific theory which said that water has its own memory and when it flows through various places it absorbs information of a given material or a given place. It has been said that even people have their influence on the condition of water.

Piotr Wyrzykowski

Olga Warabida and Mariusz Samól, *Little Ice Age*

Little Ice Age is a sound installation that serves as a surreal intervention into the fabric of the city. Artists drew inspiration for their work from historical records according to which in the past, winters in our climate were so severe that it was possible to travel between Sweden and Poland across the frozen Baltic Sea. Therefore, at the height of spring time in Gdańsk pedestrians walking on the footbridge over the Radunia channel, connecting Rybaki Dolne and Górne Streets, will have the opportunity to experience a truly winter-like situation and evoke feelings accompanying the act of crossing the frozen Baltic Sea. Participants' bodies will serve as interfaces, which bring the installation to life, and the triggered sound will change the perception of reality.

Sound: Anna Suda

The viewers play the key part in starting our artwork. There are sensors on two ends of the bridge and whenever someone steps on it, a sound comes from the speakers beneath the bridge. We wanted to refer to the freezing of the Baltic which happened several times in history.

Mariusz Samól

Justinas Gaigalas and Rytis Urbanskas
Post-fishing Post

Post-fishing Post is a participatory art project that uses sound as a medium. Fishing, for enthusiasts of this type of recreation, is an activity through which one communes with nature. Fishing may also be accompanied by a feeling of excitement and curiosity, caused by one's invading an alien, underwater world. Using only digital tools, Lithuanian artists tried to explore this mysterious world, thus eliminating the element of violence accompanying the usual act of fishing. With the specially designed rod and headphones, they offer users "fishing" for sounds typical of the underwater world of the Radunia channel. Fishing, a down-to-earth activity, is presented by the artists as an attempt to extend the human senses, and they have highlighted the contemplative value of this act.

This work is about an old time activity, about fishing. We made our work in digital technology, to look at it in a new way. It's some kind of observation on traditional and everyday activities of people.

Justinas Gaigalas

Hydro Active Winners: *Water Memory, Message in a Bottle, Post-fishing Post, Little Ice Age*

The public space of water

by Agnieszka Kulazińska

The Baltic has been referred to as the inland sea of Northern Europe. It is surrounded by land on all its sides. Its specific location has become the starting point for the Art Line project. A post-contest exhibition called *Hydro Active City* was organized in late May and early June 2013 as part of the enterprise. The presentation went outside gallery rooms, activating the city space along the Radunia channel. The exhibition was part of the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre's *Closer to the Water* cycle, which has been underway for several years with the goal of drawing attention to the potential of water areas in Gdańsk.

The sea brings together and separates all the partners of the Art Line project.[1] What role does water play in a city? Is it only a useless area? A barrier, a hampering factor? Can it become an active area?

Venice is the first association that comes to mind when we think about water in a city. "In Venice nearly all of the most interesting spectacles and cultural events are held on the Canale Grande. It is a great salon of Europe. Water can be a place of events and can constitute public space of a specific nature".[2]

Is it worth thinking about the function of water in a city agglomeration? "It might seem that this topic has been discussed in architectural sources to the point of exhaustion. Has it really been enough for the problem? But is this a problem at all? The presence of water around the human being has always been obvious and he has made his existence dependent on it (…) In searching for a place to settle, he chose his location according to the form of its presence".[3]

Let us analyze the situation of Gdańsk in detail. The city was developing as a water project. "Gdańsk is a city whose history of development was closely linked with water: from the south it is surrounded by the damp area of Żuławy, it is located at the point where Motława flows into the Vistula, and uses the waters of Radunia and numerous streams. The traces of battling with water and using it for utility and military functions decided about the urban layout of Gdańsk".[4] Until the Second World War water played a substantial role in the city. The channels were filled in, their course was changed but the basins were a central point for the urban development of the agglomeration. The situation changed after the Second World War. Gdańsk lost its coherence and became a cut up, fragmented city to the visitor. In the collective awareness, the city lost its "water" nature. Basins formed from conjoining elements became barriers, factors hampering the development of the city. Water became a passive element in Gdańsk. How to make it active public space? How can it be restored in the awareness of its residents?

The post-contest exhibition *Hydro Active City* was an attempt to find answers to those questions. The artistic installations presented as part of it encouraged the active participation of the recipients. The technology allowed them to permeate into the water reality at a level which is inaccessible on an everyday basis.

Post-fishing Post by Justinas Gaigalas and Rytis Urbanskas drew the viewer into the underwater world. The recipient, having a fishing rod with a sensitive microphone, could listen to the sounds of fishing. The technology was an extension of human senses, allowing one to peek into the inaccessible soundscape of the Radunia channel. Fishing gained a different dimension turning from a hobby to a meditational activity. Maciej Wojnicki's *Message in a Bottle* was presented in the form of a municipal game. Equipped with tablets and smartphones the recipients travelled along the Radunia channel looking for hidden "messages in bottles". Contrary to traditional communications of this type, Wojnicki's installation allowed them to engage in a dialogue with other users of the city space. The application developed by the artist allowed them to exchange posts and comment on them, add pictures and new messages. The Hydro activity included in the title of the exhibition received the form of an act of communication. Piotr Wyrzykowski's *Water Memory* created augmented reality in which the present mixed with

history. After downloading an application to a tablet or a smartphone, the recipient "traced" virtual items left by the artist in the city space. Each item was connected with history – kayaking, displacement of Jews, strikes. In particular, the artist's visual palimpsest was exploring the separate layers of the city – historical events, stories of the people. The starting point for the artist was the pseudoscientific hypothesis about the ability of water to collect and store information. The sound installation called *Little Ice Age* prepared by Olga Warabida and Mariusza Samól also referred to history. Those passing through the bridge joining the Rybaki Dolne and Rybaki Górne streets could experience a kind of a time travel to the times when harsh winters allowed travelers to cross from Poland to Sweden across the frozen Baltic Sea. Entry to the bridge started a sound installation reconstructing the sounds of crossing an ice-covered sea. The technology allowed the authors to create an alternative surreal reality, knocking the recipients out of their everyday routines.

Art Line is a project in which the sea has become a key for the selection of partners and a topic of consideration. However, the enterprise is far from a classic marine art. Among the topics analyzed in the project is the notion of hybrid reality, created from the fusion of physical public space and areas accessible in the internet. *The Hydro Active City* exhibition created such a hybrid space. In line with its traditional symbolism, water became an active element, a starting point for events which happened in the physical space of the city owing to the latest technology. The installations activated the city basins and created an augmented reality which revealed other aspects of the city hydro activity.

During the accompanying *Festival of Digital Forms*, the topic of water became a starting point for creating images and sounds. The presentation of Iwona Zając's project *Shipyard on air* was part of the Festival.

It was created after the demolition of the wall on which the artist painted her mural *the Shipyard* which was a record of her conversations with workers of the shipyard. After the wall was demolished, Iwona returned to her old tapes and made them available online.

Analyzing a number of cultural activities aimed at restoring "water municipality", Lucyna Nyka notices that the "image of the city cannot be reduced to what can be seen on a few main streets. It is much fuller and better identified when created also by special places: historic traces, usually undiscovered landscapes and missed places where water meets the land".[5]

The *Hydro Active City* exhibition added the latest technologies to the meeting point of water and land. Owing to them, it was possible to literally activate water spaces, expand everyday perception and permeate into areas which are usually inaccessible. The exhibition was an interesting step towards reclaiming the public space of water basins in Gdańsk. After all, until 1945 Gdańsk was sometimes referred to as the Venice of the North…

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ART IN A PUBLIC SPACE
– festival or not?

Type of project: conference

Where: Old Town Hall, Gdańsk, Poland

When: 17–18 May 2013

Lecturers:
Michaela Crimmin (GB)
Julia Draganović (IT/DE)
Dominik Lejman (PL/DE)
Michał Bieniek (PL)
Kuba Szreder (PL)
Julita Wójcik (PL)
Agnieszka Wołodźko (PL)
Bettina Pelz (DE)
Martin Schibli (SE)
Torun Ekstrand (SE)

Curator: Iwona Bigos

Organizers: Gdansk City Gallery, Gdańsk;
The Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, Gdańsk, Poland

Art for all in the public domain

by Michaela Crimmin

With the comparatively recent trend for temporary rather than permanent artwork, comes the possibility for artists to make propositions that address a range of different audiences and issues; and for us, their viewers and sometimes collaborators and participants, to be more open minded in response to art in its increasingly diverse manifestations. Arnold Schoenberg's provocation - "if it is art, it is not for all and if it is for all, it is not art"[1] - rings increasingly hollow. Nevertheless, we should rightly and jealously guard artists' freedom to comment or criticise, to obfuscate as well as to illuminate, to be independent of the vested interests of others, or to oppose hegemonies or the status quo as we are currently witnessing in Syria and in Egypt.

Over a decade ago in 2002, as part of the Lima Biennial in Peru, artist Francis Alÿs, in collaboration with Cuauhtémoc Medina and Rafael Ortega, made what was to become for many an extraordinarily poetic, and moving, work that depended on collaborative effort.

Named *When Faith Moves Mountains*, this was a direct experience for the five hundred or so people, many of them undergraduate students at the local university, involved in a task set by Alÿs to move a 500-meter-long sand dune a mere ten centimeters. For the rest of us, we consume the work as a distilled image in the form of a postcard, or as an image in a book or magazine; or as a story told to us – almost a parable; or as a video that the artist has uploaded onto his website. As art historian and writer Claire Bishop says of this work, "to recount the event, or to send and receive the postcard, reiterates one of the work's ambitions: to supplant the solitary romance of Land art with a new horizon of social experience".[2] For Bishop the title of the work seems to allude to a desire for collective action – if enough people unite forces, believing that change is possible, perhaps it can really come about? The participants feature in the video; their voices, their views, are captured and they become an integral and continually present part of the work, artwork as a potential generator of political and social change; a signifier that collective effort is worthwhile and of the potential efficacy of a collaborative venture between artist and participant.

At the time Alÿs was commandeering students in Lima, I was closely involved in a series of commissions for London's Trafalgar Square. The temporary artworks for the so-called "Fourth Plinth" have been a means of elbowing in imagination, ideas and energy to the heart of this capital and cosmopolitan city.

The space of just 4.8 x 2.4 meters of London, the surface area of the plinth, to date has hosted eight remarkable and varied works, acquiring a visibility and a focal and talking point each time a new work is installed. This month sees the ninth work by the German artist Katharina Fritsch, inevitably sparking fresh speculation amongst the millions of people who see it.

We have such a rapidly changing world, with such huge challenges that we need all the ingenuity of artists, and the involvement by the rest of us in as energetic and open a way as we possibly can. We can take a collective responsibility to extend and amplify the values and questions art brings. And not least to dream of new futures, both solitarily and collectively. To end with another, more apt, quote by Schonberg: "An artistic impression is substantially the resultant of two components. One which the work of art gives the onlooker – the other, which he is capable of giving to the work of art".[3]

Michaela Crimmin is a curator, co-founder and director of Culture+Conflict. She is a course tutor on the Curating Contemporary Art masters programme at the Royal College of Art, London, UK.

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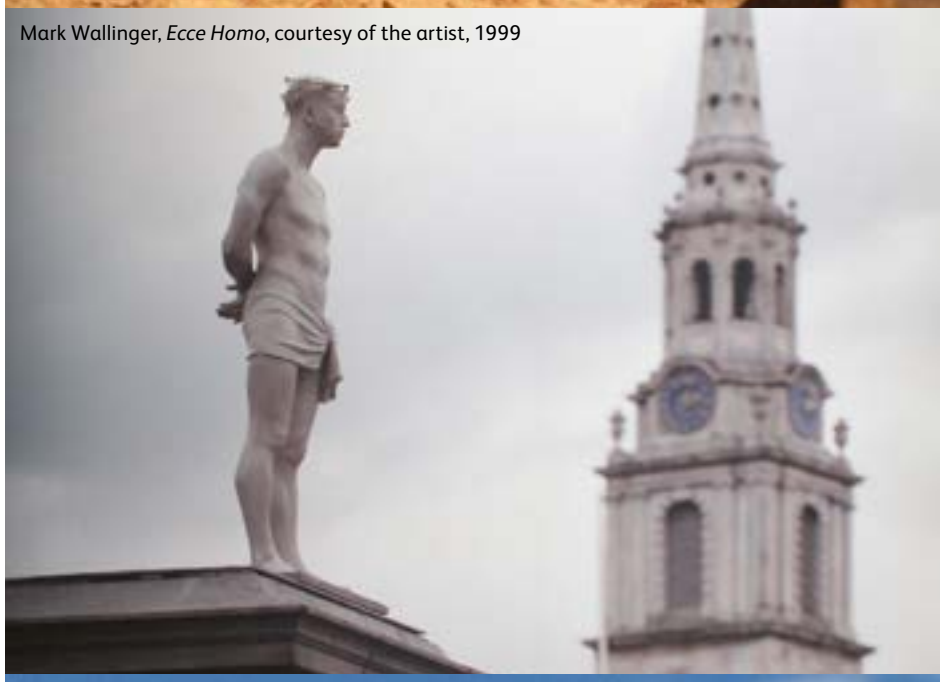
Francis Alÿs, *When Faith Moves Mountains*, 2002



Mark Wallinger, *Ecce Homo*, courtesy of the artist, 1999

Elmgreen & Dragset, *Powerless Structures*, *Fig. 101*, 2012

Notes on time-based public art

by Julia Draganović

The title of the Art Line conference *Festival or Not?* tackles not only the meaning of what we call "event-culture", but also the problem of the sustainability of those art forms which are mainly presented in festivals of contemporary art in public space – art forms that are often time-based, ephemeral or process-oriented, rather than object-based. Things that do not last are hard to evaluate, as they mostly survive in various forms of documentation and in the memory of the audience and the people involved in their production. Sometimes, ephemeral art pieces change the way the audience perceives its surroundings – an effect that is even more difficult to verify and to measure.

The criteria for evaluating the success or sustainability of temporary art interventions depend on the expectations an organizer starts with: goals have to be set beforehand in order to meet them.

Let me briefly present Ælia Media, a participatory art project launched by Pablo Helguera, winner of the International Award for Participatory Art in collaboration with Katia Baraldi, Fedra Boscaro, Giorgia Dolfini, Vincenzo Estremo, Matteo Ferrari, Nathaniel Katz, Marianna Mendozza, Stefano Pasquini, Cinzia Pietribiasi, Anna Santomauro, Alessandra Saviotti, Daniela Spagna Musso, Annamaria Tina, and 19/20 (Fedra Boscaro, Federica Falancia, Tihana Maravic, Linda Rigotti, Costanza Savini). Ælia Media consisted in a self-organized journalism school that took place in Bologna from spring to early fall 2011 and in a temporary interactive radio station presented in a transparent movable kiosk in Piazza Puntoni, Bologna in October 2011. Pablo Helguera wanted to share the prize he received for his career as a socially engaged artist and for proposing to realize Ælia Media in Bologna, with a group of young cultural producers, encouraging them to study investigative methods, to share the knowledge they acquired and to produce a radio program together with people they did not previously know. The proposal for the project took inspiration from the history of Bologna, known for social innovations that, with Radio Alice, included the first free radio station in Italy, which experimented with open microphones as early as the 1970s. Furthermore, Helguera wanted to create an alternative information channel in a country that at that time was still governed by media mogul Silvio Berlusconi. The funding institution, the Legislative Assembly of the Emilia-Romagna Region, had the goal of giving artists the opportunity to develop new forms of collaboration that would serve as case studies for questions like "what creates the sense of belonging to a community?" and "how can the awareness of common shared goods be raised?". Pablo Helguera's project was considered a success, as it created a temporary community of people who successfully operated the radio station with a high level of self-organization, and some of the participants continued collaborations of various kinds even after the end of the project. This might seem a meager outcome for those seeking greater visibility, but for the goals set at the beginning of the project, even the testimony of eighteen participants who confirmed that a process that had lasted for only for 9 months had changed the way they looked at their environment and had influenced their way of working and sharing tasks was considered a decent success.
Festival or not? It depends on your goals…

Julia Draganović is a curator for contemporary art whose interest is focused on new artistic strategies including art in public spaces, socially engaging practices and new media. She is in charge of the International Award for Participatory Art launched by the Legislative Assembly of the Italian Region Emilia-Romagna.

Krzysztof Żwirblis, *Social Museum*, 2012

Discuss, not decorate!

by Agnieszka Wołodźko

My presentation was an attempt to look at art in a public space in Gdańsk from a perspective of a practice named by Suzanne Lacy "new genre public art". As she says, an aim of a today artist is not to decorate a space of a city but to bring back its public character as a place for debates, disputes and an exchange of ideas. According to his/her role understood in this way, the artist is no more a creator of art works but a public intellectual producing alternative proposals to a consumption-crazed society. My reflections were illustrated with examples of activities that have been undertaken since the 1990s.

In the mid-1980s, in the absence of own exhibition space and in time of an ongoing boycott of the state cultural institutions, a group of Gdańsk artists, including Grzegorz Klaman, Robert Rumas, Marek Rogulski, Eugeniusz Szczudło, Kazimierz Kowalczyk and Piotr Wyrzykowski, organized its events on a ruined island called Wyspa Spichrzów (Granary Island). Acting outside the reach of official cenzorship, but also outside the official circulation of information, they organized one-day exhibitions and concerts, which attracted a large crowd of friends, fans and supporters of independent culture.

In 1994 the same place became a subject of the International Workshop *Island Project* organized by myself and Grzegorz Klaman. We invited Polish and foreign artists to participate in it. In the face of the intense social and economic changes taking place at that time we wanted to draw attention to a significant role of culture, which should not be ignored when planning a future for the Granary Island.

Next international workshop, entitled *City Transformers*, was organized by myself, Grzegorz Klaman and Singaporean art curator Jay Koh in 2002. It also concerned problems of transformations of the urban space, but this time we attempted to look at the city space in its entirety. Artists from Poland, Europe and Asia spoke out on the processes taking place in Gdańsk as well as the related conflicts and were predicting possible scenarios of events.

A crucial element of the urban landscape of Gdańsk are murals, in respect of which the city authorities decided to adopt affirmative attitude. Among the abundance of this kind of public statements, we have both a whole range of work carried out anonymously and independently on abandoned walls, courtyards and along the railway line and those, that arise as a result of institutionally organized festivals. From a critical point of view, mural painters working in the framework of official events could be perceived as "whipping boys", accused of collaborating with authorities. However, if we take a closer look at these festivals and motives behind them, this case takes more complex form.

The Festival of Mural Painting *Kliniczna* was organized by the artist Piotr Szwabe in 2000–2007 on spans of a viaduct at Kliniczna street. Collecting funds and soliciting the necessary permits, Szwabe created a space for creative expression for himself and many mural painters from Gdańsk and other Polish cities. Later from this initiative the Monumental Art Festival evolved, which has been organized by Szwabe in Zaspa (a district of Gdańsk) since 2009. After the political change, that took place after 1989, a discourse on modernistic housing estates revived. Connected to the traumatic period of communism, it was presented in a decidedly negative light, and residents of tower blocks were negatively stigmatized as "blockers". This status quo caused deep frustration of inhabitants of these settlements, who in addition to an apartment in a monotone, hardly comfortable surroundings, fell to the bottom of the social hierarchy. The aim of the Monumental Art Festival has been not only an aestheticisation of Zaspa's blocks, but it was also to lead to a positive identification of the district. I must admit that these assumptions are realized. As surveys show, thanks to the new face of the environment, the residents have begun to feel satisfaction from the place where they live. Currently, the district has become the object of interest of tourists coming to the city, who are helped by trained local guides, leading them to the various murals.

Educating another generation of mural painters is the aim of the artistic-educational-prophylactic program *I know. I don't destroy. I create* organized by Laznia CCA. In its framework, curators Mikołaj Jurkowski and Hana Lubert-Miodek run workshops with young people (ages 13 and older) and show them that creating graffiti can have a positive dimension and need not to be used only for destruction. The program has a form of an open competition, the winners of which have an opportunity to realize their projects in designated areas.

Last but not least, we must mention a particularly important mural *Shipyard* realized by Iwona Zając in 2004 on a wall separating the Gdańsk Shipyard from the rest of the city. As a resident of the shipyard, having her studio there, the artist collected 11 stories of shipyard workers about their work in this place, cut out portions of their statements in the form of stencils and painted them in the place the workers passed in their daily way to work. The mural disappeared during a demolition of the shipyard wall, which took place in January 2013. This fact has raised many violent emotions and initiated a public debate on the direction of the city's development.

The Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdańsk, organized periodically since 2005 by Laznia CCA, has quite different character. It is a closed international competition addressed to artists invited to create works for a gallery located outdoor in a neglected and now revitalized Gdańsk district Dolne Miasto (Lower Town). This initiative is meant to change the image of this area and to attract Gdańsk's residents as well as tourists, who have so far avoided it because of its bad reputation. Among the competition works and projects are both those, that are attempting to aesthetisation of the city space, as well as those reflecting a critical approach towards the local reality. The latter include *LKW Gallery* by Daniel Milohnic and Lex Rijkers, a sculpture *Leader Swing* by Fernando Sanchez and *Korore Architekty* by Bert Theis (the last two projects have not yet been executed).

Another festiwal, entitled *Narrations*, was initiated in 2009 by the Gdańsk Municipal Gallery, which for its implementation has invited German curator Bettina Pelz. Now this event is organized in a collaboration with the City Culture Institute and it attempts to draw the audience's attention to the fact, that temporal art works – using light and projections on the walls of buildings – can become a constitutive factor for the aesthetics of the city.

I concluded my presentation with a question about possible artistic and institutional strategies: how to plan them in order to make local residents feel they have a say in what's happening in their city.

Agnieszka Wołodźko studied at the Faculty of Painting and Graphic Arts of the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Gdańsk in 1980–1986. Currently, her PhD thesis is in preparation on participatory art in Scandinavian countries in 1990–2010 at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Since 2000 she has worked as an exhibition curator at Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art in Gdańsk.

What is it about public art that makes it so hard to love? Some remarks on public art in Sweden and an outcast to a theory

by Martin Schibli

During the last decade, there has been increasing interest in public art, sometimes described as "art in the public domain", and not only in Sweden. Every year there is at least one major conference in the field, where participants discuss how to work in this field. There are probably several causes of this interest:

- A lack of ordinary/traditional exhibition spaces.
- Standardization, as more and more temporary exhibitions in institutions tend to include projects in the public domain.
- Increased interest in Activist Art, as most contemporary art fails to encourage people to change society.
- Interest reaching out to a broader audience than is possible in more traditional exhibition spaces.
- General disappointment with the quality of today's public art.

It might be a combination of these things, but what is worth noting is that many artists, curators, etc. put a great deal of energy into promoting the belief that it is possible to develop the practice of public art. This also means that artists and curators are also asking more and more questions about the idea of public art. On a general level, one might say that, in many ways, the transformation taking place in the art world as a whole, the shift in focus from aesthetic to conceptual aspects, has never really reached the domain of public art in Sweden. Nor did the postmodernist debate from the 1980s really reach the field. Of course, there are exceptions to this, such as the work of Gustav Hellberg (*Obstruction and In Your Head*) and Lars Vilks (*Nimis*, *Arx* and *Omphalos*), both of whom also have a strong conceptual side. When it comes to public intervention, there are several examples of works that have strongly provoked the idea of the public realm, like the work of Anna Odell (*Unknown Woman*) and NUG (*Territorial Pissing*), though these works were not presented as strictly public artworks.

So, today we have the paradox that the increased interest in and discussion about public art in Sweden during the past decade – along with the resources being put into public artwork and conferences – do not coincide with the belief that a major change has occurred in the process. I would suggest that there is still some kind of disappointment with the present situation. So far, this applies both to permanent works, and to more temporary works, though the level of freedom in the latter is, of course, higher.

Some premises

So one could make an assumption that something is missing in the discussion about public art in Sweden. But let me first introduce some premises for the Swedish context of public art:

A: "Culture is not in our blood". This means that culture is not considered as a condition for a social society and its future development. It is considered as more of a form of leisure, and even something that takes resources away from "important" things.

B: "The lack of discussion about Quality". This could be understood as provocative by many administrators of public art, though this is not the only group discussing public artwork. Using the term "quality" in discussions of art is often problematic in the Swedish context. In practice, quantity is preferred over quality in Sweden.

The term "quality" is problematic for two reasons. First, it implies that art is not a democratic field, and secondly, quality is often connected with the term "elite", a term that has negative connotations (except in sport). So, implying the existence or lack of quality in artworks is often considered elitist thinking, which should be condemned because it is seen as being undemocratic. A consequence of this thinking is that art also should not upset anyone, and, on a general level, should be cheerful. Likewise, it is worth mentioning that in Sweden there is no real division between professional artists and amateurs, in contrast to actors, where there is a clear difference between amateur and professional theatre.

C: As a consequence of A and B, "Professional Knowledge" within contemporary art is not 100% respected outside the art world. On a practical level, many with decision-making power about new public art projects do not have a deeper knowledge of and/or an education in art. This often results in an asymmetric structure between the artistic and curatorial process, and the structures provided by people handling public art. This also applies to many cultural institutions in Sweden, especially those on the peripheries.
Also, in Sweden, when it comes to decisions, many people are consensus fundamentalists, which means that everyone has to agree on a decision. This is something that probably does not promote in-depth discussion about quality or permit experimentation and new ways of thinking to be promoted.

D: "An understanding of the concept of the site". This has rarely been discussed. Sweden, as opposed to most European countries, does not have a specific site or location that reflects the history of the nation through thousands or even millions of tragic family histories (i.e. sites like Katyń, Stalingrad, Berlin, Dresden, Utöya, or Auschwitz….). Such sites immediately trigger thoughts and emotions. I would suggest that this also results in a different understanding of the idea of "site", suggesting that from a Swedish point of view, the idea of emotions and connotations being linked to a certain "site" cannot be fully understood.

E: "200 years of peace". This is, of course, in most aspects very, very positive – do not get me wrong – but perhaps this is also one reason that knowledge about Sweden's history, including its cultural history – is lacking in contemporary society. There are simply no war memorials like the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal*, 1913 (in memory of a battle outside Leipzig in 1813) by the architect Brunp Schmitz 1858–1916 and the artists Christian Behrens (1852–1905) and Franz Metzne. No sites in Sweden are linked to family tragedies on such a huge scale, and we do not have the baggage of former ideologies in which a strong public art was devoted to authoritarian ideologies. Although it could be argued that pre-WWII public art in Sweden was also ideological, in the sense of bringing the Swedish nation forward (often using mythological motifs) and celebrating the idea of the healthy mind in a healthy body. But due to the amnesia that occurred in Sweden at that time, Swedish culture had to be de-Germanised, which meant that many cultural references, important for Sweden's cultural heritage, were also lost. We need to remember that Sweden was strongly linked to the German cultural sphere before WWII.

These five aspects are rarely discussed when it comes to art, but when added together, they suggest that Public Art in Sweden has a different starting point compared to that of other countries. In many cities in Europe, a specific "site" is connected to a number of different histories, which are often well known to the citizens. A public artwork (permanent or temporary) will not yield a neutral interpretation, but will enter into a constant dialogue with all the positive and negative connotations – historical, political and emotional – linked to that specific "site". The decision-making process will in many ways be tougher, like in Germany, where professionals are usually involved in making decisions, while other agents, like technical staff, function as advisors on technical aspects, not as decision makers on artistic quality.
Also, in many countries, like Poland and Germany, there has been an intense discussion on how to relate to history. This is, of course, necessary, but it also has implications as to whether we think of public art as being permanent or temporary. In Poland, there is a lively discussion about how to relate to public art from the 1950s to the 1980s, and in Germany there is a huge discussion regarding the memorial process that, in the end, resulted in Eisermans *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* in Berlin, and increased awareness of the possibilities, impossibilities, and the minefields in public commissioned art in Germany.

Sweden – roundabouts

In Sweden, the vast majority of public artworks are placed at locations that are usually more or less neutral, such as a new roundabout, a government building or a new blockhouse complexes, or a site is selected because it is ugly, such as a tunnel under a street between two blockhouse complex in the suburbs. There are very few possible "sites" with a tense history that would create a strong awareness today among citizens.

During recent decades, one of the most common spots in Sweden for public art has been roundabouts. I am not referring to huge roundabouts that are used as a manifes- tation of ideologies like Mussolini's roundabout project in Rome. I am talking here about sites constructed as a result of traffic planning. Public artwork is often placed in the middle of these. The conditions of these sites as a framework for the artist is that the work should be based on visual aspects, but not provoke or be a distraction for the drivers. In this sense, it should be cheerful, and the work should be equally visible from all angles. It will not be possible to interact with the sculpture, since you do not want people walking around in the roundabout. These sites are often outside cities, so you only pass them by car…

The lack of historical, political and emotional connotations to a site works both ways. In one way, this means that artists are quite free to bring forward an artwork that lives more on its own merits. They do not have to consider different aspects of history, and how people might react to these; on the other hand, perhaps it is harder to create something of interest if there is no history to play against at, or to interact with?

Who owns public space?

Another difference in relation to public artwork is based on the question of who owns public space. In this aspect, there are also differences between countries in Europe. In Sweden, the usual belief is that public space is actually owned by the citizens. In other countries, public space means, more or less, the space of the government. This also has implications for the interpretation of a public commissioned artwork. In the former, artists will mostly be considered the senders of an artwork, even though it was publically commissioned. Later, it will be understood as a kind of – perhaps not propaganda – but as something that the government will use more or less for ideological confirmation. Perhaps this is the reason why non-commissioned temporary art projects in some countries in Europe – by the mere action itself – are considered more provocative than in Sweden. You cannot fight for something you already are considered to be the owner of.

The structures of society are well-defined

This question is also related to the question of who owns the space, but one thing worth stressing here is that the structure of Swedish society – due to 200 years of peace – is more defined in its boundaries. The judicial system, sports, newspapers, the art world, etc.; the boundaries of these systems are – I would suggest – more clear cut in Sweden. These boundaries do not exist to the same extent in some younger nations that are still developing their political, economic and judicial systems. The boundaries are more like that of an ongoing game in a greyzone. This means that an art project can easily be interpreted or even accepted as a political statement despite the artistic intentions. However, in Sweden it would be harder to integrate contemporary art with other areas, or to really manage to create a trans-boundary work that plays within two fields. A publically commissioned artwork in front of a new judicial building will mostly still be considered an artwork in front of a building, rather than actually giving the visitor any meaning or making people think about the judicial system. These boundaries work both ways: the positive side in Sweden is that there exists an area that is accepted as the domain of art – a kind of freezone. Within this area many things are possible that are not possible in other fields. The negative thing is that most critical art can easily be neutralized as a critical work just by stating that it is art.

Permanent and temporary public artworks

The greatest interest in art in the public domain is often seen in temporary exhibitions. There is, of course, more freedom here, as the artists do not have to think about aspects of the materials and other things related to its having to last for a long time. And maybe more importantly, artists and curators are also more free on an artistic level to really test things and to experiment, and to make changes and interact with the process of how we think about contemporary art in the public domain. In temporary exhibitions, ideas of concep-

tual public artworks are discussed, works with a critical standpoint, and sometimes even provocative works are accepted. In recent years, one can say that temporary exhibitions of public artworks have been a test field for how to think about permanent public artworks, as well. One thing worth mentioning here is that much of the discussion about art in public space does not concern artworks exhibited in the public space, but rather interactions within this space. In recent years, the loudest discussions in Sweden have been about works by Anna Odell (*Unknown Woman*), NUG (*Territorial Pissing*) and Pussy Riot (the action in the Salvation Church, Moscow 2012), all of which were based on interaction. In the case of Odell and NUG, most people – including the art world if they even spoke up – were initially very critical towards the artists. Both of them used aspects of the welfare system to make their art. Odell faked a suicide attempt in Stockholm and was criticized for using the resources of the hospital and the police when she was taken to hospital. NUG documented the frenetic tagging of a subway car in Stockholm, done as a kind of performance. The critique: graffiti is not art, it is destruction, and it costs money to clean cars. In the case of Odell, she went through a transformation when people understood that she really had an agenda: discussing the welfare system and how it treats people who have a hard time surviving. In the end, Odell became very popular (outside the art world). In both cases, the art world was not the main place where these things were discussed; the art world was in general very quiet. Paradoxically, support for Pussy Riot has been tremendous in Sweden, and sometimes the same people who criticized Odell, NUG and Vilks for doing provocative things outside the box have been positive towards the actions of Pussy Riot. This support probably has more to do with Sweden's relationship with Russia than with real political support for Pussy Riot and their ideas, or support for the idea of freedom in art.

Conclusions

My remarks should understood more as an imperative to discuss the initial premises that produce the circumstances for art in the public domain. One way to do this is to compare different countries, like Sweden, Poland, Germany and Russia, with each other in order to recognize initial differences. If we start to discuss these things, this will provide a starting point for considering

Calle Holck, *YOU ARE GREAT*, 2012

the idea of quality, which in the end would lead to more interesting artwork, and not only in the public domain. But this also requires increased respect for professional knowledge by people in decision-making positions outside the art world. In the end, this will be crucial for the development of Swedish society and for raising the level of culture in order to survive.

Martin Schibli a curator, critic and lecturer based in Sweden. Worked as curator and director of exhibitions at Kalmar konstmuseum between 2006–2012. During the last decade he curated about 80 exhibitions in eleven countries. Besides curating, he also lectures regularly at universities and art schools.

Ingela Ihrman, *The Giant Water Lily Victoria amazonica blooms. Skälby växthus*, 2012

Festival or no festival?

by Michał Bieniek

In my presentation at the conference *Art in public space – festival or no festival?*, I was supposed to talk about the role and tasks of a curator who doubles as an organizer of events (such as festivals) taking place in public space, and who also commissions artistic projects. Nevertheless, a presentation which preceded mine inspired me to talk about a different topic, in order to oppose it. To offer a counterargument to the theses presented by the speaker before me, I focused on my own 10-year curatorship and organizational experience working in public space in Wrocław during the annual SURVIVAL Art Review festival. I decided to highlight such aspects of my activities as the transiency of artists' works, the partial transparency of some of them, their vulnerability to damage, and a more or less intentional openness to viewers, a quality which makes objects, installations and performances interactive or participatory.
My aim was also to question the very notion of "presentation" or "exhibition" in respect to art in public space, especially "public art", a notion that was often used by speakers.

In the final part of my presentation, which was devoted to organizational failures as well as failures of art curators (such as the work of Hubert Czerepok *Not only good comes from above*, which was taken down just before the opening of the 6th edition of the SURVIVAL Art Review as a result of the intervention of a local rabbi, or Dorota Nieznalska's work *Construction of Race*, which was stolen from the place where it was being exhibited, i.e. the Wrocław stadium, called *Oławka* by fans of the Polish football team WKS Śląsk, who could not accept the image of a fan of a competing football team being displayed on "their grounds"), my aim was to draw attention to the fact that every time art is presented in public space, it should give rise to negotiations or even to conflict, and it should do this by revealing the hidden mechanisms that shape this space. It should raise awareness of the complexity of so-called "property rights", in this case the right to space, reflected both in legislature and in the less obvious symbolic sphere.

The "right to space" also means the right to put down roots, to identify with a place, group, local community, and so on. Even though some of these factors are obviously difficult to predict, it is worth taking them into account before coming up with an artistic proposal for public space. Some of the less obvious, non-institutional mechanisms that shape public space can be revealed only in a confrontation with a new, foreign element, such as a work of art.

This is the logic underlying many sculptures and monuments that have become a part of public space in cities and towns as a result of the actions of authorities and group interests, and which, being products of different ideologies and points of view, are not always uniformly accepted. Therefore, even another monument of John Paul II, strongly opposed by those who are tired of the questionable aesthetics of these works, is more interesting than even the best work of art that remains indifferent to the space it inhabits and the people living in it. The latter works are often placed in museums or galleries, which are devoid of any context and are governed by rules governing the presentation and circulation of art.
The basic reasons for artistic work in public space are context, a willingness to engage in a dialogue, a desire to learn from and about the environment, including, perhaps most importantly, the social environment, and the possibility it offers to negotiate, participate and, in some cases, engage in conflict, provocation, and exposure. In order to have such an effect, art must oftentimes resign from the permanence that makes it subject to the market forces of supply and demand. It must accept transience, fleetingness and the unpredictability of reactions, and appreciate them as important values.

As I mentioned earlier, the switch of focus in my presentation was inspired by the speech of my precursor. He talked about the principles of organizing festivals in public space, where the "exhibition" should be narrowed to a fenced-off or otherwise protected area in order to protect the works. He also postulated limiting the number

of works to a few and, at the same time, limiting the number of artists or "names" taking part in a given event. The presumed result of the above would be increased investment in such art and works and, thanks to this, the works would also be more permanent. These postulates are in line with the growing trend of treating art festivals in public space like traditional exhibitions, a trend which is responsible for increasing the distance between festivals and the areas where they take place. This gives rise to a kind of festival tourism – a situation where the same names and similar works "travel" from one event to another.

This trend has been gaining prominence from the moment art initiatives in public space started to be financed with public funds, later coming into fashion and becoming another offering of modern art museums and galleries that treat this kind of art as an outdoor extension of themselves. As a result, big-picture thinking that takes into account such aspects as the relation of a festival to its environment, is superseded by the logic of supply and demand, with festivals becoming brands and promotional tools for cities and institutions.
However, as dr. Gavin Grindon from Kingston University in London reminds us, a festival can be seen as a critical tool similar to a happening, event or potluck. In the 1960s, politically engaged artistic groups, such as the Second Situationist International or Provo movements, "wanted to create social movements in the West and experimented with various forms of mass actions for this purpose".[1] We are then witnessing a situation which took place earlier in the West, i.e. the redefinition of the ideas underlying festivals and assigning to them roles and principles which contradict their previous roles.
Because both in this text and in my presentation, I adopt a subjective and engaged point of view resulting from my long experience of working in public space, I must express my concern with the changes taking place at the moment and with lack of understanding about the nature of artworks in public space, as they, for certain, neither are nor should be merely "exhibitions" placed at various time intervals in "picturesque" locations which are treated as a simple alternative to an art gallery or its extension.

As it happens, as I work on this text, the 11th edition of the SURVIVAL Art Review is drawing to a close. Below is a fragment of a review of this event, excerpted from an anonymous blog called *Krytycykultury.pl*. It illustrates perfectly the way of thinking I described above, a point of view based on a fundamental misunderstanding: "What worried us about this year's SURVIVAL is the fact that many works of art did not survive for even 24 hours in an undamaged condition. Sure enough, some of the onlookers walking along the Boulevard engaged in interaction with the works of art so intensely, that the latter were forced to give up and change their form. It is a pity that they could be seen at their best only on the first day of the exhibition. It does not suffice to open an exhibition, it is equally important to protect and take care of the exhibited works all the time".[2]
Is there anything else to add? Maybe this: I believe that each trace, each intervention in a work of art exhibited in public space constitutes one more text (and test), a voice, a point of view. Even acts of vandalism and other interventions (some of which are prevented and some not) which upset the artists and organizers are important and should be seen as valuable, as they, in the end, provide a diagnosis of the condition of public space, presenting us with a true and clear picture, which is difficult to obtain in any other way. Obviously, the knowledge we gain is not always welcome, this picture is not always beautiful, and our intentions are not always as honest and fair as we would like to believe them to be.

Michał Bieniek studied at the Faculty of Painting and Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław. Since 2010 he has been a Research Student by Project at the Curating Contemporary Art Department of the Royal College of Art in London, UK.

References:

1. I use here a text by Gavin Grindon which has not yet been published and which was the outcome of the conference *Polish art. In public space*, which took place in the Courtauld Institute in London on December 6, 2012.
2. http://www.krytycykultury.pl/2013/06/11-przeglad-sztuki-survival-trzeba.html, accessed 29.06.2013.

Everyday life of the festival

by Julita Wójcik

I started my lecture with the statement that I am a practitioner, a visual artist, for whom public space is the space most suitable for making art. I have been working this way for 13 years, and this way of working has deepened the understanding between me as an artist and those who have come across my art in the street. In the last few years, artistic performances in public spaces have started to be associated with festivals. This has introduced a new quality which is as challenging for artists as it is rewarding. The first advantage that comes to mind is access to the city's main squares and central places. Until now, art has crept into areas which were neglected areas, on the outskirts, and quite invisible. Festivals give artists an opportunity to show their art in highly visible spaces, at the same time demanding that their performances be spectacular. Secondly, these performances must be temporary, although the examples I have selected show that artists are often tempted to extend the life of these works or make them permanent. I call this negotiating or entering into a dialogue with the viewers, as I have never wanted my works to become monuments. They are processual, and their permanent change is for me the most important aspect.

Bogactwo (Wealth)

As part of the TAK! Festival, I prepared a project called *Bogactwo (Wealth)*. The festival was organized in a public space of the city as part of the National Cultural Program of the Polish EU Presidency in 2011. The program was prepared by the gallery Rondo Sztuki and financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Audiovisual Institute. Additionally, all of these cultural events took place during the competition for the European Capital of Culture, in which Katowice presented itself as Katowice – city of gardens! This city that owes its birth to the coal industry has taken a new course for the future – saying "no" to pits and "yes" to gardens. I decided that my project should reflect this parting of the city with coal, but at the same time, pay respects to this natural mineral which played a central role in Katowice. Wealth – a range of goods of great value consumed by individuals – became a mineral, both literally during the performance and metaphorically – the mineral that used to attract business and provided employment for thousands of people, giving them a good life during the communist period of Polish history, and that now has become a source of nostalgia, disappointment and hard feelings, as some coal mines close, while others thrive thanks to effective management. Katowice is once more a European industrial town on the threshold of transformation.

At the Powstańcow Śląskich monument, I arranged five tonnes of coal into the word b o g a c t w o (in English wealth) and left it to the disposal of the residents, announcing via the mass media that they could take some of the coal with them, and that it would be recorded as an art project. As the finances designated for my project would allow me to buy only two tonnes of coal, together with the festival's organizer we sought other support. Thanks to the fact that in Silesia everyone has something to do with coal mining, we managed to find a sponsor. Katowicki Holding Węglowy gave us five tonnes of high-quality, anthracite coal. Another goal was to involve former coal-miners in shovelling the coal in exchange for a day's pay. Even though a few miners showed interest, none of them turned up, but some people did come to haul the coal away. So, we finally got to work together with the gallery's employees and those who had come to help lay out the coal. After four hours, the word b o g a c t w o (wealth) was formed. It immediately started to disappear. Despite the organizers' fears that the coal would vanish immediately, the process lasted three days – exactly as long as the festival. The organizers were worried about exposing what makes the city infamous i.e. people stealing coal from freight trains or creating illegal coal-pits, called "poverty-pits" in Poland. What the organizers aimed at was to distance the candidate for the title of the European Capital of Culture from anything related to coal.

Bogactwo became a major media success. Apart from the national media, those connected with the mining industry also visited the site. Coal featured in conversa-

tions about those who worked in the mines, those who escaped this tough labour, about closed mines, and about those that are now reopened as museums of 19th-century technology.
On the third and final day, when the coal was gone, and the place was full of ashes, there suddenly appeared large crowds of colourfully dressed people. Whole families flooded this public space, a space which was full of billboards advertising a new 3D film about the Smurfs. The remnants of coal were ignored, trampled under peoples' feet. When you perform in public space, you never know what may happen. I simply could not have dreamt of a better ending for my performance. Coal is out, consumers are in. Thanks to the festival I had just taken part in, I had achieved all three goals. The performance was ephemeral and disappeared after three days, I was given the main square in the city, and I also formed a huge word from five tonnes of coal, so it was also spectacular. The only thing I did not do was give in to the pressure of the organizers to alleviate the critical tone of my performance. Happily, they were in a hurry, so they did not have enough time to properly work on me.

The mound of an unknown artist
In 2012, at the invitation of the Artloop festival in Sopot, and as part of an artists' exchange with Cracow's ArtBoom, Jacek Niegoda and I tried to persuade city decision makers to let us make a *Mound of an Unknown Artist under the Mound of Krak* in Kraków.

It is hard to imagine a bigger creative failure than to be an unknown artist. Unknown means unrecognized, undiscovered, forgotten. Does it mean a bad artist? Galleries, museums, albums and books are full of works signed: unknown artist.
We know who Krakus and Wanda were, but who was Gallus Anonymous, who recorded the birth of the Polish state? Without all those people who wrote, sang, painted and sculpted there would be no art. It does not matter what their names and surnames were – what matters is the genuine beauty they created. Let's prove, calling for freedom and solidarity, that anyone can become an unknown artist. Next to the signs of freedom and solidarity, let's erect a permanent sign of art.

Julita Wójcik and Jacek Niegoda

The mound was created within a week, but it was accompanied by protests from the authorities of the Podgórze district (where it was erected), who had it removed after less than three months.

The Rainbow
Since the beginning of June 2012, Savior Square in Warsaw has been host to *The Rainbow*, another of my works. Having been set on fire a few times, it still stirs lively debate on the role of such art in a city and its impact on viewers.

Julita Wójcik a sculptor and initiator of artistic actions. Graduate of the Faculty of Sculpture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk in 1997. Works in public collections: Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw, Museum of Art in Łódź, National Museum in Warsaw, Arsenał Gallery in Białystok, Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art in Szczecin, HorseCross in Perth, Scotland, and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.


Julita Wójcik, *The Rainbow*, 2012
The Independant Day, November 11, 2013

On the political economy of public art projects

by Kuba Szreder

While dissecting the apparatus of public art projects from the position of the expanded political and moral economy, it is important to consider several fundamental questions. One needs to ask what is produced and disseminated and how? What are the terms and conditions of this process and its internal contradictions? Who partakes in production and exchange and from what position? What types of labour are involved? Who is rewarded and who is not? Is the success of some related to the peril of others? In other words, do we experience exploitation, and if yes, who exploits whom? What kind of critiques and justifications does this situation prompt? How is the system legitimized?

Public art is an interesting case of cultural production characteristic of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello call the "new spirit of capitalism". In fact, public art can hardly be imagined outside project-making, an organizational mechanism specific to a networked world of flexible accumulation. Every project is only a temporary, yet highly effective undertaking, a momentary burst of activity, a nomadic flash of mobilization. A project links agents and pools resources in one node of the network, freeing them to migrate to a new enterprise after the current task is executed. In this mode of production, the global art network plays a vital role as a means of creating connections between project makers and their potential employers. It is the natural habitat of freelance artists, curators and other art professionals, who roam the globe searching for possibilities to realize their projects. Both precarious and enthusiastic, these self-entrepreneurs are guns for hire in a new symbolic economy, lingering on the verge between vocational involvement, disillusion and depression. They network to establish connections with commissioning institutions, localized art scenes, engaged publics or wider constituencies. Though every project is a marvel of human interaction, a temporary burst of connectivity and a genuinely collective enterprise, every project maker moves between projects as an individualized and atomized particle, free floating on the waves of a globalized art world, competing for access to opportunities.

The art network is ridden by complex reputational hierarchies that determine how resources and opportunities are spread. Their distribution is overridden by vast inequalities between what Gregory Sholette calls "artistic dark matter" and a galaxy of art celebrities. The flow of resources and various forms of capital (money, reputations, social connections) is determined by a peculiar division of symbolic, technical, administrative and emotional labour. Partakers and stakeholders are stratified according to several criteria, based on differences between mobile and immobile, desired and disposable, famous and neglected, recognized and invisible, authorial and anonymous. These distinctions are quintessential for the reproduction of injustice embedded in the networked mode of artistic production. They constitute foundations for networked exploitation between individuals and professional categories, including artists, curators, technicians, assistants, gallerists and administrators. The systems of exploitation are possibly less direct than in the past in industrial capitalism, however, paradoxically they result in extreme inequalities. The globalized art world is dominated by a tiny but extremely mobile elite that amasses disproportionate wealth and garnishes global reputations. At the same time, the majority of cultural producers remains poor, locked in the lower strata of the network, invisible and anonymous.

Kuba Szreder, a graduate of the Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University (Cracow). Curator of the Free / Slow University of Warsaw. As part of his curatorial practice he organises public art and research projects, convenes seminars and conferences, writes articles and edits publications.

Greta Weibull, *The Jenny Nyström Edition*, 2012

Visual Seismographs. Art festivals as an essential part of urban culture

by Bettina Pelz

Temporary exhibition formats in public space have a long-standing tradition in the arts. They respond to a world in constant change and have become an essential rendezvous to display and to discuss contemporary art. Internationally a heterogenic multitude of formats has been established. Although they gather under the roof of the same communication terms and channels, and often even share the same funding sources, in their specifics they often have little in common. Their characteristics are engendered in a mix of guiding interests of participating institutions and communities, leading personalities and funding partners. With their intertwining aesthetic approaches, conceptual agreements, economic and technical abilities, spatial options as well as communication and publishing qualities, their specifics form and define unique and often incomparable frameworks for participating artists, curators and visitors. As a format, they match the zeitgeist where new spatial flows and sedimentations associated with digital networks, transnational relationships, globalized economies and universal ecological needs are dissolving any simple equivalence between city, citizenship and urban space. In the mix of domains and interests, each festival needs a closer look to understand its specifics and qualities. From the Venice Biennial, founded in 1895, to the Gdańsk Festival *Narrations – Installations and Interventions for Public Space*, founded in 2009, most of them include miscellaneous urban spaces for staging artworks – sometimes in addition and sometimes as a counterpart to art institutions. Leaving the white cube and the black box for projects and festivals, urban space, and its connotations and atmospheres can become artistic materials. Artists, who deal with urban situations, react to complex processes that precede artistic interventions. They maintain the idea of collecting and sorting as a form of artistic practice, and they develop a special attention to found details, signs and systems, frames and contexts. The amalgam, developed over time, in which ideas and intentions, functions and malfunctions are intertwined, is what interests them. Function and wear, existing materials and the implemented language of urban planning and architecture are the subjects of their analysis.

Temporary interventions experiment with given situations, existing architectures, sensory perception and allegorical associations. In projects and festivals, they show with often minimal or non-invasive means how architectural ensembles and urban spaces can be used or viewed differently. Artists read into the aesthetic vocabulary that is visible in the juxtaposition and superimposition of different times, interests and compasses. As much as the choice of space is part of the artwork, the artistic quality of the interventions develops along the depth of focus and artistic sovereignty, which the artist can generate working on a chosen location.

For the viewer, the known space serves as a recognizable reference. It becomes a connecting link between the everyday situation and the artistic intervention, and functions as an anchor point to an artwork which might, at first sight, be only fragmentary or partially understandable. This moment of dysfunction contributes significantly to the experience that blind spots of everyday perception are resolved and awareness is reset. The familiarity with the environment creates a kind of security and forms an Ariadne's thread to explore the artistic position.

Artists who prefer the complex structure of urban space over the more neutral white cube, are characterized by a keen sense for the relationship of continuity and creativity. They contribute to the idea of regarding urban spaces as open spaces and frames of possibilities. They render visible not only opportunities but also deficiencies, which is why temporary art interventions are often interpreted as a criticism of urban development and architectural conventions.

The focus on the interchange of space and its connotations with artistic practice corresponds with the contemporary needs of urban development, ecological awareness and community engagement as much as with an ongoing interdisciplinary dialog between the arts, sciences and technological advances. The present festival formats act as an ephemeral meeting point linking vari-

ous domains having a share in the public sphere. In their ubiquity, they influence the co-constitutional process of public scope, public values and public practice.

The plethora of festivals can be valued as a seismograph of sociocultural activity in the public domain responding to new spatial flows, cross-cultural and trans-national relationships, which are asking for ongoing negotiations between public space, political culture and civic responsibility. The growing number of festivals worldwide indicates that no alternative has been found yet. Temporary co-operation, a variable set of partners, changeable focus, flexible approaches, and limited duration all seem to respond to the need for open spaces away from the institutional conventions and to accommodate the potential to reflect the state of the art as well as its cultural relevance. What is missing is the idea of how to evaluate this.

Bettina Pelz, since 2000 the curatorial work of Bettina Pelz has been dedicated to interdisciplinary projects in urban space, postindustrial environments and world cultural heritage sites.

Anastasia Ryabova, *The Object is Under Protection*, 2012

BETA TEST I AND II

Type of project: public space project

Where: Kalmar konstmuseum, Kalmar, Sweden

When: 07 May–04 September 2011
17 September–20 November 2011

Artists: Gustav Hellberg (SE), *In Your Head*,
San Donato Group (Oleg Blyablyas, Aleksey Chebykin, Irina Chesnokova, Evgeny Umansky) (RU), *IKOF / Ingvar Kamprad Order Friendship*

Curator: Martin Schibli (SE) **Assistants of the Curator:** Ola Carlsson (SE)

Organizer: Kalmar konstmuseum, Kalmar, Sweden

DO WE REALLY NEED YET ANOTHER PIECE OF PUBLIC ART?

Type of project: conference

Where: Ölands Folkhögskola, Kalmar, Sweden

When: 07–08 May 2012

Speakers: Oscar Guermouche (SE), Gustav Hellberg (SE/GE), Johanna Karlin (SE), Helle Kvamme (SE), Martin Schibli (SE), Łukasz Surowiec (PL), Aneta Szyłak (PL), Vladimir Us (MD), Lars Vilks (SE), Krzysztof Żwirblis (PL), Agnieszka Wołodźko (PL)

Curator: Martin Schibli (SE) **Assistants of the Curator:** Ola Carlsson(SE)

Organizer: Kalmar konstmuseum, Kalmar, Sweden

ART IN PUBLIC SPACE – WHATEVER THAT IS?

Type of project: public space project

Where: various places in Kalmar, Sweden

When: 19 May–19 August 2012

Artists: Pawel Althamer (PL), *Promień Słońca (Sunbeam)*
Karolina Breguła (PL), *A city tour with explanation of public art works*
Heath Bunting (GB), *Lawfull Identities and Tree-climbing workshops*
Klas Eriksson (SE), *Lost*
Gustav Hellberg (SE), *Second inauguration of In Your Head*
Calle Holck (SE), *YOU ARE GREAT*
Ingela Ihrman (SE), *The Giant Waterlily Victoria Amazonica blossoms*
Johanna Karlin (SE), *Rudiments in Transformation*
Helle Kvamme (SE), *The Artists Eye*
Emmeli Person(SE), *Celebration of the Roundabout*
Jörgen Platzer (SE), *Vehikel WOL0TFF35W2001259*
Anastasia Ryabova (RU), *The Object is Under Protection*
Greta Weibull (SE), *The Jenny Nyström Edition*
Krzysztof Żwirblis (PL), *Social Museum*

Panel discussion speakers: Heath Bunting (GB), Åsa Elzen (SE/GER), Marina Naprushkina (BY), Stanisław Ruksza (PL), Martin Schibli (SE)

Curator: Martin Schibli (SE)
Assistants of the Curator: Emmeli Person (SE)

Organizer: Kalmar konstmuseum, Kalmar, Sweden

Art in public space – whatever that is. Kalmar konstmuseum's participation in Art Line 2011 to 2012.

Text edited and compiled by Ola Carlsson

The public art projects that Kalmar konstmuseum has collaborated on within the Art Line partnership have been diverse, ranging from installations to workshops and from guided tours to large conferences, but everything was about public art. What has become clear during the course of the work is that the notion of "public" is not very clear cut, nor, naturally, is the notion of public art.

In this text, we will look at some examples of what has been done in Kalmar over the years in relation to art in the public space. These projects represent different ways of viewing what public space is and different ways of working within that space. Descriptions of the individual projects have been left out of this text due to space limitations, but they included Heath Bunting's *Lawful Identities* and his tree climbing workshop, Klas Eriksson's performance *Lost*, Karolina Breguła's guided tour of public art in Kalmar, Emmeli Person's *Celebration of the Roundabout*, a collaboration between Vladimir Us and Öland's folkhögskola entitled *Not Here, Helle Kvamme's Konstnärens Öga - Välkommen In*, Anastasia Ryabova's *The Object is Under Protection*, Jörgen Platzer's *Vehikel WOL0TFF35W2001259*, Calle Holck's *YOU ARE GREAT* and Greta Weibull's *The Jenny Nystrom Edition*. The sheer number of artworks presented, especially during *An Exhibition in the Public Space - Whatever that is?* offered an incredible opportunity for the community to experience artworks that explored the public space by means of different methods.

Gustav Hellberg (SE), *In Your Head*

In the spring of 2011, Kalmar konstmuseum held the exhibition *The Return of the Losers*, which inaugurated Gustav Hellberg's installation *In Your Head*, the first of many public pieces to be shown from the Art Line project.

A door is slightly opened with light emitting from it. From the space behind the door, you can hear a male voice in English, with a slight German accent, repeatedly asking the question "Is it safe"?

The artwork is placed in the vicinity of one of Kalmar konstmuseum's entrances. A segment of the building's characteristic façade has been dislocated and protrudes half a meter from the wall. In the middle of the segment, there is a door, slightly opened. The door is fixed in position. Right inside, there is an arched wall. Within the space created, fluorescent lights have been mounted that cast an indirect and even light against the wall. There are no shadows or details visible inside the door, making it impossible to guess the size of the room. Within the room, a pair of hidden speakers have also been mounted. A stereo system plays a repeating MP3 audio file. The audio is borrowed from a torture scene from the movie *Marathon Man* (1976), where the actor Laurence Olivier, with his soft voice and pleasant intonation, repeatedly asks his torture victim, played by Dustin Hoffman, "Is it safe"*?* The whole scene is used but the audio has been edited so that you can only hear Laurence Olivier's voice. Sounds from the torture and Hoffman's answers have been cut out.

The artist portrays a contemporary phenomenon: our having developed common notions about security and safety. We define the sense of security and safety by its absence. We do not want to feel insecure or unsafe. Actual threats to our security or safety are mixed with the fear of eventually being exposed to something unexpected or unwanted. We add to our own fear a collective worry which leads to an extended cycle of apprehension. Primordial and sometimes real fears mix with fictitious ones, and prejudice arises, which, in turn, generates even more insecurity. This is a social progression where human beings, without any appar-

ent self-contemplation or self-criticism, and in conjunction with an arrogant ignorance, have created an introspective, protectionist and thus intolerant view of society. The unknown is dangerous and is observed as a threat. What is it that we are afraid of?

The installation was made as a temporary installation, but Kalmar konstmuseum bought it from the artist after the exhibition, making it a permanent piece and a part of the museum collection. It is now both a public art piece connected to the museum structure and also works as one of many artworks inside the park surrounding Kalmar konstmuseum. It had a second inauguration during the exhibition *An Exhibition in the Public Space - Whatever That Is?* in 2012.

The San Donato Group (RU),
IKOF/Ingvar Kamprad Order Friendship
As part of the opening of the exhibition *A Complicated Relation part II* on September 17th 2011, The San Donato Group arranged a free ride from Kalmar konstmuseum to IKEA in Kalmar in a car similar to the one Ingvar Kamprad claims he drives.

By decree of the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, the founder of IKEA Ingvar Kamprad was conferred the Order of Friendship of the Russian Federation for his input in the development of commercial, economic and investment relations between Russia and Sweden.

It was a purposeful decision of the artists to mix different social and cultural meanings in the project, such as the desire of people to possess or use the everyday belongings of celebrities; a juxtaposition of the mass and the unique, the mundane and the sacral through a forced communication between market and museum. One such aspired-for object is the private car of Ingvar Kamprad, a 1993 Volvo 240. The artists and Kalmar konstmuseum sent a purchase request to the IKEA office in Switzerland in order to use the car in a public art project in the entrepreneur's homeland. Ingvar Kamprad personally replied and stated that even though he was glad the request was sent he definitely wanted to keep the car for himself. An exact copy of the car was bought and is now used in this project.

The project plays on people's unconscious desire to acquire the qualities of a star through contact with an object belonging to a celebrity. Ingvar Kamprad, one of the most famous natives of the Småland province, is by all means such a person.

According to a long-established Russian tradition, IKEA offers free transfers to its visitors. Similarly, the project authors provided the same shuttle service from the Museum to IKEA and back, in Kamprad's private car, thus drawing a metaphorical connection between the notions of consumption of culture and the culture of consumption. Each passenger also got one free museum ticket as a bonus as thanks for their participation. The interviews can be viewed online on the Art Line website.

Do We Really Need Another Piece of Public Art?
– Towards a new approach to art in public spaces
In the spring of 2012, Kalmar konstmuseum and Ölands folkhögskola arranged a two-day conference on public art. The conference raised questions regarding art and its relationship with what is called "public space". There has been huge interest in art in public spaces since the 1990s, and it seems to have been increasing over the last few years. Including temporary public artwork is a standard procedure today for most art biennales or larger exhibitions on contemporary art. We have also seen yearly conferences and increased interest from artists in doing projects in the public space in Sweden and elsewhere. Still, despite this increased interest, it seems to be hard to form a consensus on the fundamental basics of how to approach the process.

Topics addressed at the conference included art projects that work in the public space, the insufficiency of a single definition of the public space when working in different cultural contexts, and different ways to work in the public space based on the application of contemporary theories of art. Most participants came from Sweden and Poland, which yielded different views on the topic. The speakers were artists and people involved in the realization of art projects, such as curators or other cultural producers.

Speakers: Oscar Guermouche (SE), Gustav Hellberg (SE/GE), Johanna Karlin (SE), Helle Kvamme (SE), Martin Schibli (SE), Łukasz Surowiec (PL), Aneta Szyłak (PL), Vladimir Us (MD), Lars Vilks (SE), Krzysztof Żwirblis (PL), Agnieszka Wołodźko (PL)

An Exhibition in the Public Space - Whatever That Is?
An Exhibition in the Public Space - Whatever That Is?, which opened on May 17th 2012, was all about public space. But what is this really? In Sweden, when you discuss public art, you are generally talking about permanent artworks, oftentimes placed outdoors, for example, on roundabouts. But public spaces can also be things like libraries, museums or private shopping malls, or refer to the media and the digital sphere. In what different kinds of conditions will art work in these different circumstances? The exhibition aimed to ask questions about what is possible for art in the public sphere.

Some artworks in the exhibition remained somewhat invisible, and some could hardly be recognized as art. Some only lasted for a couple of minutes, some lasted all summer or lingered even longer. Below you can read about some of the artworks in the exhibition.

A broad notion of public space made the exhibition reach out to more people than most contemporary art exhibitions, and also helped reach people who generally will not visit museums or other art institutions. Sometimes, experiencing public art is something outside the realm of personal choice.

Artists involved: Karolina Breguła (PL), Heath Bunting (UK), Klas Eriksson (SE), Gustav Hellberg (SE), Calle Holck (SE), Ingela Ihrman (SE), Johanna Karlin (SE), Helle Kvamme (SE), Emmeli Person (SE), Jörgen Platzer (SE), Anastasia Ryabova (RU), Vladimir Us (MD), Greta Weibull (SE), Krzysztof Żwirblis (PL)

Ingela Ihrman (SE)
Ingela Ihrman from Kalmar works with questions about human beings' relationship to nature, the body and the exotic. She contributed to the exhibition in the early summer with a piece about the history of the giant water lily and Skälby Greenhouse. The piece was done as part of her Master's degree from Konstfack, Stockholm.

The audience was invited to participate and watch two performances in the tropical part of the greenhouse; on Friday night the white water lily bloomed and on Saturday night the flower had turned pink. The head botanist at Skälby greenhouse, Cecilia Kilbride, informed the audience and answered questions about the water lily. The documentation from the performance and a folder named *Tropikerna 1 – 4* remained in the greenhouse for the rest of the summer.

The invitation:

Skälby greenhouse's tropical department will extend its opening hours to proudly show the giant water lily Victoria's spectacular nocturnal blooming. The public has the unique opportunity to see a bud develop into a fully blooming flower. On the first night, the water lily is white and fills the air with a sweet exotic scent. On the second night of blooming, the flower has turned a deep pink.

Krzysztof Żwirblis (PL), ***Social Museum***
During the week starting August 12th, the artist Krzysztof Żwirblis's project involved creating a social museum in the Bergskristallen apartment building in Oxhagen, Kalmar. With the help of a movie and workshops that explored the history of Oxhagen, its residents and their creativity, the artist and his team hoped to establish contact to open up the stories that are hidden inside the walls. The end result was an exhibition and a movie that was shown to the residents of Oxhagen.

Żwirblis calls for everyone to be their own museum. We all tell our own story, a story about what brought us to where we are today. Stories can also express what we choose to surround ourselves with, or what we choose to be clear in our creative expression. These kinds of private and personal expressions are exactly what Żwirblis wants to bring to the public space.

The project finished on August 19th with an exhibition in the backyard of Bergskristallen with objects and creative works that represented the residents' stories. A movie showing the interviews done during the project was also shown.

Kalmar konstmuseum invited Żwirblis to do his *Social Museum* in a Swedish context. This is the first time the artist has done something like this outside Poland. The interest from the museum's perspective, and the exploration of public space, if you will, was about whether you could move such a project to a new context.

San Donato Group, *IKOF/ Ingvar Kamprad Order of Friendship*, 2012

Vladimir Us (MD), *Björnhovda 36*

The work consists of a post box with the names of Viorel, Adrian and Oana printed on it. Viorel, Adrian and Oana are Romanian guest workers who every year spend six to seven seasonal working months in Sweden on the island of Öland. There, they work in a field, preparing it for cultivation. They fallow it and then cultivate strawberries and leeks, harvest them, and, when needed, participate in other agricultural work or help around the farm. Accepting to work for a smaller wage, still much better than what they would get in Romania for the same kind of work, they guarantee the economic success of Swedish agriculture.

Like many other workers (Poles, Slovakians) coming to Sweden, Viorel, Adrian and Oana feel alien, but none of them wants to settle there. Only some seasonal workers manage to integrate, learn Swedish, make friends and eventually get their own household, albeit seasonal, in the country. This can take ten, fifteen or more years. Most of them live in temporary lodgings or in caravans, two or four to a room, with no actual opportunities to set up a more comfortable place for themselves and, in the end, they return to their lives in their own countries, where their children, wives and friends are waiting.

The post box with a real postal address and with the names Viorel, Adrian and Oana printed on it was installed in Färjestaden with the permission of Jörgen Gottfridsson, the owner of the farm where Viorel, Adrian and Oana have been working for several years. It was an attempt to give them a point of reference in Sweden – new coordinates where they can be found or contacted. On the one hand, the post box relates to a steady place that might make them feel better, encouraging them to appropriate the space where they spend half of their lives and to make them get a better perspective and end their nomad life style, enforced on them by unfavourable economic conditions in their place of origin, and making them, at the same time, feel more responsible, likewise towards typically Swedish issues. On the other hand, the project aimed at providing visibility to seasonal workers and their poor working conditions, and at attracting the attention of the local community to their situation.

Viorel, Adrian, Oana
Björnhovdagatan 36
38635 Färjestaden
SWEDEN

Johanna Karlin *Rudiments in Transformation*

Decks of wood were built on three different locations in Kalmar. The locations were isolated, deserted or in between societal functions. They all took shape in relation to their spaces.

***Space 1* – outside the former Rifa factory**

A 20m² "island" of wild nature has forced its way through the asphalt, a piece of unpruned landscape.

The caretaker still cuts the grass in the area surrounding the factory, outside the fenced off, typically 1970s factory. There are plans in place to tear down the factory and build a residential area there instead.

A deck was built along the short side of the island. It was adapted to the space's shape and size and built in an L-shape. It encouraged consideration of the space surrounding it, as well as of the deck itself. A certain confusion arises, as it appears logical, well built, new and recognizable, while, at the same time, it has lost its function as a deck in someone's home (that holds at least one lounge suite).

***Space 2* – The shortcut**

Alongside the parking lots close to a sports centre and a residential area, a pathway has been closed off by a strip of grass. The space is not used for anything in particular. Right next to this almost 300m² large "rudiment", there is a track created as a shortcut by all the pedestrians and bikers in the area.

The deck is six meters long and follows the shortcut's diagonal angle to the parking lot. The shape looks like a rhombic bridge. The deck does not interfere with the manmade shortcut but sits alongside it. It corresponds well with all typically municipal functions that can be seen in our public environment, like grass planes, asphalt, galvanized steel railings, bushes, signs, fences, parking lots and so on. With its simple "municipal" look, it can almost be seen as something that actually belongs there.

***Space 3* – The field**

The field, the former pasture and industrial remainder between residential areas and industry was chosen as the third of the places in Johanna Karlin's project. Within the field, an uneven surface of asphalt has pushed through the vegetation. The surface corresponds with *Space 1*, but is

inverted. Here is an asphalt island on vegetation instead of the other way around. Cars continuously pass by at high speeds, adding the constant noise of traffic. The place is relatively large if you take in all of the field, but the piece of asphalt that pushes through is small, unorganized in shape, surrounded by weeds and close to a romantic tree. This was the smallest deck.

A year later, the field was gone. No romantic tree and no piece of asphalt. Certainly no wooden deck. Yet another parking lot was taking shape. The plans to place the deck there were well grounded, with permission having been obtained from both the municipality and the police, but they never informed the artist about the plans for the space.

"I sincerely hope that my project did not have anything to do with this change." – Johanna Karlin

Paweł Althamer, *Promień Sońca (Sunbeam)*
A music video in collaboration with NRM, Amaroka and Paprika Korps.
June 2nd – August 19th, third floor Kalmar konstmuseum realised by Open Art Projects as a part of the 7th Berlin Biennal.

The Polish artist Paweł Althamer, born in 1967, is among the biggest names in contemporary art today. He has participated in several biennials and major exhibitions, including a solo show at Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin 2012. A significant part of his art practice raises questions that touch on the social interaction between people and what this means for society.

In Minsk, the capital of Belarus, a temporary meeting between a few friends is seen as an illegal assembly. In Minsk, you can end up in jail just because you applaud on the street. In Minsk, the government tries to rigorously control everything. Despite this, 150 people dressed in golden suits marched a few kilometres to welcome the sun. An act that liberated them from fear while walking toward new hope and a better future. The day before the march, bands like Amaroka, Parika Korps and NRM played a concert, during which NRM played a special song written for this project, Igor Znyk. The end result was a music video presented at the exhibition at Kalmar konstmuseum. Realized by Open Art Projects as a part of the seventh Berlin Biennial.

Coordinator: Magda Materna
Production: Maryna Czplińska and Piotr Klueu
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Finishing words
As the museum continues to work with its regular exhibitions and public art, we take with us what these exercises have taught us from collaborations with artists and art institutions and from the public. Not being closed off by the walls of the museum building, both literary and figuratively, makes Kalmar konstmuseum more interesting and perhaps more unexpected. In public art, the notion of what defines art in the audience changes, just as the audience changes. Perhaps to dismiss an artwork as "just art" becomes impossible when the artworks are created outside the general sphere of art and a general art audience. The uninitiated become at least somewhat initiated, whether they want to or not. In many ways, the notion of what is public is not that clear cut, which we have seen in the artworks, as well. And the museum itself also forms a public space, an important realization for everyone to consider.

Ola Carlsson, creative project manager, Gothenburg, Sweden. In 2011-2012 he worked as a curator, translator, writer, etc. at Kalmar Konstmuseum. Currently, he is a freelancer and project manager (Glasarvet).

Klas Eriksson, *Lost*, 2012

Risks of exposure

by dr. Catharina Gabrielsson

There is a thin line between public and private, just as there is between art and life, and perhaps it is the way this line is articulated that explains the ability of certain artworks to move us, emotionally as well as intellectually. Submersed, as we are, in a world replete with expressions, representations, claims and opinions, it seems that the art of making distinctions is now more crucial than ever. Captured by a film in the Art Line online archive, *The Best Things in Life are Free* (2002) – a 2:17 minute piece featuring a masked shoplifter whose movements are recorded as if using a surveillance technique – I am led onto other works by Nug and Pike that similarly seem to address these thin lines of distinction. In one of their more recent pieces, *It's so Fresh I Can't Take it* (2007), the setting is a station in the Stockholm underground system. What we see is a body thrashing in space, compulsively holding onto a spray can that seems to have acquired autonomous power, throwing the person this way and that whilst leaving violent scribbles on the tiled walls and floors. It only lasts a few minutes: an explosive act of physicality bursting forth in an interstitial space-time, leaving incomprehensible and indelible traces of writing. Rather than being represented by tags, symbols or otherwise intelligible images, "graffiti" here is reduced to its bare essentials: the making of lines as evidence for a depersonalized presence in generic public space. The settings employed by Nug and Pike – the supermarket, the underground, the railway tracks, the digital screen – are defined by technology, infrastructure and consumption; a hyper-striated urban space marked by surveillance, zero-tolerance, and the austerity of neoliberal urbanism.

What arises through films like these is a precise and complex articulation of our present condition, as bodies and political subjects, notwithstanding our particular identities as artists, public offenders, or normal law-abiding citizens. Framed in a recent publication as *metagraffiti,* what is held in common by these "grafitti art films" (and what justifies the "meta" term)[1] is a self-reflexive gaze, one distant from its own practice, yet embodied and informed by it. In as much as graffiti remains a sub-culture, transgressing the line between public and private, and blurring distinctions between art and life, it remains excluded from the realm of what is "proper", but nevertheless illustrates the kind of fragility I would like to forefront here. The playful and ironic enactments performed by Nug and Pike reveal the dangers of going public: the risks you run when exposing yourself to the outside world whilst attempting to put your indelible mark on it. Whether writing on the backside of doors in public lavatories, inventing personas by putting tags on walls in unreachable places, or contributing to the elaborate semiotic registers of large-scale painted public "pieces", the motivating force behind these practices clearly transgresses the simple desire to communicate. Rather, the desire (and the thrill) seems directed towards attaining an absolute self-expression that is not only dependent on being seen by others but on absolute recognition. There is a yearning for belonging contained in most of these practices, some of them entailing a sophisticated system of sub-cultural coding and peer appraisal; a yearning that surely runs parallel to all individualization processes. But it is only when (re)presented through a distant and self-reflexive gaze – transmitting equal measures of desperation, wit and irony – that such practices are brought to a level of general understanding that allows them to be shared and reflected upon by others. The self-reflexive gaze is what turns them into art, and moreover, what makes them public, dislodging them from their original settings in a closed and internal system of self-referentiality.

Basically, as once noted by the philosopher Nancy Fraser in her reflections on "actually existing democracy" (beyond abstract rhetoric and idealisations), what remains as criteria for a discussion to be public is that it concerns all members of society. That is to say, the decisive element of what is public or not is linked to issues of communality. But there is a problem in how we tend to think of public space as an entity in its own respect, as an object or significant "out there". We readily come up with examples of spaces and localities that seem to fall under this heading, but things get more difficult when we

are pressed to say what these places have in common, and hence what decisively defines them as public rather than private. Much has been said about the privatization and commercialization of public space in Western societies, yet comparatively little on how the private is made public through "personalised" media, communication technologies and the undermining of personal integrity that by now is a job requirement.[2] The "destruction" of public space is thus also a destruction of private space, or rather, of values and practices that historically have been mapped onto certain spaces and thereby associated to an array of meanings ranging from the existential to the political. But it must be stressed that divisions between private and public are socio-historical constructions. Rather than constituting universal or timeless ordering devices that reappear whenever and wherever human beings co-exist, public and private take on different meanings and forms of expression in different times and contexts. As categories they are fluid, dynamic and transitory; their boundaries subject to constant and sometimes violent negotiations. Moreover, the dividing line is only partly maintained by material means, more often being determined by social norms, legal regulations and economic conditions. Walls are in themselves but a reflection of the imaginary institutions of society that, increasingly today, are being put under pressure by totalizing tendencies and regimes of repression. We cannot address "public space" without also addressing the private.

Thus, there is a thin line between private and public, just as there is between art and life, and it seems to me that what the best pieces do is to address that line by giving it singularity: density, content and setting. I am consciously adopting another language here, one spoken some 50 years ago when artists first broke out of their "cultural confinements" to seek a more direct and obtrusive relation to the everyday. It was people like Robert Smithson and Donald Judd who spoke of "best pieces", and who contributed to a discourse that revolved around re-thinking the identity, significance and legitimacy of art exposed to (what was coined by Rosalind E. Krauss as) "the expanded field". After all, if artists were now free to use any material, adopt any medium and claim expertise in anything at all, it necessarily also brought about a whole series of questions to do with the conditions for passing judgement and the art of making of distinctions. Much of this involved a quest to find the limits of art in relation to everything else: objects, phenomena, practices and skills in the surrounding environment. It was through their engagement with "real places, real people" (as suggested by Lucy Lippard) – by transgressing the boundaries of the art world, which (already at that time) was being critiqued for being commercialized, aestheticized and institutionalized – that these artists looked to establish a more upfront relationship with the world of commodities, buildings, landscapes, infrastructures and communities. The paradoxes and contradictions inherent to this movement – which tends to rely on, and indeed strengthen, the relationship between artworks "out there" and the institutional framework on which they depend, not only as producers or commissioners, but also in supplying manuals for interpretation and in signing the necessary guarantees that preserve these pieces as "art", and thus protect them from becoming indistinguishable from the conditions they address – are obvious, and very well known. But the issues at stake and the underlying motives for what hence has been known as the site-specific tradition may nevertheless be called on as proof for the thin line of distinction between art and life, between the public and private, witch I am addressing here. Much of what goes on today within the sphere of "public art'" rises from, knowingly or not, this particular historical shift, and exists in continuity with it (at least its "critical", if not always self-questioning mode). Nowadays, we are more hesitant to pass judgement, however, at least within educated circles – leaving opinions on "good" or "bad" art to amateurs.

Contemporary public art is not a new phenomenon, but neither is it identical to what came before it. There is a disturbing tendency to wipe out events of the recent past (its insights, problems and achievements) in ways that constantly nail us to the present – a situation like scribbling on a blackboard that is continuously wiped clean before the next session begins. The absence of a strong tradition and a mode of remembrance that allows for reference and self-reflexivity add to the fragility of public art. But despite the lack of historicity, or perhaps even because of it, it seems to me that the sphere of "public art" – as a concept, setting, project or artwork – continues to provoke. Thereby, it provides the means for asking the most crucial kinds of questions and for making the most pertinent articulations on the conditions of our contem-

porary communality. The plethora of issues, confrontations and innovations framed by a project like Art Line shows how "public art" continues to generate acute and detailed elaborations of what are, or should be, matters of shared concern. Recognizing the fluidity of the boundaries between public and private creates the opportunity to also claim spaces as public, precisely through their insertion into the fabric of art, and its sphere of sensibilities, critique and discourse. A glade in the forest, a motorway, a laboratory or a shop only become public in the proper sense of the word when turned into sites for conscious action, reflection and articulation.

But, as we know from the body thrashing in space, working in public means running the risk of exposure. It means exposing the groundlessness of the social by addressing the kind of spaces it produces, a token of what we are and what we have become, but it also exposes the fragility of personal identity and that which we call the self. It means to voluntarily be exposed to the judgement of others, to be subjected to the hatred and harsh condemnations that are harboured in society, but also, and perhaps in equal measures, to its compassion and love.

Dr. Catharina Gabrielsson is an assistant professor in urban theory, School of Architecture KTH.

References:

1. Barenthin Lindblad T. (ed.) (2009), *Metagraffiti: Graffiti Art Films*, Årsta: Dokument Press.

2. At the time of writing, newspapers exploded with reports on the whistleblower Edward Snowden who went into hiding after revealing how the NSA (the National Security Agency, a US governmental authority) systematically records our movement and use of the internet. Yet the enormous global success of social media as such reveals a need to expose one's private life in public – tantamount, perhaps, to the creation of that life, that 'self' – with far-reaching effects; not only illustrative of the fluidity of borders between public and private but also of how much is at stake.

Helle Kvamme, *The Artists Eye*, 2012


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Investigations of the digital non-site: with Robert Smithson towards curating net and software art today

by Jacob Lillemose

For the 2013 transmediale, I curated an exhibition entitled *Tools of Distorted Creativity*, which presented 12 software and net artworks dating from the early 2000s to today that all related to the concept and form of the tool as a means of creative expression. The selection of works spanned from contemporary classics like Adrian Ward's *Auto-Illustrator* (2000–2002) and Cornelia Sollfrank's *net.art generator* (2003) to *Extra File* (2011/2013) by Kim Asendorf and *Pure Flow* (2013) by Katy Connor, who are both emerging artists. The works were presented on one big wall - divided in two but conceived as one - through (live) videos, (framed) prints, objects, and two interactive screens. It was a style of hanging inspired partly by the informal and cramped hanging of paintings in classic salon exhibitions and partly by surrealist montage style and its associative investigations of possible correlations between juxtaposed artefacts. From these two sources of inspiration, I conceived the exhibition format as a wall in a tool-shed that gave the potential users of the audience access to what I called "tools of distorted creativity". Instead of solving problems in creative ways – as the historical notion of technological creativity is understood – these tools applied creativity in all sorts of speculative and visionary ways to generate problems – or distortions – in the common perception of usefulness and creativity in the technological environment. As I wrote in the introduction text, "The works encourage users to engage in a more undisciplined kind of tool use, turning creativity into a 'critical' techno-cultural language. It is a language that refuses the logic of office-speak and rather, like Jimi Hendrix and his handling of the electric guitar system, takes its point of departure in experimental sensibilities and intelligences that reinvent the notion and use of the tool for other disobedient expressions and purposes".

The format was a deliberate and pointed challenge to the conventions surrounding the exhibition of screen-based computer art, most notably net art and software art.

From the point of view of some, net and software art's initial dismissal of the art institution and embrace of the non-institutional space of the computer and the net, might seem like a misconception, failure or even a death wish. Not so much on the part of the art as on the part of the art institution. The digitally charged avant-garde that emerged in the new democratic space of the net throughout the 1990s and early 2000s to claim the merging of art and life outside the white cube had now been reduced to just another art object in the institutionalised exhibition space. Like so many avant-gardes before it, net and sofware art had been assimilated by an unholy alliance of aesthetics, art history and the curator, and its promising potential for institutional critique ignored, forgotten, lost.

As a curator, I can honestly say that I did not ignore the institutional critique that has been an important part of the most seminal works of net and software art in the past 20 years. On the contrary, rather than reconsider it as a thing of yesteryear I wanted to rethink it in the contemporary context of the transmediale exhibition as a very specific institutional framework. Hence, in the following, I will outline what I see as a series of new, important conditions and possibilities for curating net and software art today that this framework offers.

First of all, the exhibition format of *Tools of Distorted Creativity* manifested a continuing reflection on my part on how to further explore the possibilities of exhibiting net and software art as a critical and experimental practice. The exhibition was in other words not a nostalgic return to traditional exhibition formats but a deliberate and direct challenge of a set of expectations traditionally connected with exhibiting net and software art in a gallery space.

When net and software-based art first hit institutional spaces in the 1990s as part of a new wave of institutional critique characteristic of contemporary art in general, dis-

playing (interactive) personal computers in an art exhibition was a novelty. There had of course been historical precedents of displaying computers, but rarely as a medium for artworks. Moreover, the new art forms introduced the new emerging network of the internet and the multiple software applications associated with it to the art institution, thus questioning the institution's cultural, social and economical boundaries. Like the institutional critique of the 1970s, net and software-based art connected with the world outside the walls of the institution, challenging it to expand its aesthetic perception and consider the personal computer and the internet as new contemporary artistic media.

Almost two decades later, these conditions for exhibiting net and software art have radically changed. Not only have computers become an integral, almost expected, part of contemporary exhibition-making, but more importantly, computers have become an all-over, all-the-time phenomenon in our everyday lives. To encounter an online computer in an art exhibition no longer represents an element of unfamiliarity and surprise. On the contrary, it serves to create a smooth continuum between the exhibition space and the objects and dynamics we encounter outside the exhibition space. In other words, the computer in the exhibition space has become a figure – or medium – of familiarity. Certainly at the transmediale. To exhibit a computer there is an expected, not a critical gesture.

In this context, it seems important to remember that historically institutional critique was never just about getting away with the institution by merging it with society. Rather, institutional critique aimed to reinvent the art institution as a space for critical reflection on society that differed from the spaces of deception and consumption which characterised the expanding society of the spectacle.

To continue this reinvention of the exhibition space as a space of difference – both in relation to the history of the exhibition, the institutional context and the social sphere – is one of the primary challenges I see facing curators of net and software art today, and one of the main instigations of my curatorial work.

So, to come back to *Tools of Distorted Creativity*, let me explain how I understand curating net and software art in combination with a Salon hanging and a Surrealist montage as a continuation of institutional critique?

Aside from a general curatorial interest in salon hanging and Surrealist montage style as exhibition formats that encourage a certain explorative and curious approach to the artworks on display, I was guided by an attempt to "curate computer-based art out of the ghetto", as I termed it in a text co-written with Inke Arns for the 2005 Argos festival. This deghettofication was intended to bridge what we perceived as a "digital divide" within the contemporary art world caused by a reluctance on both sides of the divide. As curators we wanted to emphasise that computer-based art was an obvious part of contemporary art, and one of the strategies we employed was to deemphasise the technological aspect in favour of the conceptual dimension of the artworks, a dimension that it shared with contemporary art in general.

An example of our work was the touring retrospective of the web server collective irational. The exhibition took the work of irational "off the server" by "translating" it and presenting it in off-line formats such as objects, prints, videos, slide shows, text installations and photos that were familiar to the general perception of contemporary art but unfamiliar in terms of exhibiting net and software art.

In 2012, we curated a version of the show for the artefact festival in Leuven that used Théodore Géricault's painting *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818–19) as the structuring principle. The members of irational built a raft in the exhibition space on which was displayed a selection of the "translated" works (this version included no computers at all) as well as works made specifically for the occasion. Besides constituting an apt narrative framework for crisis and disaster, the format investigated the possibility of making an exhibition of computer-based art as a three-dimensional image involving interactive and live elements. That is, to expand the field of curating computer-based art through the classic medium of painting.
A similar expansion through the reprocessing of exhibition formats from before the personal computer and new media art also informed my experiment with Salon hanging and Surrealist montage in *Tools of Distorted Creativity.*

An equally important inspiration for the exhibition format, however, was the negotiations between the artwork and the gallery and museum space initiated by conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s as part of its institutional critique. This was a critique that challenged the notion of the exhibition – and the exhibited object – through an expanded notion of the artwork.

As I wrote in another text for the Argos catalogue, I fundamentally understand computer-based art in the tradition of conceptual art and its expansion of the notion of the artwork. It is an expansion that, like the Avant-Garde, engages the art-into-life question, but more importantly it posits the artwork as a means for analysing and criticising art as a philosophical concept and a cultural construction. And by doing so, it challenges the conditions for how the artwork is exhibited and what it means to exhibit an artwork.

A significant example of this change is those artworks that involved "elements" – objects and situations – that originated in a time and space beyond the institution. While many conceptual artists exited the institution to explore other exhibition spaces, such as magazines, television, books and public space, an equally large number of conceptual artists were concerned with the question of bringing those outside elements back into the institution. Not in order to re-institutionalise them but, on the contrary, to engage it in an institutional critique from within. In performance and environmental art photographs, texts and other referential material were presented as documentation of an "absent" artwork as well as an integral part of the absent artwork. Hence, the artwork existed both inside and outside of institution and staged a dialectic exchange between the two.

In opposition to the single object celebrated by modernist aesthetics, this new kind of artwork introduced by conceptual art manifested itself in a multitude of mediations. It criticised the myth – and institutional economy – of originality and authenticity to investigate the artwork as the open-ended dynamics generated by the network of these mediations.

My claim is that the same goes for an important part of net and software art, and the exhibition format of *Tools of Distorted Creativity* is a reflection of this claim. Like the conceptual artworks implied in the passage above, the artworks in the exhibition consist of elements that are present and made for the exhibition format and elements that are absent, created for an online computer context beyond the institutional space. *X-Devian* (2003–2013), a free software distribution by Daniel Garcia Andujar/Technologies to the People, featuring a promotional poster, *Carnivore* (2001), by Radical Software Group was represented through a series of "classified" letters related to the work's initial release, and alongside the video version of Julian Oliver's *iop3a-paint* were prints the same size as the screen.

Rather than falling into the modernist trap of perceiving the online elements as the original artwork and the exhibition elements as mere derivatives, I conceive of the two types of elements as part of the same expanded notion of the artwork in the age of transmedia mediations.
A significant source of inspiration for this double view was Robert Smithson's notion of "site/non-site".

Introduced in relation to a series of works from 1968 and 1969, the notion was essential to Smithson's life-long negotiation with the art institution and its "cultural confinement", his attempt to critically and analytically respond to its ideology and limits while continuing to exhibit his "earth art" there.

At the time, Smithson was reading Claude Levi-Strauss' *The Raw and the Cooked.* From the book's anthropological investigations of the dialectics between nature and culture, he was introduced to the perception of culture as a prepared form of nature, like a meal, a translation through reformatting and recontextualisation.

At a symposium at Cornell University in 1969, Smithson explains how he arrived at the notion or method as he calls it:

> I was sort of interested in the dialogue between the indoor and the outdoor and on my own, after getting involved in it this way, I developed a method or a dialectic that involved what I call site and non-site. The site, in a sense is the physical, raw reality – the earth or the ground that we are really not aware of when we are in an interior room or studio or something like that – and so I decided that I would set limits in terms of this dialogue (it's a back and forth rhythm that goes between indoors and outdoors), and as a result I went and instead of putting something on the landscape I decided it would be interesting to transfer the land indoors, to the non-site, which is an abstract container.[1]

The non-site work thus consisted of physical material found at the site – stones, gravel, sand – presented in different forms of arrangements involving sculptural boxes, mirrors, photographs and often a diagrammatic map of the site. As such, the non-site was an abstract representation of the site. Or as he refers to it in his text *Provisional Theory of Non-Sites* from 1968: "a three dimensional logical picture". The notion of a "logical picture" is opposed to a "natural or realistic picture" in that "it rarely looks like the thing it

stands for". Instead of resemblance, a logical picture work by analogy and metaphor.

So how does Smithson's artistic method relate to my curatorial approach to *Tools of Distorted Creativity*?

By using the Salon hanging and including offline elements, I wanted to achieve two things. One, I wanted to emphasise that the exhibition was a non-site in the sense that it displayed artworks originating in a space – and time – beyond the institutional framework of the transmediale. Two, I wanted to create a context and situation for the viewing of the artworks that was different from how the artworks were "viewed" on a computer and online. Different in the sense that it – by its "exaggerated" employment of the Salon hanging – emphasised the aesthetic dimension and art historical connections and encouraged the audience to perceive the artworks as images and concepts reflecting our technological environment and our engagement with it instead of getting caught up in considerations about the works as technological artefacts. With the tool-shed wall I wanted the audience to relate to the works differently than they would have if they had encountered them on a computer screen because I believe that at the same time as the non-site of the art institution is a space of limitations it also offers a highly sophisticated language – ways of seeing, thinking and doing developed through hundreds of years of art making and art ehibitions – that allows us to reflectively approach technology. Hence, contrary to the belief in the reinvention of art through technology, the exhibition format expressed a belief in this artistic language as a means to discover new inventive approaches to technology. As such, I also understand the non-site is a "site" of potential.

The approach reflects Smithson's notion that "the [Non-Site] really comes out of a comprehension of limits". Just as the non-site in Smithson's works exposes the absence of the site at the same time as it points to the site and expands and challenges the perception of it, I understand the non-site of the exhibition of net and software art as a presentation that exposes its own limits as an offline mediation at the same time as it points to the online site and expands and challenges the perception of this site.

In Smithson's case, the site was far beyond the walls of the non-site, but in my case, I chose to bring the two components of the dialectic equation closer together by building a rudimentary net café-like setting featuring a series of online computers with the gallery space. Here the audience could sit down and experience the works as they would in front of any computer regardless of its location. The setting was clearly separated from the wall, but close enough to make a connection between the two. It was my hope that this proximity between site (the computer space accessible in the "café") and non-site (the wall hanging) would emphasise the dialectic, in the sense of exposing that the works on the wall were both connected with and different than the (same) works on the computers. It was an attempt at honesty but also an investigation of this difference both in relation to the artworks and to exhibition making.

Of course, there are many problems working with the site/non-site method as a curator – the figure of the "establishment" that Smithson despised – and retrospectively I see some unresolved issues relating to the way I speculatively used the method in *Tools of Distorted Creativity*. Perhaps in the future it would make sense to pay more attention to translating the interactive aspect of the artworks into the physical object? Perhaps, in the digital era it is time to challenge Smithson's basic dialectic between nature and culture, between "the raw" and "the cooked", and develop an understanding of a more integrated entity?
As a curator I can only work through these issues by experimenting with the exhibition format, and that will only work if net and software artists also engage the approach. Looking at much contemporary net and software art, it seems as if they are doing so.

So, despite these issues, I believe the distinction represents a productive conceptual language with which we can begin to address the complexity of exhibiting net and software art and more openly continue to further develop the potential for institutional critique that the best works from the two fields contain.

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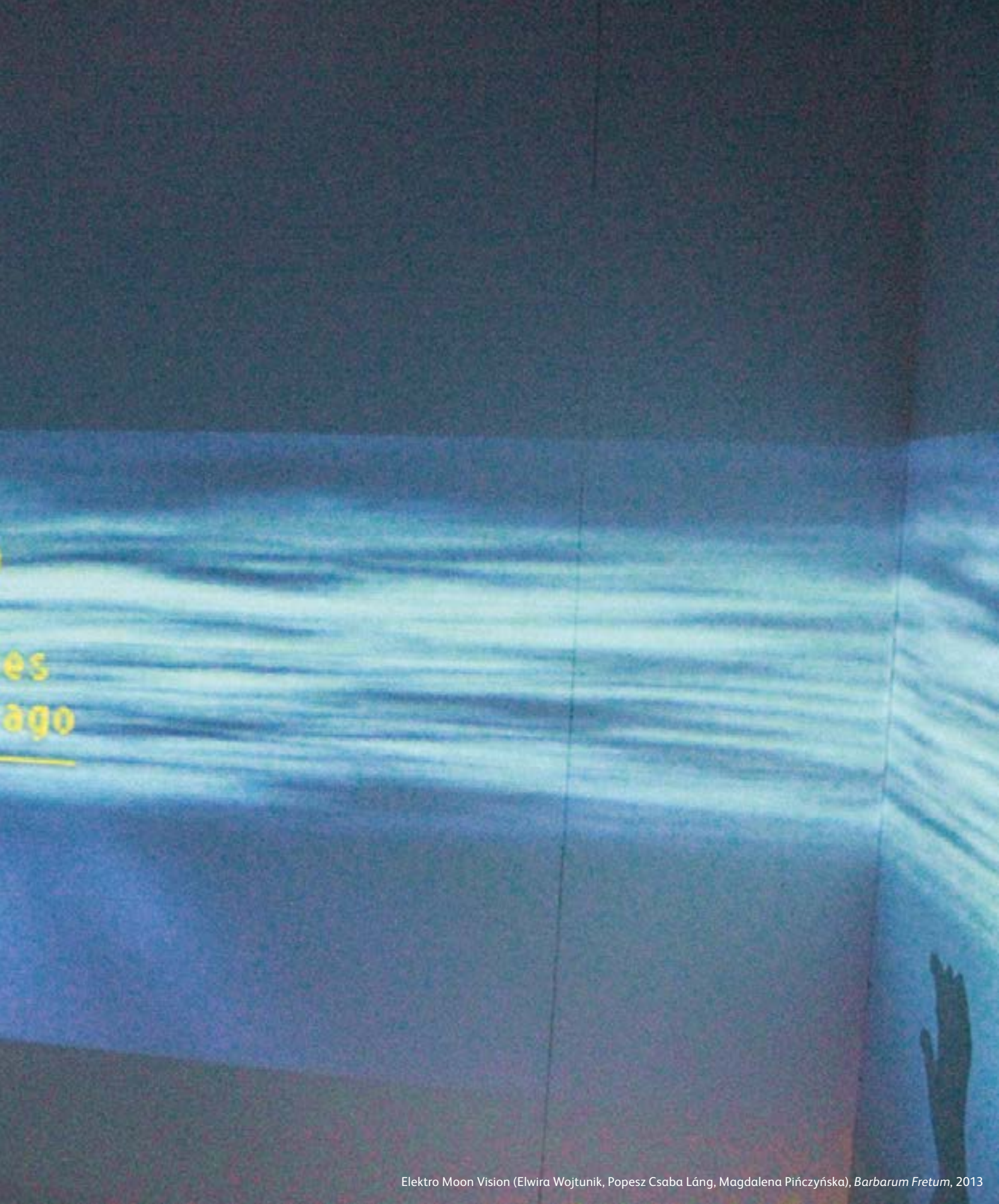
the young
planet.
the retiring
some 10-15,000



Elektro Moon Vision (Elwira Wojtunik, Popesz Csaba Láng, Magdalena Pińczyńska), *Barbarum Fretum*, 2013

TOWARDS THE THIRD CULTURE
the co-existence of art, science and technology

Type of project: conference

Where: Artus Court, Gdańsk, Poland

When: 23–25 May 2011

Lecturers:

Prof. dr hab. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński (PL)
Dr Monika Bakke (PL)
Jakub Bąkowski (PL)
Edwin Bendyk (PL)
Prof. Elinor Nina Czegledy (CAN/HUN)
Prof. Monika Fleischmann (GER)
and Prof. Wolfgang Strauss (GER)
Prof. James Gimzewski (USA)
Prof. dr hab. Joanna Hoffman (PL)
Prof. Lissa Holloway-Attaway (SE)
Malin Jogmark (SE)
Dr. Fabrice Lapelletrie (FR)
Prof. Roger Malina (FR)
Prof. Michael Punt (GB)
Jasia Reichardt (GB)
Prof. Victoria Vesna (USA)
Peter Matussek (GER)
Dr. Martha Blassnig (GB)

Organizers: Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdańsk;
The National Centre for Culture, Warsaw, Poland. Cooperation: Gdansk 2016;
Gdansk Historical Museum; Goethe Institut, Warsaw;
The Baltic Cultural Centre, Gdańsk, Poland

The project was complementary to the Art & Science Meeting Project

Towards the Third Culture, the co-existence of art, science and technology

by prof. dr hab. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński

Contemporary transformations in art have led it towards the domain of scientific research, towards disciplines labelled as sciences. Art today creatively engages in dialogue with genetics, biotechnology and research into AI. This is not only a result of new aspirations on the part of art. A parallel transformation in scientific concepts, and an evolution in its theories, from Ernest Nagel and Karl Popper to Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend, have resulted in the contextualisation and relativisation of the value of scientific results, leading to the very definite conclusion that science should no longer be seen as the sole field of social practice where knowledge is produced. Consequently, art today has assumed a new role, rejecting the traditional division between objective science and subjective art. Art now aspires to the role of a research milieu, a significant and valuable source of knowledge. The links between art thus shaped and the sphere of the sciences are no longer based on the popularising of or critical references to scientific results, as was the case in the past. Art can be, and frequently is, a domain and method of scientific research. Numerous artistic works, most often those from the sphere of new media, undertake tasks located between traditionally understood artistic creation and scientific-cognitive activity. These works, on the one hand, reactivate the alternative scientific tradition in epistemology, rejected during the Enlightenment; on the other, they transplant artistic practice to R&D laboratories. As an effect of such a migration, numerous new artistic tendencies such as bioart, robotic art, transgenic art and nanoart have emerged. The artworks stemming from these tendencies, combining artistic and scientific attributes, introduce a new and significant value to both fields. Above all, however, they introduce new and significant values to the social milieu in which such tendencies are developing.

Today's art, which has developed close, structural relations with new media technologies and scientific paradigms, constructs objects of artistic experience in an entirely different way than traditional art media. Bestowing these objects with an unprecedented character, this art proposes different strategies in the negotiation of their meanings and, first and foremost, engages those who experience them in an entirely different way. It no longer refers to the traditional concept of artistic culture, understanding art as an autonomous domain, governed by its own principles and rules. In reaching for scientific technologies, art is now developing in the context of the third culture, postulated by John Brockman, the forerunner of which was C.P. Snow's concept of two cultures. According to Brockman, the third culture consists of scientists, thinkers and researchers from the empirical world who, in their work and writings, are taking over and transforming the role of the traditional intellectual elite. Contemporary artistic creation that unifies the paradigms of art, science and technology in its activities aims to overcome the opposition between the humanist world of art and the world of science – the opposition that begot Brockman's concept of the third culture. This refreshed vision of the third culture is founded not upon conflict but on the mutual interactions of two, or rather – three, worlds, including the engineer's world of technology. Such culture, absorbing not only the paradigms of art, science and technology, but also the structures of information and the internet society, and the determinants of participative culture, is shaping the new framework of our future.

The conference, which took place on 23–25 May 2011, focused on the mutual relations between these three domains of human creativity. Its participants – scientists and scholars of various specialities, and artists – presented the results of research and studies on various aspects of these relations and considered the possible consequences of this situation for contemporary culture. The publication *Towards the Third Culture* documenting the conference was later published by Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art.

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Monika Fleischmann & Wolfgang Strauss, *Electro Field Sensing*, 1997–2005

Towards posthuman creativity. From kinetic to bio-robotic art

by prof. dr hab. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński

A work of art as an artist

I wish to look closely at a particular form of robotic art. In its mainstream, so to speak, robots play the role of artworks. As part of the tendency that I will be dealing with here, robotic art pieces created by humans play the role of creative instances for further generations of artworks – thus robotic works become artists, become art creating art. Its sophistication comes not only from the specific status that its creations achieve – they are at the same time subjects and objects, creations and creators. This stems from the hybrid entanglement of various tendencies and art types, and also from the degree of aesthetic problems it provokes, causes and considers through its mere existence.

The form considered here emerges mostly from the entanglement of kinetic, cybernetic and robotic art. It is their mutual relations that line out the area in which art creating art appears. Beside them there is also room for other tendencies.

The art of installation and performance art join the three previously mentioned forms for equally obvious reasons. The specific construction of the artefact that the piece creating art is comprised of fits it into the broadly considered context of the installation. On the other hand, performance art appears in the analysed area because in it we are faced with works that, while undertaking creative activities, at the same time realise a performance for the audience. Thus it is not only the material construction of the artefact, but the activity that it performs which becomes the experienced work of art.

The work of art we are facing is three-fold. First of all, it is an artefact prepared by a human-artist. Secondly, it is an event, a spectacle or performance carried out by this artefact. Thirdly, it is the creation of that performance. This last aspect, nonspecific for performance art, introduces a meta-discursive aspect into the debated issue, leading us towards another tendency entangled in the analysed phenomenon – conceptualism.

Conceptual art, with its meta-artistic approach, plays a very important role here. A mere clash of different tendencies, characterised by the hybrid nature of the considered art creating art, brings consequences of a conceptual-analytical nature. Every tendency entangled in this structure puts the others in an analytical frame of reference. However, the main source of the conceptual character of art creating art is of a more overall dimension. The phenomenon analysed, taken en globe, is a serious challenge for aesthetics and art theory; it problematizes its numerous aspects, deconstructs its ideas and paradigms. In this way, it receives a cognitive dimension, becomes a discourse in which cognitive aims complement or sometimes even replace formal intentions. This critical, auto-analytical aspect is precisely what makes it part of a conceptual approach.

The participatory art trend becomes visible in only some forms of art creating art. It only happens when the artwork–artist invites or enables co-operation on the part of its audience, who are then not only observers of the performance made by a machine, but also its participants.

Generative art seems to be an empirical type of art creating art. The latter is understood as art created using an autonomous system. Most frequently mentioned in this context are works generated by a computer, although in this type of art other generative systems are also applied, e.g. mechanical, robotic or biotechnological ones. I do not, however, bring the concept of art creating art to the idea of generative art, since it is my belief that the first one is broader in character. It refers to art pieces that have a multi-level structure that includes the artefact and a second-degree work of art created by it, while in generative art, generating systems are not usually perceived as part of the artwork. Nevertheless, both phenomena are extremely close to each other. The same applies to relations between art creating art and evolutionary art. The latter may be considered a branch of generative art, where systems work on the basis of both evolutionary rules and those of natural selection, which are used as generating procedures. These systems are of computer in character and remain in constant interaction with the artist–human who determines the selection mechanisms.

Monika Fleischmann & Wolfgang Strauss, *Digital Sparks Matrix*, 2006

The last group of tendencies that co-set the field of art creating art emerges as a result of developments in biological art and the simultaneous hybridisation of artistic activities. I place bio-cybernetic, bio-robotic and cyborg art in this group. They are all characterised by the mutual presence of both technical components (including digital ones) and biological ones in the structure of the created art pieces. The creative procedures that are characteristic for them stem from, e.g. interaction between both spheres. Creations of art creating art that are formed under their particular influence are characterised by complexity as well as their having the greatest meta-discursive potential.

All of the artistic tendencies that have been recalled here determine the mutual area in which for several decades now the analysed phenomenon of art creating art has been developing. They play the paradigm role against it, which in this case means that artistic phenomena belonging to it, created at different periods in time, are characterised, to different degrees, by different tendencies, and occasionally by only some of them. Yet it is the interactions between them that build art's dynamics as a whole, hybrid phenomenon, but they also play a crucial role when it comes to characterising its properties and constructing it as a concept.

In the further part of these considerations, I will analyse four examples of works of art creating art, at the same time indicating the constructive variety and meta-discursive structures that are characteristic of it. These works, created by artists with various backgrounds, and belonging to different historical periods of the analysed tendency, when looked at together, display both its durability and cohesiveness, but also major transformations connected with changes in ideas concerning robotics, constructed life and artificial intelligence.

Akira Kanayama – concept against expression

Eduardo Kac dates the work *Remote-control Painting* by Akira Kanayama, a member of the avant-garde Gutai group, to 1955.[1] Other sources mention the year 1957[2] and use the title *Remote-Controlled Painting Machine*[3], *Remote-Control Painting Machine*[4] or *Machine Drawings*[5]. Such discrepancies disappear when it comes to the work's description, upon which everyone agrees. Kanayama created a machine-robot on a platform on a remote-controlled four-wheeled model car. A can of quick-drying paint was placed on top of it. Kanayama placed vinyl on the floor of his workshop and painted it using the device described above. He later showed a painting created in this way in a gallery.

In every work published on it, attention is drawn to the connection between this artwork and the paintings of Jackson Pollock, describing it as a conceptual attack on expressionism and psychological automatism in art.[6] Lewis Kachur sees in the works of Kanayama a conceptual critique of painting understood as exploring the unconsciousness.[7] On the other hand, Mary Flanagan claims that this artist created automated work, thus referring to the area of a game creating art. By replacing the artist at his work, the painting device brought the act of creating "high art" down to the level of a task performed by a machine.[8] Ming Tiampo stressed that Kanayama problematized the concept of authorship in art in this way.[9]

The commentary recalled above draws attention to the conceptual character of the Japanese artist's art, acknowledging that aspect as the most important feature of his work. Being created at the point where kinetic, cybernetic, robotic, performative, generative and conceptual art cross one another's paths, Kanayama's painting machine definitely privileged the latter, subordinating the others to it (a special place belongs to generative art, as Kanayama's painting machine served primarily a generating role – it brought a painting to life). All of these are present in this work and mutually determine its character and the issues explored. Yet, the basic aim of Kanayama's creative activities was still to create paintings, and the machine to do this was mostly a polemic instrument – a tool for critiquing the artistic concept being questioned. It was the paintings that were mostly shown at exhibitions and not their creation. We cannot be sure whether Kanayama's painting robot was not part of the artistic process, which was only revealed in order to present the intentions behind the paintings. Discrepancies pointed out earlier in naming the works begin to make more sense. Sometimes they indicated an activity contained in the painting and/or its creation, other times they pointed to the painting machine – these terms, regardless of the actual motivations behind them, mutually present the project's ambivalence.

Jean Tinguely – the creative joy of machines

We will also be unable to avoid chronological doubts in the case of the art created by Jean Tinguely. The series that is of particular interest to me here, *Méta-matic*, was first shown in July 1959 at the Iris Clert gallery in Paris. However, the mo-

ment of the first presentation of Tinguely's works does not have to overlap with the time of their creation – for instance, the art museum in Houston informs us that it is in possession of *Méta-matic No. 9*, dated in the collection catalogue to 1958.[10] Moreover, the *Méta-matic* series was not Tinguely's first project connected with creative machines; three earlier works of this kind were made by him as early as 1955, and the first one of them – *Machine à dessiner No. 1* – was shown in April of that same year as part of the kinetic art exhibition at the Le Mouvement exhibition in Galerie Denise René in Paris.[11]

Méta-matic and earlier painting machines by Jean Tinguely, like Akira Kanayama's project presented earlier, represent a hybrid tendency combining kinetic, robotic, performative, generative and conceptual art. But if Kanayama's work definitely privileged the conceptual current in this setting, Tinguely's hierarchy spreads differently. The works, considered to be those of the Swiss artist, also undertake meta-artistic discourse, problematizing both the concept of the artist and visions of the creative process. However, in this case, other tendencies surpass the conceptual one on the scale of importance, thus mutually creating a more balanced order than in the case of Kanayama. In this setting, the kinetic current comes to the foreground. This is so because, unlike the works of Kanayama, Tinguely's works of art are kinetic installations that perform creative activity in the presence of viewers. What the public is mainly confronted with is not drawings made by machines, but machines which themselves are part of the creative process. The importance of the generative current bleaks out in this context, also privileged in Kanayama's work, which, suppressed here by expansion of coincidence, loses its position to performative tendency. Among the artistic currents presented in Kanayama's project is a mixture of three: kinetic, performative and conceptual, which determine the nature of the *Méta-matic* series.

They are complemented by two more tendencies, absent from Kanayama's works. As I mentioned before, *Méta-matic* machines are kinetic installations (close relations to kinetic sculptures, as I would probably put it if they did not engage receivers into their actions); therefore, a current of installation art also appears here. A second current – participatory – emerges as a result of the character of the mutual relations which are maintained between creative machines and their paintings.

Pontus Hultén points to two important determinants of these relationships. Firstly, Tinguely's aim was mechanical disorder, irregularity, unpredictability and mechanical uncertainty, so he gave his machines precisely these features.[12] The artist turned out to be a continuator of the Dadaist approach that privileges the role of accident in art. Secondly, these relations are co-shaped by the audience. Machines can be "programmed" in various ways: one can set their mechanisms, use a pencil, fountain pen or even a stamp, determine the duration of the machine's continuous work, the time of work, using a certain colour or number of machines.[13] And this is the role or a task of the public. Due to the second aspect of these relations, Tinguely's work reveals a participatory current. This does not, however, mean bringing machines to the level of tools. As Jean Tinguely once put it himself: "If you respect the machine, if you enter into a game with the machine, then perhaps you can make a truly joyous machine; by joyous I mean free".[14]

Both indicated dimensions of these relations, through co-operation, become a source of variety in the created drawings, adding not only to their theoretical, but also to their practical uniqueness.[15]

In the case of Tinguely's works, we are dealing with yet another stage of development in an artistic approach of interest to us. Kanayama's project introduced both a post-human element, which is basic to it, and a post-humanist perspective, mostly in terms of the artistic process, personified in the structure of the work and, to a lesser degree, in the form in which it is experienced. The paintings of the Japanese artist lost those properties which allowed them to be connected to his psychological sphere or unconsciousness, yet they ultimately remained artworks. Museums and galleries showed Kanayama's machine-made paintings at exhibitions, and not the painting machines. In the case of Tinguely, the situation was exactly the opposite. His basic creation is always a drawing machine. The machine is placed in museum collections and is shown at exhibitions. Its presentation takes on the form of a participatory performance that engages the audience. The result of such a performance, i.e. the artwork of a machine, becomes a creation of the second degree – a work of art created by a work of art.

Patrick Tresset – towards a digital creative identity

Robot Paul created by Patrick Tresset is a portraitist. It appeared for the first time in June 2011 at an solo exhibition of

Tresset's work at the gallery of Tenderpixel in London.[16] Similar to Tinguely's works, Paul not only draws portraits, but also turns this activity into a gallery performance. It has the form of a robotic arm mounted on a table counter, complemented by a mobile camera, which is also embedded there. A hand and an eye – external attributes of a cartoonist. These visible elements of Paul are clearly technical in appearance, as are the visual aesthetics of the set overall. Tresset is not at all interested in anthropomorphic form, which is so frequently found in robots. In interviews, he stresses that Paul does not try to copy humans in his passion for drawing.

The term installation in relation to the works of Tresset loses the connection with sculpture that is clearly present in Tinguely's works, bringing to the foreground the system of relations that defines it.[17] Relations that develop – in this case – between the physicality of the artefact, the technological materiality of hardware, and the digital immateriality of software, but also between the environments of the artwork are defined by these three dimensions, and the audience is immersed in it.

Similar to Tinguely's case, however, Tresset's robot Paul becomes part of his creation, which can be understood within the context of both a creative robot and the drawings – portraits that are made by him. A creative act, a portrait performance by Paul carried out in the presence of the viewers, who become models, are connected by both ingredients of Tresset's project – a robot and drawings – blended into one artistic whole with the hybrid order.

Tresset's project is realised in the area where art, computer science and robotics meet. As a result of this co-operation, Paul's eye and hand became one. He had the opportunity to draw from observation thanks to computer modelling and robotic technologies. Together with Fréderik Fole Leymarie, as part of the research projects *AIKON (Automatic IKONic drawing)* and *AIKON II*, Tresset created an artificial mind that processed data fed by a camera-eye, and then sent the command to a robotic drawing hand. It is neither chance nor participatory interference by the audience, but artificial intelligence that manages Paul's creative processes.

As part of the *AIKON* project, Tresset and Leymarie worked on a generative computer system that would be able to simulate processes required in the drawing of a portrait. This system makes use of face recognition techniques, and then determines the main lines that outline its shape, which is later followed by shading contours. In its activities, it uses knowledge concerning the functioning of the part of the human cerebral cortex responsible for processing visual information.

In this way, Paul gained the ability to draw faces. Where did he take his style from? Even a quick overview of his drawings reveals a clear similarity, their stylistic homogeneity. This time the source is Patrick Tresset. It was his way of drawing that Paul "assimilated". While preparing a system that managed Paul's creative behaviour, Tresset and Leymarie analysed Tresset's process of drawing (limiting the area of research to the way he drew faces). Then they pitched this process into a sequence of steps, so as to later carefully study each one of them individually. In consequence of their analyses, they prepared a system in which each step could be transformed into an algorithm operating as a result of the previous one, resulting in a sequence that copied the hand of an artist – Tresset's style.[18]

This is how Paul received his creative identity – an artificial imagination was born. Tresset played the role of a teacher, shaping his artistic personality, not through cultural programming (as is done with students of art schools) but with IT programming. The system that Tresset and Leymarie created, which determined Paul's creative possibilities, can be called subconscious. Its algorithmic structures outline both the autonomy of Paul's digital identity, and its connections with Tresset.

Paul's performance is also of importance. The system created especially for him opens up windows of opportunities for the theatricality of his behaviour. Thanks to it, both the performance and Paul's artistic skills that become visible because of it when confronted with the public's expectations, allow a platform of communication to be created between the robot and the human world, which is so important for Tresset; communication which aims at naturalising the robot in this.[19]

Among the tendencies that define where this form of art creating art develops, the robotic current is of special importance, particularly its generative and performative aspects. I recognise the conceptual current as their direct background because we are still faced here with activities that significantly problematize the paradigm of art. Critical reflection concerning the artist's status in the world of creation returns once again here. However, this issue is accompanied by a

new realm of controversy, directly connected with the relations that art has with the world of science.

For the first time in the contention about art creating art it has been put forward that we have discovered what lies at the root of the construction of the artwork – references to science relevant to its character. This characteristic will be on the increase and intensify. The need to create an autonomous being capable of artistic creation may be realised more effectively nowadays with the participation of researchers dealing with the issue of artificial intelligence, artificial life, genetics or neuro-engineering. Art engaging in these contexts leads to the emergence of new problems that complement, develop and replace the issues undertaken so far. The cognitive aspects of these activities, which until now have taken on the form of a conceptual tendency, are finding new challenges and forms for themselves.

The creativity of cyborgs

If in the case of Kanayama and Tinguely, the initial challenge was to locate the analysed works in time, in the case of *MEART: The semi-living artist* project, which is the subject of this last part of my reflections, it seems troublesome to point to its authors. The complexity of the project, resulting from the span between art and several scientific disciplines, meant that what we are dealing with here is teamwork. The project was realised thanks to the co-operation of the SymbioticA Research Group, located at the University of Western Australia, Perth, and scientists from the Neuroengineering Laboratory at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, USA. The project team included Guy Ben-Ary, Philip Gamblen and Steve Potter, PhD.

The first stage of *MEART's* development was an installation entitled *Fish & Chips* (2001). The name was changed because the neurons used in an early version of the installation, which had been collected from the brain of goldfish (Fish) and were bred on silica integrated circuits (Chips), were replaced by neurons collected from the grey mass of a rat embryo that were bred on a Petri dish with the use of microelectrodes (MEA). The name *MEART* – abbreviation of *Multi-Electrode Array aRT* – tells us that we are faced with art whose source (brain) is in a cell culture communicating with its environment via an electronic circuit.
MEART was presented in 2002 as part of the Electronic Arts Biennale in Perth. It may be described as a bio-cybernetic or neuro-robotic work of art.[20] Three components may be distinguished in its structure:

1. Wetware – neurons and glial cells collected from a rat's brain and cultured on an MEA;
2. Hardware – a robotic drawing arm;
3. Software – an interface enabling communication between the wetware and hardware.[21]

It should be added here that the first two components are geographically separated. The wetware was placed in Potter's laboratory in Atlanta and the hardware at the art gallery in Perth. The internet was used as a communication tool.[22]

Besides a robotic arm and a computer system, there was also a camera at the gallery, registering the physiognomy of a selected receiver and the drawings made by the robotic arm. An individual picture showing the receiver's face is processed into a signal of low frequency – 64 pixels – corresponding to the number of electrodes connected to the wetware (they monitored 60 channels of activity of the cultured neurons – MEA-artist's brain). This signal then reaches the wetware as an electric impulse, causing processes that are later registered and sent back to the robot – hardware in the form of impulses processed in such a way that they can represent the activity of neurons, and generate the drawing arm's movements that correspond to them. The processed picture of a drawing made by them then comes back to the *MEART* brain. We are dealing here with a creative system that functions as a cybernetic one, able to create and receive impulses and receive electric stimuli as a reaction to its activities in real time.

MEART can see the world through a camera that acts as its eyes. It can process what it sees by means of the neurons which act as its brain. It can appropriate actions by means of a robotic arm that acts as its body. The internet functions as its nervous system.
MEART embodies the idea of controlling a robot with the use of brain cells collected from a body and connected through an interface to electric devices. It is a concept for the aesthetic use of living cells connected to a physical object. *MEART* is both a scientific experiment studying the network mechanisms that produce directed adaptation behaviour[23] and – most of all – an artistic project aimed at creating an autonomous artificial artist. *MEART* as an artwork and an artist at the same time is a bio-cybernetic being that perceives the world, a being that is unpredictable and creative. Not only does it create art, but it also analyses the surrounding reality.

All three components of *MEART* highlighted earlier – wetware, hardware and software – blend into a network to create a hybrid artistic structure that could be described per analogiam as artware. It is a cyborg form – a semi-living one – living and technological at the same time, not fitting into aesthetic nor academic definitions or typologies of life. A semi-living being that speaks through artistic activity and is capable of learning, and – as a result – of self-transformation. That is why it is very interesting for scientists who hope that a semi-living artist, entangled in its neuronal activity between perception, activity and stimulation, will find out something about itself and its environment.[24] And will share this knowledge with them.

A form through which *MEART* speaks artistically, i.e. its drawings, I will describe as meta-artware to draw attention to the aesthetic complexity of the phenomena described here. What we are faced with here is two levels of artistic communication: *MEART* – artware and its creation: drawings as meta-artware. "Meta" here means both a second-degree work of art created by the artwork and the meta-artistic character of the creativity that it undertakes – a work of art created so as to, through its existence and form, critically reflect on the modern world of art and basic aesthetic concepts.

MEART triggers artistic tendencies that we have yet to encounter in the realm discussed here: bio-cybernetic art, biorobotic art, and cyborg art (in their direct background we may find a conceptual tendency, but also generative and performative ones). They introduce us to the world of the third culture of C. P. Snow, into an environment where art develops in direct dialogue with science. *MEART* repeats questions about what creativity is, what the position of the artist is, and how an artwork's status should be defined; but this time it forms its doubts in the context of the relation between art and science. And in this context, these questions change their subject. What we are now interested in is the question of to what extent post- and trans-humanistic tendencies change our way of thinking about art, what the position of the artist is in a post-biological world, and how biotechnological evolution and the birth of synthetic biology influence our ways of defining creativity. In the space where we seek answers to those questions, artistic, aesthetic, scientific, ontological and ethical issues cross each other's paths. They all penetrate one another, eventually taking on a form that is as hybrid as the one characterising the cultural phenomena being studied by them.

Conclusion

The four examples of artwork recalled above represent a radical artistic approach within which the created pieces of art become the subjects of further artistic activities. Each one of them fits into the following cycle:

A human as a subject of creative activities the creation of human artistic activities – artwork as an object of meta-creative/second-degree creative activities the result of meta-creative activities – meta-artwork/second-degree work.

The two first examples belong to the order of the modernist avant-garde, where meta-creation serves as a de-constructor of traditional aesthetic concepts, such as the artist, creativity, artwork and aesthetic experience, fitting, at the same time, fully into the frames of the art world. The following two, on the other hand, are part of a post-modern system defined by such categories as transgression, hybridisation, post-biology, post– and trans-humanism. They initiate discourses that are directed beyond the world of art, concerning problems that are basic to human, or rather, post-human kind.

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Monika Fleischmann & Wolfgang Strauss, *Liquid Views*, 1992–93

BLUE MORPH

Type of project: exhibition

Where: Saint John's Cultural Centre, Gdańsk, Poland

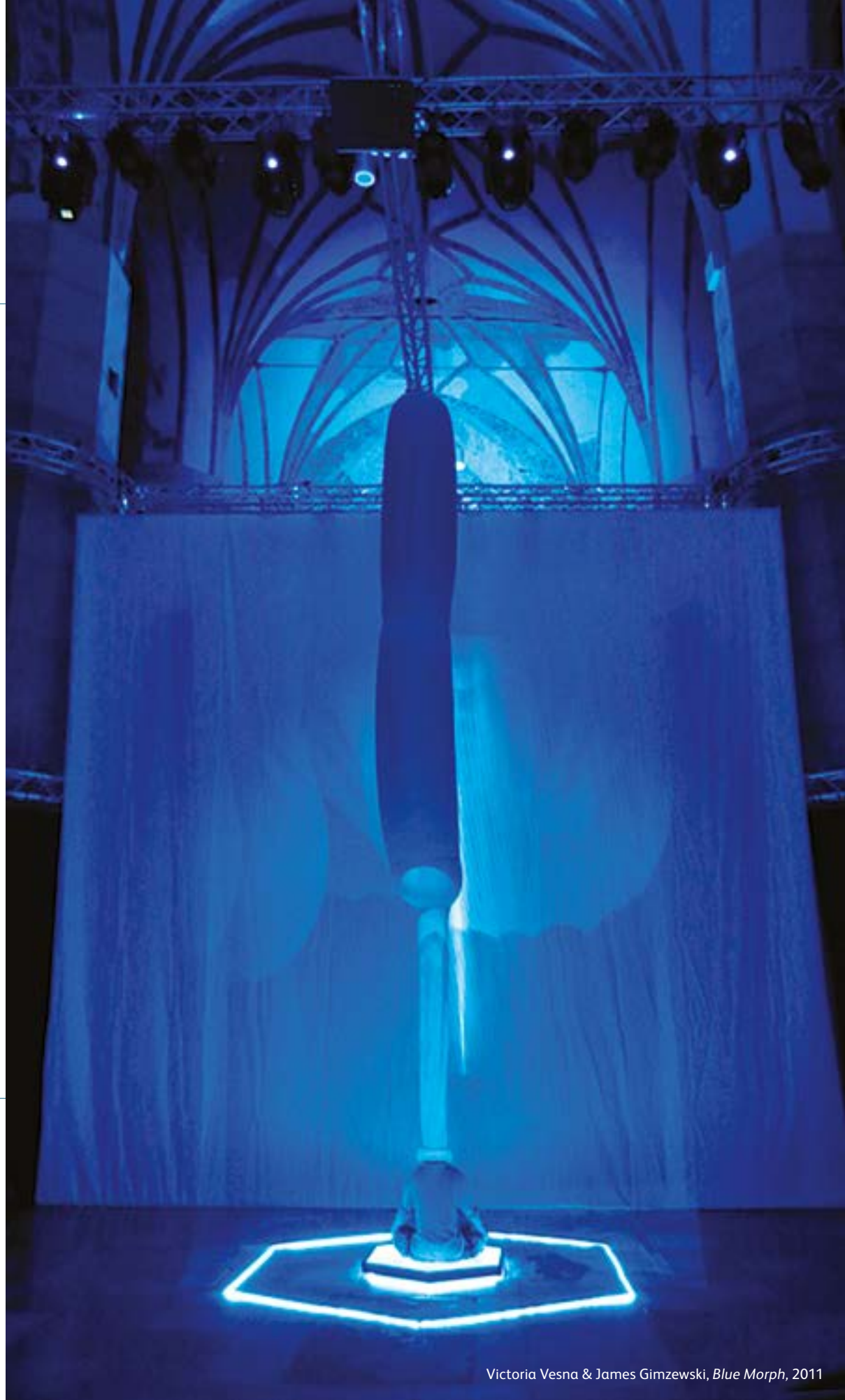
When: 23 May–05 June 2011

Artists: Victoria Vesna (USA) and James Gimzewski (USA)

Organizers: Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdańsk;
The Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, Gdańsk, Poland
Organized in the scope of Art&Science Meeting Project

Curator: Prof. dr hab. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński

Producer: Anna Zalewska-Andruszkiewicz



Victoria Vesna & James Gimzewski, *Blue Morph*, 2011

Blue Morph
by Victoria Vesna

Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?
Edward Lorenz, 1972

Once an artist takes on the challenge of making the invisible visible, or the inaudible audible, s/he is almost immediately thrown into the realm of energy at the edge of art and science. The established art world based on visual culture finds it difficult to place this kind of work. The scientific community, used to working in this realm in a reductionist way, finds it hard to comprehend. Yet the public seems to be drawn to artwork residing "in between", and there seems to be a universal need for a connection to the spiritual realm beyond what established religions offer. As many speculative ideas in the West circulate around ideas of an energetic approach to matter in general, particularly the body and mind, alternative medicine and other Eastern philosophies are thriving. This essay will show how, in collaboration with nanoscientist James Gimzewski, we have investigated these ideas from the sounds of cells to the concept and realization of the *Blue Morph* installation at the Integratron.[1]

Cell sounds: art and science

While in the midst of collaborating on a series of media artlsci projects, Gimzewski (and later PhD student Andrew Pelling) first made the discovery in 2002 at UCLA's Pico lab that yeast cells oscillate at the nano-scale. Excited by his initial results, Gimzewski was eager to share the data but knew that I would not be able to understand the importance by simply looking at the graph. Knowing that Pelling was also interested in music, he asked him to output the data into sound files instead, and sent me the audio file of live cell vibrations. This was definitely exciting and, through this sound, I could instantly see the importance of this finding. Soon after I asked if he would "compose" sounds from the yeast cells. Gimzewski experimented, as Pollock would, by throwing scotch on the yeast cells and recording the sound of cell death. I used these sounds in a piece that I called *Cell Ghosts*,[2] and Pelling collaborated with Anne Niemetz on a piece called *Dark Side of the Cell*,[3] also inspired by these sounds. Not only art was created from this event; an article on "screaming cells" came out in the journal *Nature*,[4] and a scientific paper was produced in which Gimzewski coined a new word for this kind of data amplification of vibrations within a human audible range for use in research and analysis: "sonocytology".[5] The tool with which the cell sounds are extracted, the Atomic Force Microscope (AFM), could be regarded as a new type of musical instrument. Indeed, it is easy to compare the AFM to a record and a needle that moves across the surface grooves to produce sound – the AFM "touches" a cell with its small tip. With this interface, the AFM "feels" oscillations taking place at the membrane of a cell and these electrical signals can then be converted, amplified and distributed by speakers.

From yeast cells to a butterfly chrysalis

The press on the sonification of yeast cells generated much interest across the disciplinary spectrum – scientists in nano and bio research, the medical community, experimental artists and musicians, as well as fringe spiritual healers and gurus all demonstrated an interest. This diverse scope of attention eventually led to butterflies appearing onto the scene of the research lab, with a phone call phone from a woman by the name of Anna Costello who called Gimzewski after reading about his research on the sonification of yeast cells. She was in contact with a biology professor at the Lancaster campus of the Harrisburg Area Community College, Richard Stringer, who studies butterflies and suggested, with enthusiasm, that Gimzewski try to record their metamorphosis to see what kind of sound would emerge. He reluctantly agreed, and within a week a package of chrysalises arrived at his lab. This research was not immediately of particular interest to Gimzewski. He pursued it only because of his involvement in the arts, and would frequently send me results, asking if I had any ideas of how we might create a piece out of the data. I have to admit that I resisted for quite awhile and found it quite a difficult to imagine what to do with such an overused image/symbol/metaphor as the butterfly. But, occasionally, I would notice the crea-

ture; I started to pay more attention to it when I read somewhere that the ancient Greek word for "butterfly" is (psychē), which primarily means "soul" and/or "mind". It is true that butterflies have, for centuries and in many cultures, signified the elusive quality of beauty, and have brought many to ponder the wonder of change and the power of nature. Poets and artists in the past and present have been inspired, philosophers have used them as metaphors, and scientists have studied their properties. As far back as 3500 years ago, Egyptians portrayed this creature in ancient hieroglyphs. History clearly shows an innate human interest in the nature of the butterfly. And it is the archetypal instinct that moved us both to consider this ephemeral and beautiful insect.

Sounds of metamorphosis

It was the experience of listening to the sounds of the metamorphosis – excruciatingly difficult to capture – that finally got me very excited about doing something with the results. Gimzewski and his research team examined the mechano-structural properties of the Morpho Peleides butterfly to provide insight into the developmental process and intrinsic optical properties. The sounds were acquired and recorded by detecting nano-scale motions of the pupa surface using the AFM and optical beam deflection during the developmental stages of metamorphosis. Raw data files of the caterpillar membrane "sound" vibrations were sped up and amplified by arbitrary amounts depending on the individual sample. Imaging of wings was an individual effort by Gimzewski who made a trip to the FEI company in Oregon and through his close relationship with the CEO Don Kenia, got access to the most cutting-edge Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) and obtained one of the best operators in the field to work with. Use of highly sensitive instrumentation provided images of both the surface and internal wing structure, with is mostly black space. The nano-scale architecture inherent in the butterfly wing produces its brilliant color through photonic crystalline effects. The images produced are of the highest resolution and detail that I have ever seen, and I started thinking of how to connect the sounds to the optics to produce a meditative space for an audience. The goal became to create a space that would introduce a contemporary metaphor of this ephemeral creature.

Butterfly effect: symbolic of our times

Collective Butterflies in our Stomachs. Seeing and hearing the images of the metamorphosis created a breakthrough in the creative block around working with the butterfly. The sudden realization that change does not happen gradually, as is assumed, but is in fact a series of intense bursts of energy with a rest period that vibrates in anticipation was an important discovery. The sounds were what we would interpret as pain, which is counter to the idea of the gentle, beautiful creature we have previously perceived as the butterfly. Indeed, I was not able to find any reference to anxiety and pain when researching metaphors and ideas around the butterfly. I did however discover that nature's nano-photonics used in the blue colour of the wing was used in anti-counterfeiting technology. The link to the financial crisis that was starting to happen at the time, and continues to surface – in bursts – was not only with optics, but with sound, as well. The financial markets' patterns, drastically moving up and down, are almost identical to the graphs of the metamorphosis of the butterfly. Could it be that we are having a collective metamorphosis and the markets are our mirror? The sensation of feeling "butterflies in the stomach" is most often experienced prior to important events, related to nervousness, and can be experienced in situations of impending danger. It is possible that the condition, frequently felt by an oncoming new experience or relationship, is caused by a surge of adrenaline. One could look at the current condition of humanity as a collective state of nervousness, especially in relation to the current economic ecological crisis, which is global. The "butterfly effect" has been very much in the public imagination in the last two decades with numerous movies, Sci-Fi novels and even games, with central plots around the idea that one butterfly could have a far-reaching ripple effect in the subsequent historic events. This idea was first proposed by science fiction writer Ray Bradbury in his short story about time travel, *A Sound of Thunder*, which incidentally is the most re-published science fiction story of all time.[6] Almost a decade later, Edward Lorenz was using a numerical computer model to rerun a weather prediction when, as a shortcut on a number in the sequence, he entered the decimal .506 instead of entering the full .506127 the computer would hold. The result was a completely different weather scenario. Another decade would pass before he used the now famed title, *Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in*

Texas? in a talk at the 139th meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1972.

The Integratron

Throughout and in parallel to working on our various collaborative projects, I was fascinated by a structure in Landers, a small town in the California desert, about two hours away from Los Angeles called the Integratron. It is a 38-foot high, 50-foot diameter, non-metallic structure designed by the engineer George Van Tassel as a rejuvenation and time machine. It emerged at a time when much speculation and inspiration around the idea of vibrations, electromagnetic fields and the invisible realm was circulating, no doubt influenced by the discoveries of Einstein and Nikola Tesla, as well as the theosophists, who started introducing spiritual teachings from India and Tibet to the West. An abbreviated eccentric history, very much relevant to this project, follows. In the 1930s, Frank Critzer, a middle-aged German immigrant prospector with an interest in short-wave radio arrived in Landers, CA, and staked a claim at the *Giant Rock*, reputed to be one of the world's largest free-standing boulders. He excavated about 400 square feet of space under the rock into a one-room subterranean home with the door facing west, and a storage room toward the east with a radio antenna to the top. Critzer's eccentricity was suspected by nearby residents, who left him alone, but during World War II, he came under suspicion as a German spy because of his radio hobby, and was killed in a botched law enforcement raid in 1942. The burned out room under the rock was closed and locked for years. But, before his unfortunate end, he met George Van Tassel, a former test pilot for Howard Hughes and Douglas Aircraft, who later took over his "apartment" under the *Giant Rock* and operated an airport at the site. Van Tassel believed the rock's crystalline structure possessed great channelling power by virtue of its piezoelectric characteristics. He led weekly meditations in the excavated room under the rock from the 1950s to the 1970s, which he claimed led to UFO contacts. Van Tassel claims that UFO channellings and ideas from scientists such as Nikola Tesla led to the unique architecture of the Integratron. He spent 18 years constructing the building. Van Tassel's meditation sessions led him to develop the building with direct input from his alien designers, who gave him instructions for a machine that could rejuvenate human cells using the natural energy found in the atmosphere. He called the device *The Integratron.* The 16-sided dome was built of wood and concrete and held together by glue and gravity-electrically neutral materials. The generating core was made of copper wire. Had it been placed in operation, candidates would have walked through the building, essentially a huge air capacitor, while wearing white outfits. The charges, distributed over a wide range of frequencies, would affect every cell.

***Blue Morph* at the Integratron**

There is little need to elaborate on Nikola Tesla's extraordinary contributions to humanity that basically changed the way we live on Earth. Much has been written about him, yet many aspects of him remain shrouded in mystery, especially his eccentric statements about receiving information from extraterrestrial sources. His work on the ionosphere is also surrounded and largely informed by conspiracy theories. We were quite inspired to do our first interactive version of the *Blue Morph* on this site, as we felt its history was a perfect context for the essence of the piece. As we both practice Kundalini yoga, Gimzewski and I discussed the idea of creating an environment where people experience interactivity by keeping still and/or moving from their centre. Gimzewski suggested we use meteorological balloons, and I looked for ways to enclose and design the hanging. While showing him the long tube I had manufactured in the Los Angeles fashion district, he jokingly rolled up the end into what looked like a turban and placed it on his head. The jest became inspiration as we decided that this was exactly what needed to happen and integrated the idea of a "mad hatter" into the project. Alice in Wonderland so naturally fits into the complexity and absurdity of our projections and realities. The Integratron turned out to be the ideal location for the development of this project, as the audience brought their interpretations and guided us to how we could continue to interact. What we did not anticipate was the ritualistic nature that emerged, with people seeing the installation as a place to release, albeit publically, their inner urge towards transformation and metamorphosis. The audience becomes the performer when in the centre and the witness when observing others in the centre, while the artist and scientist are on the sidelines – giving up the limelight. It is neither art nor science, neither theatre nor reality, but a scene that is open to interpretation and allows for an individualized ritual to take place. Nonsensical to a large degree, what emerged is possibly closest to dada in the arts.

Sounds of thinking

Just as much as new technology is repurposed by the public for something quite different than what it was originally intended for, the *Blue Morph* was developed by the interaction and feedback from the audience. It also pointed to us the direction to take in our next work, which emerged out of this experience, and took a deeper look at the interface of our neuronal vibrations with our environment. We are interested in exploring the rhythm of electrical oscillations in the brain that give rise to consciousness, and how failures in this rhythm can lead to a variety of brain disorders. That the vibrations influence and create our reality can best be surmised by a statement made during an interview with neuroscientist Rodolfo Llinás of the New York University School of Medicine: "Neurons have an intrinsic rhythm, a bit like a hum. They generate this electrical dance at a given frequency because they have similar rhythms — they hum in unison. But as in the case of choirs and dancing, you can have two groups doing different things at the same time. Now imagine that each group doing something represents an aspect of an external event, like a color".[8] Perhaps we are experiencing a collective, entangled and unpredictable electrical dance with extreme ups and downs that point to a major shift in consciousness, and that is unpredictable while in the midst of the metamorphosis. The chrysalis has no idea what it is becoming, and once a butterfly, how much it influences another part of the world with the flap of its wings.

Victoria Vesna is a media artist and professor at the UCLA Department of Design | Media Arts and Director of the ArtISci center at the School of the Arts and California Nanosystems Institute (CNSI).

Dr. James Gimizewski is a professor of Chemistry at the University of California, Los Angeles and a member of the California NanoSystems Institute.

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Victoria Vesna & James Gimzewski, *Blue Morph*, 2011

PERFORMING DATA

Type of project: exhibition

Where: Laznia CCA, Gdańsk, Poland

When: 16 April–26 June 2011

Artists: Monika Fleischmann (GER) and Wolfgang Strauss (GER)

Organizers: Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdańsk;
The National Centre for Culture, Warsaw, Poland
Cooperation: Gdansk 2016; Zentrum für Kunst
und Medientechnologie; Goethe Institut, Warsaw, Poland;
Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V. The exhibition
was realized in scope of the Art & Science Meeting Project

Artistic director of the project: Prof. dr hab. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński


Seine hohle Form
Coexistence
Collection
Johannes Wolf
Dr. Gabiele Lohberg
Dr. Adelheid Ehmke
Dr. Antonis Argyros
Aktivismus
Augmented Reality
Autor

Performing Data: perception of a world in motion

by Monika Fleischmann, Wolfgang Strauss

Before we had computers, the essence of life was information. Today we live with the permanent noise of information, and the essence of life is the complexity that results from our automated lives. For artistic-based research and computer science collaborations, this means establishing places for transdisciplinary research and exchange. We, the authors, have created such environments as artists and co-founders of Art+Com (1987) in Berlin, and later as artists and scientists with our research department at the GMD – the German National Research Center for Information Technology, MARS – Media Arts Research Studies (1997).

Different disciplines speak different languages and have different values. Within long-term EU research projects, we have established transdisciplinary styles of teamwork. To get artistic research financed in a technology-driven environment, we have been hiding artistic questions behind technical issues. During the last 20 years, our research has concentrated on virtual and mixed realities, interactive installations, participatory environments and public performances: The YOU_ser not only becomes a consumer,[1] as Peter Weibel puts it, but also a Data Performer.

The motif of Data Performer relates not only to the visualisation and reification of immaterial data, but also to the actions and performance of the viewer. Data Performers are involved in space-time environments which we call enterable spaces of thoughts (begehbare Denkräume). The viewer becomes a participant in an interactive plot. Inspired by Aby Warburg's neologisms, such as a "space of thought" (Denkraum), we have developed an aesthetic of the interactive space of knowledge and thought.

Interactivity as a field of research

The notion of "interactivity" in computer science implies mutual relations between software and the user, involving an exchange of information. In a globalised world, under the banner of omnipresent media interconnected in networks, this understanding of interactivity as a human-machine relation is juxtaposed to a substantially modified paradigm of interaction. A person communicates not only with the machine, but, in the first place, in a kind of media reflection, with himself or herself. Via on-line services like Facebook, Flickr or YouTube, people present themselves in an interactive way and seemingly expose or exhibit themselves in order to communicate with others, or just to get noticed. Feedback information from the social and technologically intermediated world of connections influences the self-esteem and personal development of an individual.

Apart from the interactive paradigm of the mirror reflection through media, which is a central theme in our work, for example, in *Liquid Views*[2] (1992–93) the metaphor of the *Mirror of Narciuss*, or *Rigid Waves*[3] (1993) about *Narcissus and Echo*, and in *Home of the Brain*[4] (1989–92), providing a metaphor for a totally new form of public space, we are interested in the notion of knowledge and the issue of its further transfer via digital tools. We develop tools such as *Semantic Map*[5] (2001–04) for the discovery of knowledge or artistic installations such as *Energy Passages*[6] (2004), treating a data flow as linguistic space. We see interactivity as the perception of a world in motion – as the movement of thought. And we ask questions such as: How does the notion of knowledge change in the perspective of the evolution of the internet into a global medium of knowledge?

"Recognising and deciphering relations is a unique ability of humans. The purpose of education is to strengthen it", states anthropologist Michael Wesch.[7] He understands learning as a process which involves the destruction of all previously assimilated concepts. "Truly great moments of education have nothing to do with memorising, but with reshaping. When you learn something really new, you need to demolish the walls of your already established architecture of thoughts. Destroy all what you have thought is true".[8] This is one of the most important features of the medium. In order to transform information

into knowledge, people need to make choices, compare, evaluate, and interact with others. Instead of intellectual and technical automatisation for the process of converting information into alleged knowledge – as computer science does – media art combines automatism of the machine with the act of uncovering its structures. Data Performers, data mapping and visualization are used in order to give a new structure to the already existing knowledge, and, thus, to rediscover it (*Home of the Brain, Semantic Map, Energy-Passages, Media Flow*). Here, knowledge is not only acquired through reading or listening, but also through the use of the body.

Interfaces for body knowledge and knowledge discovery

We have two major areas of artistic-based research in the knowledge arts, one is to study bodily perception with sensory interfaces in interactive environments, the other, how knowledge can be created. In both of these areas, the notion of interactivity plays an important role. We understand interactivity as a contemporary mode enabling the user/viewer to construct their own impression on a certain issue in an artwork. Interaction can be described as a process of constituting knowledge through performative acts. Interactivity is the central strategy of our stagings, with their complex relations between reality, representation and presence. We understand the interface as a dispositif for the interplay of perception, thinking and action in the mixed reality, where real and virtual presence permeate one through another. By means of sensory interfaces, we examine, above all: touch and touchlessness, grasping and comprehension of spatial perception, and the sense of balance. On the one hand, we put the body in the focus of our interest and address the problem of the bodily knowledge of an acting subject. On the other hand, with interfaces for recording, storage and intermediation, we support the activities of the researching subject.

We are interested in the knowledge which is emerging through digital activities. More precisely, this concerns semantically related data which allow for establishing relational connections within data-stocks and for the visualisation of contexts. "Can you imagine that they used to have libraries where the books didn't talk to each other?"[9] In this retrospective statement by artificial intelligence researcher Marvin Minsky, which inspired us years ago when we heard him speaking at *Ars Electronica* in 1990, we recognise a digital transformation of Warburg's space of thoughts.

Our stagings anticipate the body as resistance that causes distortions and the irritation of perception. Automatic processes of perception are interrupted by stop and pause, and the focus of attention shifts. Literary scholar Mark B.N. Hansen put it this way: "the body is a primordial and active source of resistance".[10] Only those moments of distortion allow for a reflective distance in the participating viewer. Only those moments enable a consciousness-altering dialogue with oneself or others. An almost bodily immersion in data flows brings productive moments of interference and pause. In this way, the participating viewer experiences the feeling of presence. The transformation of the viewer from a passive consumer into an active participant in the staging relates to the double requirement expressed by Peter Matussek in *Performing Memory:* "Staging means not only to put something on stage, but also to put someone in a scene".[11] In the case of staging in media art, questions arise, such as: What do players and viewers see and hear? When do we play, and when do we become the object of the play? With our artwork and tools we attempt to reflect on these questions.

From *Virtual Reality* to *Floating Interface* and *Fluid Archives*

In the following section, we briefly describe different projects and approaches of "touch" as the interface between human and machine. The body is the interface for disembodied digital information, which – metaphorically speaking – is tangible and graspable in a virtual space of thought. From *Virtual Reality* (*Home of the Brain*) to *Mixed Reality* (*Murmuring Fields*), from *Fluid Interface* (*Liquid Views*) to *Floating Interface* (*Media Flow*), from the performance of the body in space to the database aesthetics of density, we shape the interactive space of thought and the interactive processes of action. These artistic works produce productive moments of disturbance, and consequently a feeling of real and virtual physical presence.

***Berlin – Cyber City* (1989–91)**

Berlin after the fall of the Wall. A virtual walk leads us deep inside the city. The walk is understood as a movement of both body and mind and is the interface/metaphor for travelling with a finger over a map. The traveller discovers fragments of Berlin's history with a finger sen-

sor over an aerial photograph displayed on a table. The virtual model of Berlin presents layers of past, present and future of the city exemplified by Potsdamer Platz: Nazi times, Stasi times, and also a possible future. The installation as a social sculpture allows for the once estranged citizens of the divided city to meet each other and share their memories at the table, which became an interface/symbol of common discourse.

Fig. 1: *Berlin-Cyber City* (Fleischmann-Strauss 1991)

***Home of the Brain* (1990–92)**

The viewer moves around with a data glove and goggles in an architecture of the thoughts of four philosophers – Joseph Weizenbaum, Vilem Flusser, Marvin Minsky and Paul Virilio – listening to their ideas concerning the future of our culture. The subject of this installation is the metaphor of virtual space as a stage and the ability of the viewer to move around in a world of ideas that "touches" the body and broadens the perception. Through this vision of networked public space for meetings and conversations, we promote an artistic image of future internet culture. "Never before was it possible to operate within the thoughts of others"[12] – as media theoretician Derrick de Keckhove commented in this first artistic project with immersive virtual reality interfaces.

Fig. 2: *Home of the Brain* (Fleischmann-Strauss 1992)

***Liquid Views* (1992–93)**

The face of the viewer is reflected on a computer screen. When he or she touches it, it is blurred like a reflection on the surface of water. The reflection is not only a poetic examination of remembering and forgetting. It is also a technically induced experience of imaging, which shows the view of the self from the outside. Media art historian Claudia Gianetti observes that *Liquid Views* "stresses the duality existing on the one hand between world-observation and self-observation (self-knowledge), and on the other hand the sensorial relationship of tension between the immateriality of the virtual and the materiality of the physical body".[13] Writer and hypertext author Michael Joyce describes this work as associated with cinema as well as with verbal narrations. "A woman greets her past self as if a sister or a lover, (...) a man attempts to trick the self he was instants before (...). Those metafictions (…) are, of course, tales produced by an external viewer. The interactions (…) present themselves to participants and viewers in layers of narration. Those simultaneous streams of private and public meanings are not unlike our common experience of space in ordinary life, whether over a kitchen table or over a table in a cafe".[14] The interruption of nextness into stillness – like Joyce suggests, annuls the gap, "inserting it and us again into the present moment, interrupting the present with the present, interrupting the insistence of what is next with a liquid now".[15]

Fig. 3: *Liquid Views* (Fleischmann-Strauss 1993)

Fig. 4: *Murmuring Fields* (Fleischmann-Strauss 1999)

***Murmuring Fields* (1997–99)**

Imagine a stage as an audio archive where you can play sounds simply by moving your body. Collaborate with others in the creation of an audio landscape! The participants feel their own bodies more intensely while listening to the sounds and noises. "Poli-tic-tic-tic," says Flusser's voice, as the performer bends forwards and backwards, thereby interpreting a piece of the philosopher's statement. The space has been furnished with data, with audio files full of words, syllables and sounds. The body becomes the source of reflexes and sound reflections. Participants play in this audial space with their own bodies as if the bodies were proper instruments. The effect is a woven network of sounds, sometimes smooth, sometimes shredded, machinelike, but always an answer to a movement. They bring to mind György Ligeti's sound textiles. An invisible optical interface (video camera) capturing movement connects the space of data with the space of activity. The interface of the observing camera addresses the problem of the visibility of the body and raises the question of what bodily thinking could look like, or, for instance, speaking bodies. Art historian Oliver Grau perceives both *Murmuring Fields* and *Home of the Brain* as spaces for reflection sending us back to Aby Warburg and states that both works create a new kind of Denkraum.[16]

***Electro Field Sensing* (1998–2002)**

The EFS interfaces expose an invisible body, detecting and measuring its physical states. The *Energy Meter* (1998), a light box with colourful bulbs, indicates the actual "energetic status" of the viewer through the changing intensity of light. Behind this, the idea of an apparatus called a "theremin" is hidden, one of the first electric musical instruments invented by the Russian physicist Leon Theremin around 1919. It can be played without being touched. The performer modulates the pitch and the volume of the sound by the movement of palms placed between two antennae of an electric resonance circuit. In our experiments, we modify the electronic system and show how the invisible "energy of the body" becomes visible thanks to *Electro Field Sensing* technology. *The MARS Bag* (1998) reacts to the natural electric field of people or the environment by changing colours or uttering sounds. *Wih Info-Jukebox* (2002) and *PointScreen* (2005), we further developed the touchless, biosensoric interface and obtained a U.S. patent.[17] The EFS interfaces reverse the paradigm of interaction. The EFS does not wait for data to be introduced by a person, but instead "senses" his or her (electric) field of "energy status".

Fig. 5: *Energy Meter* (Fleischmann-Strauss 1998)

***Netzspannung.org* (1998–2004)**

The educational platform around media art was constructed when adequate courses did not exist and the availability of educational materials was limited. By means of the platform, artists and scientists offer insights into their works and present analyses of particular works. Both lecturers and students are guided on how to construct and play virtual musical instruments, or how to stage an exhibition of robots made of garbage. The inclusion of projects from more than 20 universities into the platform created a kind of a virtual college of media art, offering education in the field of digital media.

When working out the concept for the *netzspannung.org* portal, the idea of search interfaces enabling access to the archive was already on the agenda. Basically, there are two strategies of access to the electronic database: "sharp" searching and "fuzzy" browsing. Searching assumes that users know what they are looking for, that they will be able to define the subject of their interest, and, if necessary, will be able to make it more precise or expand it. During browsing or flicking, the main goal of the users is to give themselves an opportunity to be guided or inspired by the outcome of their findings. Our tools of knowledge stimulate browsing and discovering. Offering different ways of access, filtering, navigation and contextualisation, we encourage active and constructive handling of digital information. The visualisation and access of an archive as a living data network becomes a tool of cognition by means of semantic knowledge maps. Through the interplay of image and time-based visualisation, the viewer forms a picture of particular documents enclosed in an archive, and a picture of the archive as an entity – a work that belongs to the art of knowledge.

***Semantic Map* (2001–04) of netzspannung.org**

Archives are conventionally organized on the basis of subject-specific systems. However, because no cross-subject system exists yet for the interdisciplinary field of media art, a new method of contextualizing and visualizing content was developed. The *Semantic Map* is an interface that structures and visualizes all the content of netzspannung.org according to semantic criteria. It provides the user with different possibilities for "rummaging through" the database to discover content and connections. The *Semantic Map* was specially developed so that the platform's heterogeneous content could be presented in a common frame of reference. The netzspannung.org database comprises documentations of media artworks, projects from IT research, design approaches, and themes connected with media theory and aesthetics/art history.

Fig. 6: *Semantic Map* (Fleischmann-Strauss 2004)

***Media Flow* (2006) of netzspannung.org**

The installation *Media Flow* of a Media Art Archive is an all-encompassing browser which makes the archive of netzspannung.org accessible in a simple way. Two parallel media streams, one made up of images and one of words, flow through the space as a large data projection. The word stream shows keywords, authors and titles of the archived documents. Using an integrated text-to-speech-module, the words are spoken out by a computer voice. Alongside the representation of text and image, they build an acous-

tic description of the archive. The media flow together with the acoustic sphere create an impression of an immersive space. The synopsis of overview, context and detail allows an all-embracing navigation through the archive. It combines the usual access via keywords with the new approach of an associative network of terms combined with visual search possibilities. Image and text intertwined as one *Media Flow* provide the viewer with a suggestive image of both the whole archive and particular documents.

We willingly agree with Lev Manovich when he suggests understanding a database as a "symbolic form",[18] as he follows in his thinking the "philosophy of symbolic form" of Ernst Cassirer and the study of art historian Erwin Panofsky about the central perspective as a symbolic form. The portal *Netzspannung.org* is a realisation of the database principle as a cultural form. The diversity of content and innovative methods of access were appreciated by Peter Weibel, director of ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe: "*Netzspannung.org* and its breakthrough interfaces create new structures of data and thinking. *Semantic Map* was counted as one of 100 most innovative products of the future, presented by Nobel Prize winner and physicist Theodor W. Haensch in the publication under the same title, as one of the ideas showing new paths which are changing our lives. Media art becomes here an art of knowledge". Derrick de Kerckhove says "Knowledge has never ceased to expand".[19] Therefore our interfaces are created with the image of an ever-expanding archive in mind – the boundaries of what is visible are invisible. They are constantly shifting, are ontologically untraceable, and escape all hierarchic orders.

Fig. 7: *Media Flow* (Fleischmann-Strauss 2006)

***Energy Passages* (2004)**

Hundreds of words from daily news in the form of a data stream turn up in urban space accompanied with whispering computer voices. The newspaper as a public space of activity speaks the language of power. *Energy Passages* allow the passersby to take over the public space through breaking and fragmenting the power. Sociologist Sherry Turkle describes this installation as an evocative object stimulating reflection: "The notion of a spatial experience of the discourse of the news within a city space and the possibility of deconstructing the newspaper captures the fragmentation of how media is experienced by citizens in a culture of simulation. It thus mirrors and realizes an important cultural and political moment, turning it into an object for reflection".[20] As soon as the passers-by have picked single words, related theme networks of ideas emerge in the data stream in the form of an audio-visual echo. "A stream of prepared meanings, the act of holding them and creating new connections between them – the sole perception of two simple processes gives us the feeling that we are looking at real mental flows of a city", says playwright Georg Stuck, commenting on the project.[21] Sound researcher Holger Schulze made an observation about the synchronicity of the information stream and sensual experience.[22]

Media scientist Peter Matussek emphasised the role of the reader and the text: "In this staging, writing is emphatically enlivened – not by a mere motion of a picture, which flirts with is own fall in a compensative outburst, but as a media related practice of the staging of performative reading, where the role of the text is just as significant as the reader's. The installation makes us realize that the future of writing in the age of silicon is less connected to the 'secondary orality' as it is to the pictorial, sculptural and architectural forms of expression".[23] The staging of daily news in the form of performative loud reading in urban space confronts the passers-by with fragments of opinions coming from the mass media as well as individuals. It reflects a sense of awe at the moment of recognition of so many all-at-once simultaneous presences.

Fig. 8: *Energie Passagen* (Fleischmann-Strauss 2004)

Conclusion or ongoing research questions

We are considering the issue of how the visualization of digital data can be read and experienced as a staging, and whether such production provides an enhanced insight. The basic questions that lead to current research issues are: How is knowledge created? What kind of knowledge arises? Is there knowledge resulting from interactivity? Is there knowledge through action? How or to what extent is thinking an action?

Brenda Laurel asks for an interface-design with a dramaturgical perspective already in 1991. In her book *Computers as Theatre*,[24] she compares the computer screen with a stage that puts the user at the center of the action. With the theatre metaphor, she follows previous models of knowledge storage and memory spaces. In the media-archaeological review, we find the scenic staged *Teatro della memoria* by Giulio Camillo (1480–1544), which was rediscovered by Frances Amelia Yates in *The Art of Memory.* In the context of media art, the computer is a memory theater, as has been noted by Oliver Grau[25] and Peter Matussek.[26] Following Giulio Camillo's classification system, which struggled with his *Teatro della Memoria* against the loss of the body as a medium, we intend with our interfaces to enable an inner activity for visitors that is now described as a "flow" experience.

Today, the *Theatre of Memory* is an interface based on algorithmic operations. Information is reduced, the view is staged over sightlines. The interface is an operational picture that stimulates our perception for the redesign of (new) knowledge. While theatre interprets reality, the aim of digital scenic staging is to make our daily presence, which is a *Mixed Reality* of the real world and its technical intermediaries, graspable. Media art not only interprets reality, but also makes the viewer part of the (immersive) picture. It encourages him or her to actively participate in the shaping of the image of the world and to reflect upon changes within their own mental images (Denkbilder).

Monika Fleischmann and **Wolfgang Strauss;** the German artists and scientists Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss are considered pioneers of interactive media art. The work of Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss has earned them the Golden Nica of Prix Ars Electronica and numerous other honorary awards, and is constantly archived by ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie) in Karlsruhe.

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THE PLEASURE OF LIGHT

Type of project: exhibition

Where: Green Gate, Gdańsk, Poland

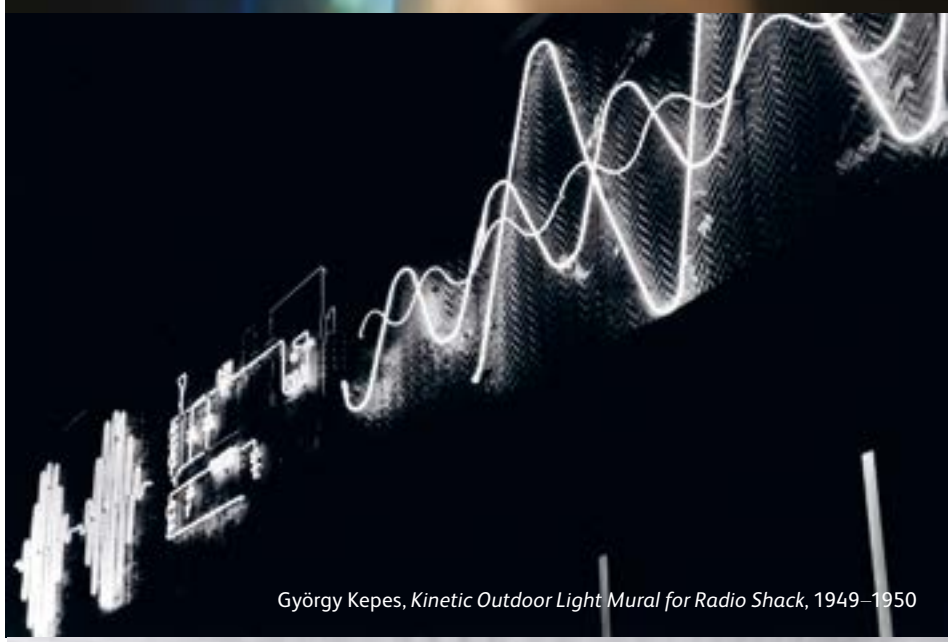
When: 30 April–26 June 2011

Artists: György Kepes (HUN) and Frank J. Malina (USA)

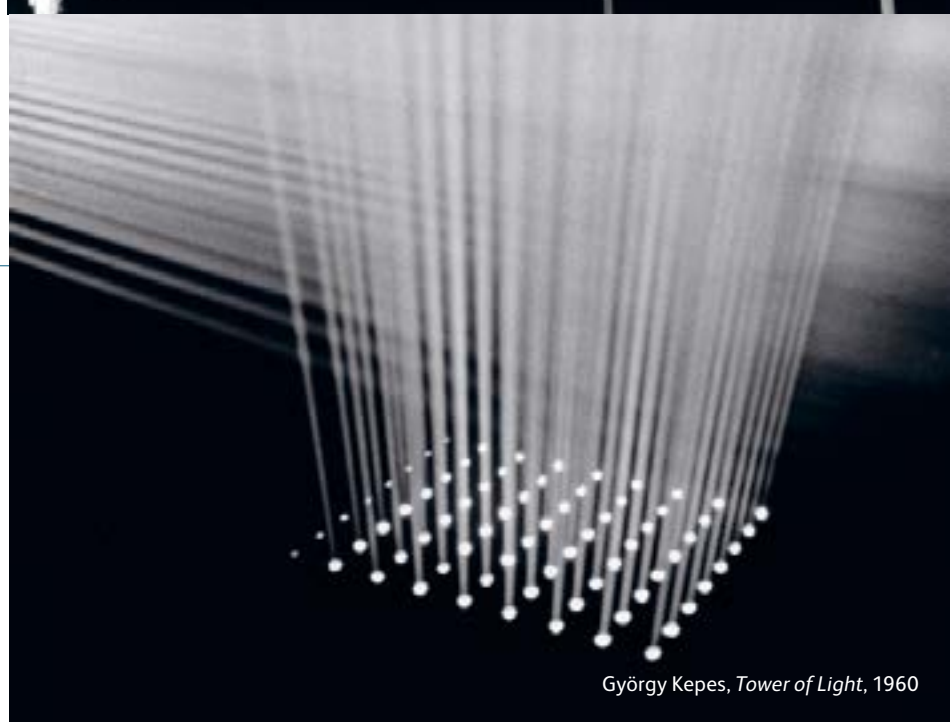
Curators: Nina Czeglédy, Róna Kopeczky

Organizers: Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdańsk;
The National Centre for Culture, Warsaw, Poland;
Cooperation: The National Museum, Gdańsk; Gdansk 2016, Poland
Organized in the scope of Art&Science Meeting Project

Frank J. Malina, *Flowers I, kinetic painting, Reflectodyne system*, 1964



György Kepes, *Kinetic Outdoor Light Mural for Radio Shack*, 1949–1950



György Kepes, *Tower of Light*, 1960

The Pleasure of Light. György Kepes and Frank J. Malina at the intersection of science and art

by Nina Czeglédy, Róna Kopeczky

György Kepes and Frank J. Malina's vision is best characterized by a distinct combination of aspiration and creativity expressed through experimentation and radical innovation. While the notions of interdisciplinary philosophy date back to a renaissance synthesis of different branches of knowledge, lately, interdisciplinary concepts and their applications have received renewed interest. Kepes and Malina were already pioneers of these ideas in the mid-20th century. They shared a humanist ideal which was perceived by many as utopian. They worked ahead of their time on demolishing the previously sharp division between art and science, producing a fundamental shift and making the results accessible to common perception. Both Malina and Kepes sought to find an equilibrium, or if you wish, a harmony, between the arts and the sciences through effective interaction and a broad interpretation of knowledge transfer. Each of them felt a sense of responsibility to develop purposeful personal and public expressions of creativity. For Kepes and Malina, working with light – both in private and public space – became an important tool for improving humankind's relation to the global environment. The creative use of light – light as a dynamic medium – preoccupied Kepes and Malina throughout their artistic careers. It is a common element in their artwork and forms a bridging concept for *The Pleasure of Light* project.

During World War II, both Kepes and Malina contributed to the US military. Kepes developed his camouflage theory into practice for the military and conducted seminars on the topic at the School of Design in Chicago, while Malina was working on rocket projects, providing fundamental patents for American rocketry, including the construction of the U.S.'s first successful high-altitude sounding rocket. During the Second World War, Malina felt obligated to serve the cause of his country; however, he was fundamentally a peace-loving individual whose primary goal was to bring Man closer to the Cosmos. It is no wonder then, that after the end of the War, Malina became disillusioned with space research aimed mostly at military purposes, and thus moved to Paris at the invitation of Julian Huxley – the first UNESCO director general. In his artwork, he explored issues of tension, transparency, light and movement, and in the 1950s began exploring kinetic art. In the process of these art experiments, he became conscious of the links to vision research by psychologists and cognitive scientists – this permeable art & science connection was clearly unrecognized at that time. He had his first solo show in 1953 in Paris, with numerous exhibitions to follow. In 1968, Malina founded Leonardo – a pioneering journal interweaving art and science and technology. Kepes, a Hungarian-born painter, designer, educator and art theorist, was stimulated early on by the experimental Kassák circle, and subsequently

collaborated on many projects with László Moholy-Nagy. He was a visionary and a pioneer, converging art and technology in America, although he became best known for his theoretical and educational work. He summarized his concepts in *The Language of Vision*, his world-famed book. In 1947, Kepes accepted an invitation to teach at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where in 1967, he founded the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, dedicated to advance new technologies and creative collaboration between scientists and artists. Kepes firmly believed that visual language conveys facts and ideas in a wider and deeper range than almost any means of communication, and realized this belief through his pioneering light installations. During these years at MIT, he also developed collaborative public art projects seeking new, publicly accessible interpretations.

It is an undisputed fact that Kepes's and Malina's concepts remain vital, and the influence of their accomplishments is strongly felt to this day. *The Pleasure of Light* exhibition and conference aim to present their parallel concepts, through the course of their lives, products and enduring influence.

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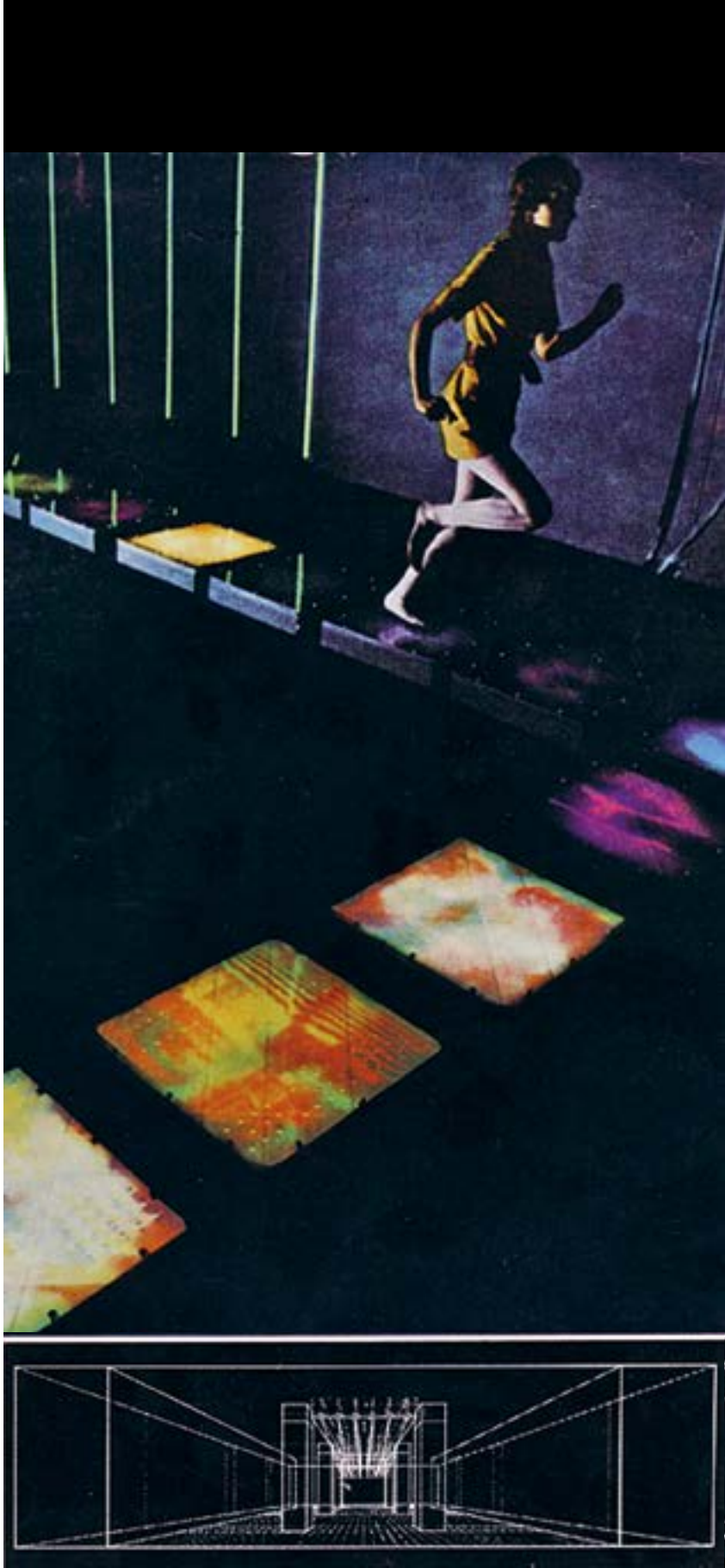
Róna Kopeczky is a curator at the Ludwig Museum and Contemporary Art Museum, Budapest, Hungary.



György Kepes, *Photoelastic Walk, with William Wainwright*, 1969

ART & APPARATUS

Type of project:	exhibitions
Where:	Kulturcentrum Ronneby, Ronneby, Sweden; Art Centre Gallery EL, Elbląg, Poland
When:	6 June–02 September 2012, Kulturcentrum Ronneby; 14–23 March 2012 in Art Centre Gallery El Additional: conference about art and technology was arranged by Art Centre Gallery EL on the 14th March 2012
Artists:	Alexey Chebykin (RU) Sylwia Galon (PL) Jakob Ingemansson (SE) Kordian Lewandowski (PL) Magnus Peterson (SE) Mariusz Białecki (PL) Linas Kutavičius (LT) Diana Rönnberg (PL/SE) Tomasz Skórka (PL) Ruzica Zajec (DE) Izabela Żółcińska (PL) Additional at the exhibition at Art Centre Gallery in Elbląg: Anders Jönsson (SE) Maciej Wojnicki (PL) Jarosław Nowak (PL) and Maciej Olewniczak (PL)
Organizers:	Kulturcentrum Ronneby, Ronneby, Sweden; Art Centre Gallery El, Elbląg, Poland

workshops

Machine Art Design/MAD Studio,
Karlshamn, Swedish Waterjet Lab,
Ronneby, Sweden

14–15 June 2011,
17–21 October 2011,
30 January–3 February 2012

Alexey Chebykin (RU)
Sylwia Galon (PL)
Jakob Ingemansson (SE)
Kordian Lewandowski (PL)
Magnus Peterson (SE)
Mariusz Białecki (PL)
Linas Kutavičius (LT)
Diana Rönnberg (PL/SE)
Tomasz Skórka (PL)
Ruzica Zajec (DE)
Izabela Żółcińska (PL)

Kulturcentrum Ronneby,
Ronneby, Sweden

Art & Apparatus

by Torun Ekstrand

> At the first meeting between the artists and the engineers (…) I told the artists that they could ask for anything they wanted, and I asked the engineers to respond with suggestions on how to accomplish these ideas, if they could be realized at all.[1]

Experiments in Art and Technology

Recently, when visiting Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, I came upon documentary films from performances of *Nine Evenings of Theatre and Engineering* in New York in 1966, reconstructed by Barbro Schultz Lundestam. Robert Rauschenberg and Billy Klüver arranged the series of performances, which incorporated new technologies from that time. This was after having previously organized interdisciplinary collaborations between artists, engineers and scientists at Bell Telephone Laboratories. As a result, the legendary organization E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) was founded by the artists Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Whitman and the engineers Billy Klüver and Fred Waldhauer.[2]

In their first newsletter E.A.T. wrote that "E.A.T. will guide the artist in achieving new art through new technology and work for the professional recognition of the engineer's technical contribution within the engineering community"[3] E.A.T. was groundbreaking in several ways and facilitated collaboration between artists, engineers and industry. One can't say that an explosion of cooperation of this kind has been organized since, but cooperation has taken and continues to take place.

The first experiments in art and technology in the 1950s and 1960s are maybe the ones we remember the most because of their presence in museums and the optimistic position that technology held then. During the 1950s, there was boundless optimism regarding the limitless prospects that were to be opened up by the wonders of science and technology. Magazines and films contained various proposals for futuristic utopian societies.[4] Although many of us spend hours in front of a computer and with our smart phones, our attitude toward technology is more ambivalent today. It is an integral part of our reality, though we sometimes call it "unreal".

Artists and laboratories

The idea of collaboration between art and technology was the starting point for the project *Art & Apparatus*. Eleven artists from Poland, Sweden, Germany, Lithuania and Russia were selected to work in experimental research and laboratory environments in Sweden.

Waterjet cutting, 3D modeling, 3D scanning and 3D printing techniques were available in the studios. This time the invitation to collaborate, as well as the funding for it, came from the arts and not from engineering companies. We discussed the ideas with two research and experimental studios. Kulturcentrum Ronneby arranged a series of workshops together with MAD Studio (Machine Art Design) in Karlshamn, and the Swedish Waterjet Lab in Ronneby. *Art & Apparatus* was organized bearing in mind the earlier history of collaboration between design and industry in Ronneby. Kockums industries played a vital role in the Swedish design history and exported goods all over the world through the enamel factory. For the *Art & Apparatus* project, Ronneby offered recent technologies to the artists involved. The artists could not ask for anything they wanted, since the technologies were limited to waterjet cutting and 3D modeling technologies, but within these limits, anything could be discussed.

Mutual exploration

We anticipated an exchange of knowledge, skills and experience in the interdisciplinary field of art and technology. The main idea was to give artists access to new technologies, and to give the studios and researchers access to artistic methods and ways of approaching their technologies. Allowing artists and experts to meet and see what happens created what one of the artists described as a win-win-situation. The process was important, as well as the mutual exploration of working methods and knowledge in different fields. Our focus was also cultural and social, to get to know one another and create new contacts across geographical

borders as well as across the art-versus-technology barrier. A cross-media perspective was employed, and the projects were situated in the borderland between the digital and the physical, where both sides influenced the other.

Art and science

Art and science have a long-standing relationship, and until the 19th century the two were closely intertwined. Our habit of thinking that science is only about rational thinking and art is about emotional reactions is not a fruitful approach for either art or science. The pursuit of critical awareness in art and science is the same. Furthermore, not all things can be explained, neither in art, nor in science.

A series of workshops

Art & Apparatus was designed as a series of workshops. The introductory presentations and a workshop took place on the ferry between Gdynia and Karlskrona. The following week-long workshops took place in the laboratories, where the artists chose which studio to work in. 3D models were made and generated on computers and digital sketches were transformed and processed into physical objects using powder and glue, or waterjet cutting of different materials. The models that came out of the workshops were as different as the artists in the project, and ranged between advanced architectural models, sculptures, projects for public space, spatial forms, narrative art and experiments with the possibilities inherent in different materials.

For the final workshops, four artists had a chance to return to develop and dwell more deeply into ideas and technologies. Jakob Ingemansson and Izabela Żółcińska worked at the Swedish Waterjet Lab, and Sylwia Galon and Magnus Peterson at MAD Studio. The studios were faced with the tough task of trying to execute the artists' ideas and overcome difficult obstacles. Knowledge about the technologies was expanded when the possibilities and limitations of the technologies were tested and joint creativity from both the artists and the laboratory staff was needed to solve problems and develop new ideas.

Izabela Żółcińska wanted to use water in a double sense, combining waterjet technology with the bodies of rivers running into the Baltic Sea: the Ronneby River, the Polish Wisła, the Peene in Germany, Neva in Russia and Niemen in Lithuania. The rivers join like a giant symbolic bloodstream. They are thinly cut in red acrylic glass and very different in shapes. It is visible in the artworks that the Polish river, for instance, is elaborated by nature in many small diverse formations, while the German river was constructed by humans in an attempt to create symmetric order.

The two works of Jakob Ingemansson also included water. He presented a concept for an eroding waterwheel in the award-winning city park of Ronneby, Brunnsparken. The idea was to enhance the effects of water in the landscape and create an eroded space in the ground. His second project was the *Sun and Rain Pavilion*, a site-specific proposal for the park. The many parts of the model were cut using waterjet technology, and the parts joined together in a complex structure during the last workshop. The *Pavilion* functions as a large sundial depending on the sun's position, and creates a waterfall in a 180-degree panorama during rainy days. The same black acrylic and technology used in the model can be used for a full-scale pavilion.

I recall the immersive dome, the Pepsi Pavilion, at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan, made by E.A.T., with sound, kinetic and optical effects. It was the result of collaboration between over 75 artists, designers and engineers. A water vapor cloud sculpture, a synthetic weather phenomenon, was one important part of the dome.[5] The water vapor cloud seems up to date with our awareness of humans affecting nature and climate change, as does the pavilion of Jakob Ingemansson. Transformations in nature are part of us and we are part of them. We affect nature, nature affects us. Jakob Ingemansson uses unpredictable weather elements as co-creators of his pavilion.

Sylwia Galon continued her exploration of the expansion of time and space, creating sculptures in 3D print. In *The Atomic Mushroom* she created a nuclear mushroom cloud. A temporary accumulation of particles, gas and smoke combined with intensive light and a blast – creating beautiful and deadly radiation at the same time. It was made up of billions of powder grains joined together in the printing process, as if trying to bind together an unstable explosion into a solid and safe form. *Little Boy* was the name of the first atomic bomb used in warfare; the bomb was released over Hiroshima in 1945. The name of the bomb implies that it should be safe and familiar – as does the sculptural mushroom of Sylwia Galon.

Magnus Petersson builds his own imaginary dreamlike worlds. The worlds seem like they have been inhabited, but no humans are in sight. He made use of 3D printing to create pieces for his large-scale model installations and for his photographs taken of these constructed environments. His small-scale sculptures became a part of an unknown and a bit dystopic, yet familiar and uninhabited archipelago or cityscape of the twilight zone.

The inspiration for the sculpture, *Nerd's Thinker* by Kordian Lewandowski can be found in the famous bronze sculpture, *The Thinker* by Auguste Rodin. Both Rodin's naked man and Lewandowski's character are deeply immersed in thought when sitting up on their pedestals. While Rodin's sculpture was conceived in the late 1800s with Dante Alighieri's *The Poet* as its inspiration, Lewandowski's figure is rooted in the computer gaming world. His sculpture is inspired by the character *Donkey Kong* from an arcade game in the early 1980s. The gorilla figure is familiar to gamers worldwide. The sculpture idea might be realized at the Blekinge Institute of Technology in Karlshamn to symbolize both academic studies and the many digital programs, including Digital Games, on campus.

Ruzica Zajec made a minimalistic transparent container, which consisted of shadows and mirrors, with the text, *Ich habe alles.* Her works recall the ideas of existentialist philosophy and the human condition of feeling empty. An attempt to fill the existential void with consumption leaves nothing behind. The writer Antonio Porchia wrote, "We become aware of the void as we fill it", but Ruzica Zajec, also in reverse, tells us about an acceptance. "This is it, there is no more, and I have what I need".

The work of Aleksey Chebykin ranges from monumental layered 3D portraits of icons of the digital revolution, to waterjet cutting on vinyl and in porcelain. He presented his work in the Waterjet Lab for artists in Kaliningrad upon his return. It was like a satellite-workshop intending to inspire more artists to use the possibilities of waterjet cutting. Linas Kutavicius created prototypes for a public art project in the *Thing-O-Matic*, while Mariusz Białecki made a 3D print of an extract of the Baltic Sea bottom. Diana Rönnberg made artworks connecting handicraft and new technology, inspired by curve-stitching and string art from the 19th century.

Kordian Lewandowski, *Nerd's Thinker*, 2011

Tomasz Skórka tried out a series of works in metal and plastic on a small scale. He also arranged for a car to drive over plastic PET-bottles, to make their surface flat and rough and then symbolically returned them to nature by creating a heap of maple leaves. Skórka and Bialecki both work at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk in the Sculpture Department, and share their knowledge of techniques with their students.

Exhibition

Models and sketches were shown at Kulturcentrum Ronneby in an exhibition that presented the working processes. A selection of the artists showed more artworks connected to digital media, technology and machines, in a curated exhibition by Oscar Guermouche.

The combination of art and technology is rarely shown in museums and art halls. Techniques like painting and sculpture are more common and are an obvious choice in group exhibitions, while the union of art and technology is not. Video and photography had that role a few decades ago. Video could be shown in the basement of a museum, e.g. on a TV-monitor as an exotic object. The main thing was not the artwork, but the technology itself. The ensemble of art and technology has its own institutes, its own biennales or festivals. Only a few art/tech works are in museum collections.

Some of the works made in the *Art & Apparatus* workshops have travelled to new exhibitions in Europe and to other contexts.

Art and industry cooperation in Elbląg

The works from *Art & Apparatus* were also shown in an exhibition in Galeria EL in Elbląg alongside an Art and Technology seminar. Elbląg has a tradition of cooperation between art and industry. The almost fifty sculptures in the city of Elbląg are a visible reminder of this tradition of cooperation. The sculptures were shown in The Biennale of Spatial Forms, which was the largest recurrent art event in public space in Poland during the 1960s and 1970s.[6]

The First Biennale of Spatial Forms is widely recognized as one of the most important artistic events in the post-war history of Poland. It had an unprecedented scale, both in terms of realization, as well as in terms of funding provided by the state. It was the first manifestation of a new idea for state patronage of arts, which subsequently focused on joining art with industry. The Biennale was initiated by Gerard Kwiatkowski, a decorator at Zamech Mechanical Works, at a local marine equipment plant, and the manager of Gallery El.[7]

DIY, humans and technology

One day, the technician Leonida Andonyadis brought the *Thing-O-Matic* 3D printer to the workshop. It is a DIY-kit for 3D printing. "Soon in everybody's home, affordable to many", he told us when presenting the small machine, which uses plastic layers to print out a 3D digital model. In the near future, you will be able to print an extra chair, or your own cutlery when you happen to need it.

Digital technologies are a part of our everyday lives. We understand the world through digital techniques. Our children shop for virtual clothes, we meet people all over the world face to face on Skype or FaceTime; we send text messages by mobile phone to somebody on the other side of the globe who receives our messages at the same moment we send them, we e-mail, take photos and send digital postcards, we interact in virtual worlds, we buy a book on the internet and are able to read it a moment later. At the same time, we sometimes have an ambivalent approach to technology. The Swedish Television series *Real humans* last year titillated our minds when the robots, or hubots, started to demand human rights and proclaim their feelings.[8]

The performance artist Stelarc recently gave a lecture at CCA Laznia in Gdańsk at the *Art & Science* meetings program. He talked about the human body as obsolete. He enhances his own body with electronics and robotics to acclaim new skills and uses his body as an arena for experiments.
He talked about a shared reality through our bodies, about being connected to the sensory experiences of others in other locations when extending himself into the virtual world. He claims that his body is impersonal. "I am not only me, but you are me, too". We all share a collective world. Stelarc presented the future of human prosthesis, a sketch of a 3D printed heart.[9]

The *I*, the human touch and authenticity are vital parts of the romantic and modernistic idea of an artist. Underlying is the notion of a unique artwork, created by a genius. The artwork should be eternal, not on a DVD or made to go in a

3D shop or on a street corner. It is also related to the mechanisms of the art market, which sells unique works or limited editions. Robots have been used for industrial painting for decades and smart machines for domestic use. The interactive Robotic painting machine by Benjamin Grosser uses Artificial Intelligence to listen to the surroundings and paints what it hears.[10] There is a talent show for Artbots.

"Art can be defined as a word for all the duties we are not willing to delegate to robots", the author and researcher Rasmus Fleischer writes, and admits that it might not be the very best definition of art. "Drummers, graffiti artists, opera singers, authors and sculptors work with art. From them we expect (at least in theory) a unique personal expression. That is why they can't be replaced by robots. To do the dishes or trade with currency are not art forms. That is why nobody complains if those duties are taken over by robots. Preferably, dishwashers and fiber cables should not have personal expressions but should perform exactly what we expect from them".[11]

Artists do not do what we expect from them, and this is a true relief. In *Art & Apparatus*, we could not imagine the results beforehand.

"Are there dangers to this sort of technology?" Professor Neil Gershenfield at MIT asked this question in his paper on 3D printing, *How to make almost anything*. He wrote about one threat, which is that digital fabrication could be used to produce weapons. "Even though 3D printers could be controlled, hurting people is already a wellmet market demand. Cheap weapons can be found anywhere in the world. CBC's experience running fab labs in conflict zones has been that they are used as an alternative to fighting. And, although established elites do not see the technology as a threat, its presence can challenge their authority". Another concern regarding digital fabrication that Gershenfield writes about is the risk of intellectual property theft; he also writes that it can be solved, like in the music industry.[12]

In the future there is only one thing that we can take for granted, that 3D technologies can transform our conception of art.

Researchers and technicians Art & Apparatus:
Peter Bengtsson, MAD Studio (Machine Art Design), Karlshamn
Anders Jönsson and Anna Harding, Swedish Waterjet Lab, Ronneby

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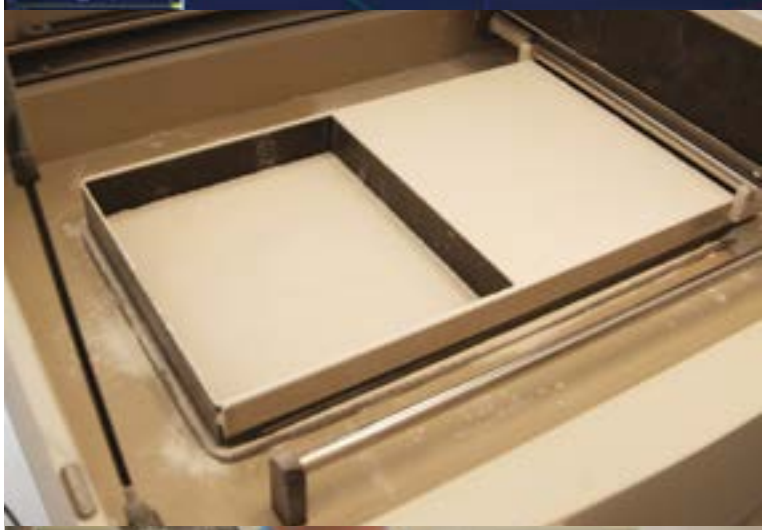
Art & Apparatus - an encounter between art and technology

by Oscar Guermouche



An artist´s practice is often dependent on alternative solutions and the ability to use whatever is at hand – commonly not least due to economics. Making use of what is available in daily life is also an approach used to formulate and comment on this everyday life.

Today, digital technology and high-tech equipment is a natural part of our life, it is easily accessible and relatively inexpensive. For many artists it has therefore become natural to work in these areas; using the same techniques and media that characterize the society that they intend to comment on.

The exhibition *Art & Apparatus* gives examples of what this encounter between two different worlds can result in. The works are for example based on video games, robotics, Internet pornography and sonar, but simultaneously, the links to art and art theory are clear. As a part of the exhibition there are objects, sketches and models on display from a workshop series at MAD Studio in Karlshamn and the Swedish Waterjet Lab in Ronneby. During these workshops, which started in autumn 2011, the artists experimented with water-jet technology and 3D modeling.

In total there are twelve artists, originating from Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Russia and Sweden. The exhibition and workshop series is a collaboration between Kulturcentrum Ronneby, Swedish Waterjet and MAD Studio. It is also part of the project Art Line, an international and cultural exchange between the five nations in the southern Baltic Sea.

Sylwia Galon, *The Atomic Mushroom*, 2011

Anthropocenic Spaces

by Jakob Ingemansson

The earth, apparatus

Ever since the steam engine was invented and the start of the industrialization, humans have been co-authoring the geo-processes of the earth: climate, geology, evolution. These processes can no longer be perceived as something "around" or "outside us", but rather as something that is part of human existence. Nobel Prize winner Paul Crutzen uses the term "Anthropocene", suggesting is a new and ongoing geological era.

As humans, we have a need to stimulate our sense of perception. Widespread awareness of the energy and climate challenges faced today have, somehow contradictory, resulted in a contemporary architecture that increasingly isolate itself from its surrounding. Using the working title *Antropocenska Rum*, *Anthropocenic Space*. I investigate the potential of an architecture with, for the Anthropocene era, adequate spatial experiences, used especially during the Anthropocenic Era. The intention is to include the geo-processes of the surroundings the spatial articulations.

Architecture is hence considered as a membrane which facilitates a conversation between the body's physical perception and the geo-processual state of the surroundings. In this exchange the immaterial forces – the conditions of architecture – is meeting its materiality. Acid rain, wind-borne carbon particles, temperature fluctuations, irregular precipitation, storms and radiation can all decompose and fertilize building materials and landscapes.

Art, industry

The Eames, a couple active in California, were some of the first architects to embrace the new technologies that became available after World War II. Their own home, Eames House, was built using prefabricated elements and simple and refined materials.
Their joint artistic achievement was influenced by the technology of that era – and vice versa. In the short film *Powers of Ten* (1977), produced in collaboration with IBM, they investigated the possiblities and potentials of contemporary video technology. In this audiovisual piece, which starts on a picnic blanket in Chicago, the scaling of perception is examined: the relationship between human bodies and the universe, and the relation between molecules and the human body. The film tangent the visual experience of the Google Earth map service with apparent accuracy. Google Earth, however, was launched approximately 40 years later.

Using contemporary technology to develop art, or using art to give an edge to technology, is thus a well-tried strategy, which both creators and industry can benefit from. During the *Art & Apparatus* event, I had the opportunity to explore the possibilities of water jet technology in collaboration with the Water Jet Lab. As an architect, the technology jet fascinates me, since it can be used in creating architectural models, i.e. scaled representations of spaces, at the same time as it can be used to spaces, furniture and building details rooms in full scale.

Sun, water

As a part of my thesis project *Streaming Potential - An Investigation of the Architectonic Potential in the Physical Spaces Hosting Internet* from the Aarhus School of Architecture, I developed a pavilion to facilitate an experience of two common weather phenomena – sun and rain. The pavilion is designed to be placed by a pond or a lake, and to face south. When hit by sunshine, the surface of the water mirrors the sun beams through different openings, and the pavilion works like a sundial. During rainy weather, a waterfall is formed over the same openings, which then form a panoramic 180 degree waterfall. In a collaboration with the Water Jet Lab, a 1:10 scale model of the pavilion was created, with the intentions to investigate how the work could be placed in Ronneby Brunnspark.
During the work in Ronneby, the idea to another project arose. A sculpture or an architectural machine, influenced by, and created for all the streams in and around Brunnsparken, was developed. The intention is to use the

energy from the flowing water and by using a dynamic construction enhance the eroding effect it has on the landscape. Thus, the architecture is facilitating the inherent geo-processual flow, whose effect is reinforced and can be read as a negative form in the landscape.

To investigate the direct spatial experience and embodied perception of the exchange between space and the geoprocessual state of the place is the goal of *Anthropocentric Spaces*. The models and sketches discussed this text are not end stations, rather representations of spaces in an iterative process which is targeted towards realizations in scale 1:1.

Jakob Ingemansson is a Swedish architect; since 2011 he has worked as a teacher in Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark.

Jakob Ingemansson, *Sun and Rain Pavillion*, 2012

The Bodies of Rivers

by Izabela Żółcińska

Idea

Our bodies consist of 70% water. Water also covers 70% of our Earth. Is there a border between the human body and what is outside it? What kind of a shape does our body take in the process of the exchanges it is constantly undergoing? Does the shape of a river have something in common with our bodies?

Place

The first recorded spelling of the name of Ronneby is Rotnæby, "the village upon the roaring (river)". My attention during the workshop was attracted to Brunnspark, located on the bank of the Ronnebyån. This idyllic place is currently acclaimed the most beautiful park in Sweden, and includes a relic of a glorious past. The sanatorium, renowned for its healing spring waters, rich in iron, was at the height of its popularity with visitors in 1870. According to the knowledge of those days, the waters at Brunspark were said to, among other things, increase the level of hemoglobin in patients. The spa was high-tech for its day. The sanatorium invested in new water pumping technology and high-efficiency machines. The Waterjet Lab – the workshop's partner – can be seen as an extension of this water technicalization process. This laboratory provided us with the possibility to check different water cutting materials and equipment, and as a research platform, gave us the possibility to have professional support in our search for nonstandard solutions.

Because of the international character of workshops, I decided to focus on several rivers from the Baltic Sea area. I was also personally crossing borders at this time. I choose the Ronneby, Penne, Vistula, Oder, Neva and Neman as samples of "bodies" of rivers to investigate in water jet technology. All of them flow out into the Baltic Sea, and all of them are samples of water from the countries of the participants.

Specimen

An organism isolated from other map elements betrays the nature of the place in which it is rooted. The nudity of the technically obtained shape allows me to observe it from a distance. Sentient, a body of water adapts to the conditions of life. It also creates, stimulates and destroys. It enters into a relationship with the water economy in its area, the relief of the land, the climate, the invention or indolence of humans. Just as our bodies' social power imprints its tracks in this organism. Its shape is also a resonance of our personal attitudes towards ourselves.

Technology

Considering technology as the first impulse for the project was challenging for me. I was put out of my comfort zone. Usually the choice of a medium was the last decision in my art realizations. Collected experiences encouraged me to explore and recreate the natural "shape of water" with the same medium, but controlled by human beings. The water jet method is based on the same technique as that found in nature in the erosion process. Lab professionals searched for a way to apply this technology at the fringes of its practical usefulness. We achieved very thin (0.4 mm) samples, which visually resembled the capillary vessels that circulate blood. My attention was caught by precision cutting. Another inspiration was my introducing a miniature cutting with kerf widths down to 0.05 mm. This micro technology creates objects that can become part of the human body, and is used in medical equipment – particularly implants. This information about the development trends in water jet cutting consolidates my intuition of flexible borders between technology and nature.

The water jet is widely used in industry, and there are many examples of applying this technology in everyday life. The workshop gave me a platform to sample this technique as an art tool, but also as the subject of my art research. It is difficult to achieve such cooperation making common orders as a client.

Response

As acrylic glass objects, *The Bodies of Rivers* arouse individual associations. For some audiences, they connote the history of Ronneby. In 1564, the city was the location of a bloody battle between Swedish and Danish armies, and the water turned red from the blood of the victims. A different background is that given in an incident published July 23, 2012, in the Norwegian *Aftenposten* entitled: *Hva er det som farger sjøen rød?* This alarming situation was caused by iron oxide – color additives rinsed out by rain from a swamp. The non-toxic substance was left there by an Askøy dweller, and dyed the bay red. The water has recorded many stories.

Izabela Żółcińska graduated from the Academy of the Fine Arts in Poznań, Poland. Her fields of activity are painting, installation and culture animation.

Izabela Żółcińska, *The Bodies of Rivers / The Vistula*, 2012

BALTIC SOUNDS GOOD

Type of project: exhibition

Where: Art Centre Gallery EL, Elbląg, Poland

When: 27–30 September 2011

Artists:
Krzysztof Topolski (PL)
Maciek Olewniczak (PL)
Danil Akimov (RU)
Sergey Ivanov (RU)
SOUNDLAB GROUP:
Wiktor Piskorz (PL)
Mariusz Owczarek (PL)
Rafał Wawrzyk (PL)

Curators: Krzysztof Topolski (PL) and Maciek Olewniczak (PL)

Organizer: Art Centre Gallery EL, Elbląg, Poland


Baltic Sounds Good

Baltic Sounds Good

by Krzysztof Topolski

Workshops, concert, installation

As part of the *BSG Baltic Sounds Good* project, we ran 3-day international workshops in listening and field recording. Polish and Russian participants went on a 24-hour ferry trip from Gdynia to Karlskrona and back. They also spent one day at the Marine Station in Hel.

Armed with portable recorders, dynamic, condenser and contact microphones, a tripod and a hydrophone, we set off on a journey in search of sounds. This extraordinary sonic trip to Sweden ended with a laptop orchestra concert in the gothic interiors of the EL Gallery in Elbląg. The recordings provided the basis for an electroacoustic music composition. A ferry plan projected over the stage provided a graphic backdrop for the concert. We presented recordings played as sound installations during the summer holiday period in 2012 on the Stena Vision and Stena Spirit ferries. The journey and workshops were documented on film.

Listening and recording

The main event during the workshops was a journey by ferry during which we listened to its sounds. We also spent one day listening to and recording on a hydrophone the sound of the Marine Station in Hel. Despite being so close to the sea, the ferry seems to separate us from this principal. We are on a huge, vibrating boat which has more to do with technology than nature, and more in common with industry than with the sea. This overwhelming, resounding mass of steel, a little town with its own restaurants, swimming pools, hair shops, spa and boutiques is like a swimming hotel. The main officer kindly lets us see the engine room and the bridge – places where passengers would normally not be allowed to venture – as we are entering the port. The sounds that accompany us are not only those of the ordinary, everyday kind. There are also weird, strange and new sounds.

The main deck is flooded with elevator music, seeping from ubiquitous speakers, loud and monotonous, while the engines (the size of a small lorry) send the walls and floors into vibrations. The whole ferry vibrates and shivers all the time. Dawn welcomes us on the bridge, as we enter the port. Focused, we listen to the orders given in Swedish, and the sounds of electronics and radio connections. When the ship stops, everything starts to vibrate, with the metal walls and glass windows playing their own melody. Shoes screech on wet, metal floors and something is clicking on the ceiling. There is a strong wind, which never stops blowing.

In Hel we learn what it is like to work with a hydrophone. When we put our device into the water from the pier in Hel we can hear the engines of the boat which is still invisible, beyond the horizon. This is a completely new and fascinating experience, a perspective which was previously unknown to us. The waters of the Marine Station are quiet. They seep delicately, and we can hear the sound of a working unit. The travelers are leaving the ship to multilingual farewells spoken through speakers, and are invited to use the ferry again. These are only a few of many recordings made during the workshops. Most of them, including the piece recorded during the concert, can be found on the project website.

Sacred noise. Does the Baltic sound good?

Field recording is a method used by many scientists and artists. In the 1930s, a musicologist, John Lomax, travelled with a recording equipment around the United States. Pierre Schaeffer used sound recordings in his pioneering experiments in “musique concrete”. Field recordings are also the main method of composers and researchers working in the field of acoustic ecology.

Research and reflection on soundscapes are a domain of the World Soundscape Project, a group established by the Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer. According to Schafer, our sonic environment is polluted. We should protect it by fighting off noise and fostering natural, unspoiled and unique soundscapes, as well as creating new ones. Witold Lutosławski, thanks to whom in 1969 UNESCO passed a resolution on the right to silence, would fully agree.[1] The World Soundscape Project group, founded in the 1960s, recorded all over the world, creating such projects and records as *Vancouver Soundscape*, *European Sound Diary* and *Five Village Soundscape*. The artists' compositions contain pure, unprocessed field recordings, or so-called soundscapes, a kind of patchwork of sounds. Acoustic ecology is thriving in many countries, promoting a listening culture. More and more people are becoming interested in listening to the Great Musical Composition of the World.

Krzysztof Topolski is an electroacoustic improviser, sound artist and a curator of Baltic Sounds Good.

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In between pseudo-ethnography and engaged in-house criticism

conversation with Joanna Warsza conducted by Torun Ekstrand and Ingemar Lönnbom

T.E./I.L.: Why have you chosen to work so much with art that exists temporarily?

J.W.: I chose to work predominantly in the public realm and most often on temporary projects. I enjoy the challenge and dealing with these contexts, including ideological questions and social conditioning, and its relevance to current issues. I have a theatre background, and although I am more active in the visual arts and architecture, I still concentrate on live aspects, on staging reality, bringing forward social tensions, problems which hover in the air, and help us in our understanding of ourselves and the system. Finally, working in the public realm on ephemeral projects demands that I act directly and critically, without discursive overproduction.

T.E./I.L.: Our modern cities consist of buildings and sculptures that are meant to stand for hundreds of years. Why is it necessary to produce art that is short-lived?

J.W.: Initially, a site-specific art was a physical artwork inscribed into a given location in the public space – like commissioned sculptures, installations or later land art pieces. Since the 1970s, but most intensively in recent years, "site-specific" has become a strategy for integrating art directly into the realm of the social, for redressing social problems, empowering audiences and underscoring the existence of unprivileged groups, places or problems. A site became a site of knowledge and intellectual exchange, a debate informed by a broader range of disciplines. The artist started to assume the role of an ethnographer, culture mediator, organiser, community adventurer and temporary critic. Art in public spaces is far more than just sculptures, of course. But even this ephemeral form brings a danger of commodification or easy consumption. As with the appearance of every paradigm shift – something can be improved, and something else broken or simplified.
In art that is short-lived, I am interested in what I call "the economy of experience", a live-through cognitive and critical moment put forward by the artist, the curator, the presence of the first and secondary audience, a moment that hopefully recontextualises the status quo. After the social sculpture of Joseph Beuys and other process-oriented projects, we know very well that sculpture in the public realm can take a time-based form. Maybe we need to understand sculpture in the expanded field, sculpture as a situation, and maybe even as dissolving art in the realms of the real. I give you an example of how we can understand public art as being far from sculptural material: last year, in the context of Warsaw's endeavours to win the title of European Capital of Culture, I wrote a proposal, together with the sociologist Joanna Erbel, for the project *Warsaw as a Ready-made: Artists on the Management Boards of Public Enterprises*. The project assumed the development of art and culture via the inclusion of artists, curators, architects and scientists in the decision-making processes of public institutions, which in the post-communist era have very unfavourable connotations. For instance, the prevailing view is that parents who send their children to a state school don't know what they are doing. We suggested that artists enter a creative dialogue with selected public institutions. In this way, for example, the Public Transport Board would avail itself of artists' imaginations in order to reclaim the degraded notion "public", to liberate itself from the mechanisms of bureaucracy or to become more user-friendly. The value added by the art projects wouldn't be snatched away by patents or corporate interests, but utilised for the general public. As the British Artist Placement Group did in the 1970s when introducing artists into companies, or as the American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles practises

currently – she still has an office in a New York municipal cleaning enterprise – we wanted to treat artists not as decorators, but as initiators of creative, change-generating thinking, as urban artists. In this process, apart from the artists, we also wanted to include social actors rarely present in the public sector – lawyers, economists, programmers and other experts, who favour private sector commercial work, rather than working pro bono. So, when you ask me about the sculpture, I think placing artists on the boards of the city companies would have many long-term effects, and would – in some way – fulfil, in fact, a similar agenda.

T.E./I.L.: What are the main differences between working in public space with temporary interventions, social and collaborative practices, arts-festival and permanent artwork? What in your opinion the best methods for working in public space?

J.W.: I am not very interested in objects and permanent forms. I feel that museums often imprison artworks. I'm personally interested in art in public space that has a performative dimension. By performativity, I understand direct effectiveness, a snowball effect that it could initiate in terms of its engagement of different social groups, an action with critical and subversive potential, which undermines the status quo. The best method is being aware of the civic and social dimensions, and taking a critical stance and responsibility, that's all. Art should be one of the voices in a democratic argument, it should take some sort of political stance. When a real argument occurs, one might also hope for a real and conscious choice. And, as the philosopher Chantal Mouffe says, political action and being political in the public sphere are predicated on a spirited and courageous confrontation between different visions. Art can direct precisely such an agonistic confrontation. This is something that I learnt when working on the 7th Berlin Biennale – that one should not be afraid of conflict. However, one must not just act on impulse. Conflict and courage can be a method, if one is prepared for it. Public art often hits harder when it is painful and awkward, rather than merely a pleasant experience which only reinforces symbolic divisions into the majority and minority, or else becomes an affirmation of the language of authority. Many so-called social and collaborative practices implement existing expectations, hidden agendas, and political or image-focused agendas. Often, for example, work with a particular minority doesn't really negate social differences but, rather, stigmatizes this minority even more, and can, indeed, have an anti-integrational impact. Difficult and painful projects can be very creative and opening. But there is one condition. You have to go into such actions prepared, have a strategy and supporters, and mediate with people on the ground, who after the action, will be left with the results. The arguments should be followed by negotiation, an evolving set of tools for its implementation, and the possibility of handing over the results achieved by art to other social actors. Public art cannot only be pleasing to those already pleased, which is often the case at big festivals. Sometimes it should be against its own audience, rather than for it. Just one example: such was the installation of the Macedonian artist Nada Prlja who, during the 7th Berlin Biennale, put up a wall across Friedrichstrasse, one of the main streets in Berlin. She called it *Peace Wall*; it separated the rich from the poor, the integrated and the non-integrated – or rather it made those separations visible. The project caused outrage, but it also resulted in the coming together of people representing different local groups and interests, who would otherwise never have met. Here, they put up a united front – against the artist, as it were. Art became the obstacle to be overcome. When I look at many of my projects, I can see that it was especially those which caused some conflict that were the most durable and significant.

T.E./I.L.: What do you think about the dissolving borders between art, performance, music, dance, architecture and so on?

J.W.: I really don't care about the borders; when you have something to say, you can use any artistic means to get your message across. But I support the avant-guarde claims of fusing art and life. When there is something to say, the medium doesn't matter, what rather matters for me is the notion of political engagement, social and cultural relevance. If you look at the work of Christoph Schlingensief or Tadeusz Kantor, or the contemporary work of the collective Akademia Ruchu or Alexandra Pirici, a Romanian choreographer who represented Romania with the Immaterial Retrospective of the Venice Biennale in 2013, or Public Movement, an Israeli group who have worked with Performa and the New Museum – these artists are relevant in all contexts, it simply works in all fields.

T.E./I.L.: As a curator how would you describe the challenges you meet as you work in different countries?

J.W.: Part of the excitement of this job is to play on the dualism of the estrangement of the pseudo-ethnographer in combination with the engaged in-house critic. I will give you an answer illustrating my recent experience working in Sweden. I was invited to be one of the curators of the Gothenburg Biennale and to reflect on *Play. Recapturing Radical Imagination*. In a year-long process, I tried to find an answer to a simple question: Why is it in Scandinavia that there is a specific, very brutal genre of Nordic noir? What does it say about this society and those circumstances? It seems that crime and horror fiction has appeared as a kind of sublimated and staged political debate in the region, a post-Marxist critique of a society hiding vice behind an apparent harmony. The fascination with crime fiction – as the ardent fan of the genre Bertold Brecht wrote – derives from a deeply modernist project, since it represents life as logical and coherent, where every wrong must have a reason and the evil eventually fails, aspiring for the phantasm of a pure society.
In the winter of 2013, I approached the Swedish author Åke Edwardson, one of the authors of Nordic noir, and one of the few based in Gothenburg. Edwardson is also an author who refers to the intermingling of the social and political context, questioning the apparent consensus, racial urban segregation, and the emotional consequences of crime. I asked him a question: whether he could imagine transcribing the ideas of the art exhibition into a crime story, just as much as literature becomes a film; if contemporary art could be transcribed in this very locally popular, in other words, very Swedish, genre of a short fiction and printed in a local newspaper? He was intrigued and came up with a short crime novel *One Last Case for the Dream Police* – a hybrid resulting from this conversation, which became a delegated form of curatorial statement, introducing the exhibition via an obscure vision of the future of Gothenburg, and turning viewers into investigators of the games that people play. The Quai of Broken Dreams – the site where the exhibition took place – formed a heterotopic setting both for the exhibition and the story – investigating both crime and art as social vehicles and mirroring the failure of the entrepreneurial ambitions of the city. As stated in the famous Adorno quote: "Every work of art is an uncommitted crime", since art, as much as crime, wants to eradicate the status quo.

T.E./I.L.: How do you regard the mediation with the audience in a public art project?

J.W.: As an artist or curator, you can create an interesting situation, but it is important that it has been arranged in such a way that the recipient and participant can feel responsible for it. I would like to believe that audiences are more self-conscious and perhaps more demanding in a certain regard. And which audience are we speaking about? One of the differences between, for example, the performing and visual arts audience is the authority of the judgment. In the visual arts, symbolic power is often held by a few people, often driven by market interests, who are able to decide whether such-and-such an artist is relevant, even if nobody comes to see his or her show. Whereas in the performing arts, there is a more democratic approach to recognition: a theatre simply can't operate without an audience, even if the author is considered a genius. On the other hand, while looking at the exhibition, we are able to talk, to comment while watching, to edit our own experience (you hardly see the full length of the artists' videos, for example). In theatre, most of the time you – as Jérôme Bel says – have to sit down and shut up. The philosopher Jacques Rancière in his essay *The Emancipated Spectator* writes about the spectator's paradox: without his presence a spectacle will not take place, but the act of looking itself is assessed as wrong, since it assumes passivity and a lack of critical distance. How do we create a spectacle without spectators? – asks Rancière. What co-responsibility do spectators share for art in cognitive capitalism? What he calls "the emancipation of the audience" is a situation where, even if committed to your seat, you feel free, where the artist does not believe that the spectator will decode his/her work in a planned and adequate way, nor that she/he is less wise or less sensitive. If the situation is governed by the equality of experience and intelligence, every spectator becomes a potential author, actor, translator and vice versa. The problem is that Rancière still looks at the audience as a monolith. Public art projects shall hopefully enjoy the commenting liberty of the arts, and the collectiveness of theatre.

T.E./I.L.: What about the site-specificity of a public artwork, is knowledge of a location/city/region/country important?

J.W.: You asked about art production tourism and its possible effects, advantages and disadvantages. As Mion Kwon in *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* says, in many commissioned projects artists (and/or curators) are often: "free-lancers globetrotting as guests, tourists, adventurers, temporary in-house critics or pseudo-ethnographers". I guess you have to be conscious of your ignorance, but also empowered by the possibility to look from a distance and have a willingness to intervene. Sometimes this mixture helps.

T.E./I.L.: Have you worked in a semi-public space, a commercial location?

J.W.: I have worked in the former Georgian Ministry of Highways in Tbilisi in Georgia, which was bought by the Bank of Georgia. And I have to say, in the particular project, once I gained the trust of the owners, many things were possible. There is no other way but to accepting that we will have to work in public-private circumstances. And maybe it's good to ask the question how to empower and emancipate ourselves within these difficult future contexts?

T.E./I.L.: We do cooperate more between countries in this part of the world. What do you think can be achieved, art-wise?

J.W.: Actually, as an effect of my work in Georgia, last year I curated the Georgian Pavilion in Venice; it was a long-term engagement, and I guess I was invited because of my past experience in the region. When I started to work in Georgia back in 2008, one of the things that struck me immensely was the stunning approach to Soviet architecture. In Georgia, the Soviet housing blocs simply started to grow after the end of the USSR. The inhabitants would commission an engineer to design a whole new floor, or a block of *Kamikaze Loggia* extensions. I called this performative architecture because it's a semiotic sign: it shows you a community approach to trying to deal with the Soviet legacy. In Poland, we just wanted to destroy this stadium as soon as possible and forget it; in Georgia, the approach was more organic, more sensitive, more intelligent: they just overbuild it, produce a new layer, like you do with palimpsests – and, basically, with history.
Many architects look at favelas and are inspired by the solutions made by the poor. But here, the master plans of huge Soviet buildings had been personalized or amended with balconies by their inhabitants, which have a long tradition in Georgia, since the country was built on the high slopes of the Caucasus mountains. So, when I was invited to curate the Georgian Pavilion in Venice, I could not help thinking: how can I transport – curatorially and physically – the idea of the loggia to the context of the Venice Biennale. Together with a team of 13 artists, we also looked critically at this Biennale, where geopolitical influences are highly visible: countries like the United States or England or France enjoy the pleasure of spacious pavilions in the garden area, while other countries which are not so powerful have to rent a palazzo for millions of Euros. Georgia belongs to the second category. The Tbilisi-based artist Gio Sumbadze came to the idea that maybe we could just build a pavilion, since Georgia doesn't have one, in the form of a kamikaze loggia. Miraculously – despite the fact that in Venice for more than a hundred years no new building has been allowed – it turned out to be possible as a temporary artwork. And we built an extension on an old part of the Arsenale, a historical site located where the Biennale takes place, a bit like a balcony. There is a saying, which my commissioner, the Vice Cultural Minister Mrs. Marine Mizandari, often mentions: in Georgia you don't measure your apartment by square meters, you measure it by how many guests you can fit inside. So what can be achieved? A different part of knowledge and experience, re-contextualisation, a symbolic and perhaps real shift. After my experience working with Georgia, I published a book called *Ministry of Highways: A Guide to the Performative Architecture of Tbilisi* with many contributions from artists and critical thinkers based in Georgia and Armenia, who reflected on how architecture can reflect political and social circumstances. It looks like Lonely Planet, but provides info you would not find in those guides. And this is where you need contemporary, critical art.

Kamikaze Loggia, Georgian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, 2013

T.E./I.L.: What would be your dream project in public space, if you had an unlimited budget and all the places in the world to work in?

J.W.: Curate the whole city. In South America, I met a few politicians who could also be described as artists or curators. Antanas Mockus, the former Mayor of Bogota, creates moments of "political beauty". In the presidential election last year, in one of the debates, he invited his opponent to run his own campaign for him. Earlier, as Mayor, he had spent almost no money on his promotional campaign; instead of hanging up billboards, he handed out empty green posters which his supporters could fill up with slogans and hang up. At a security summit, he donned a flak jacket with a heart-shaped hole cut into it. In Brazil, Lula's government initiated a policy of pontos de cultura, abandoning the classical strategy of subsidising institutions in favour of grants for so-called culture points, run by ordinary citizens. Every collection of records in a garage, a museum run in a favela, or concerts regularly organised in someone's allotment could apply for a government grant. This dispersal of funds also demonstrated the diversity of culture in that country. Such activity to me seems to be politics conducted by means of art; politics replacing art in public space – which allows us to look at things differently, demonstrate their potential, surprise and stimulate thinking.

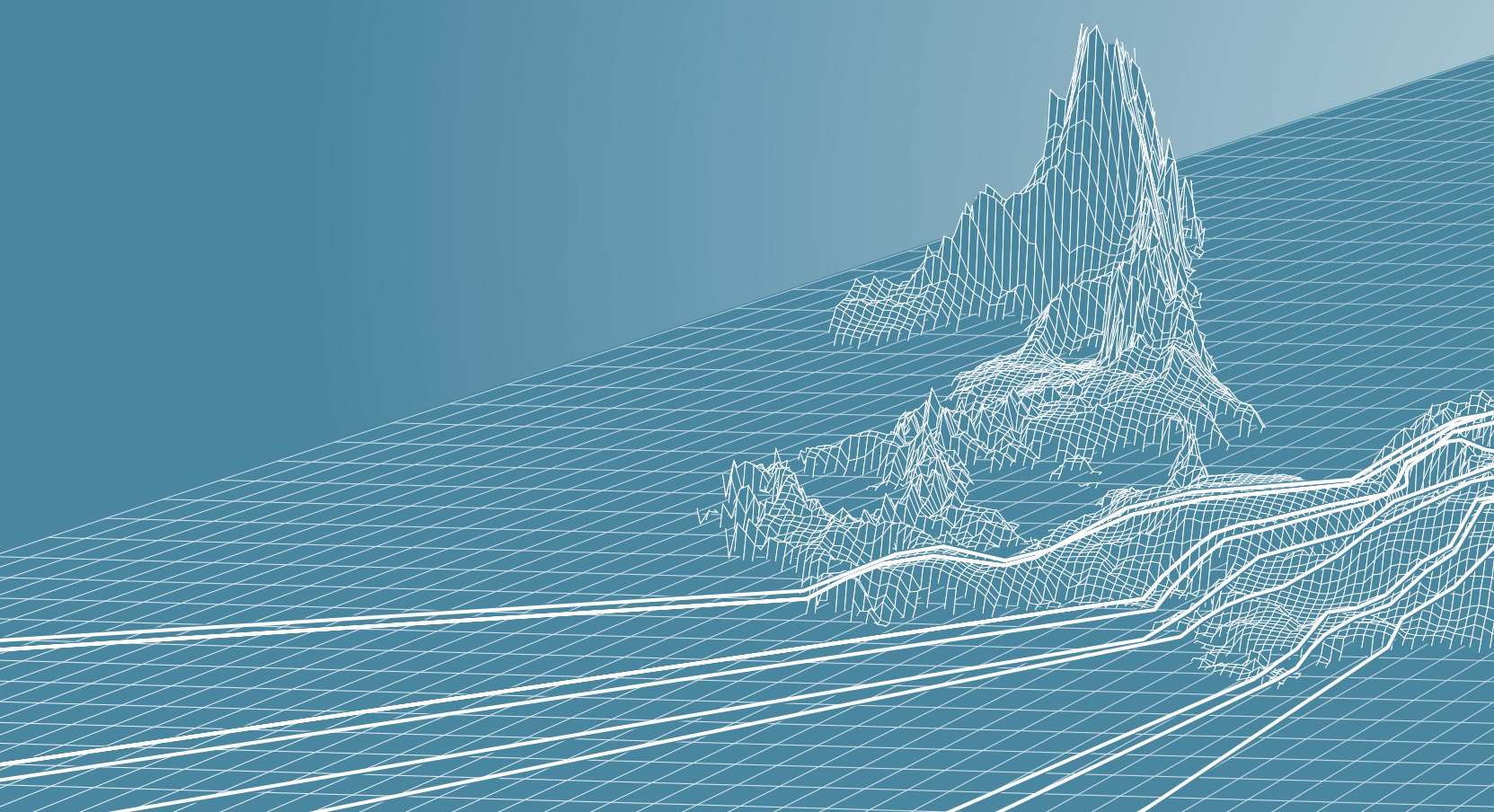
T.E./I.L.: Which of your public projects was the most difficult for you, and why?

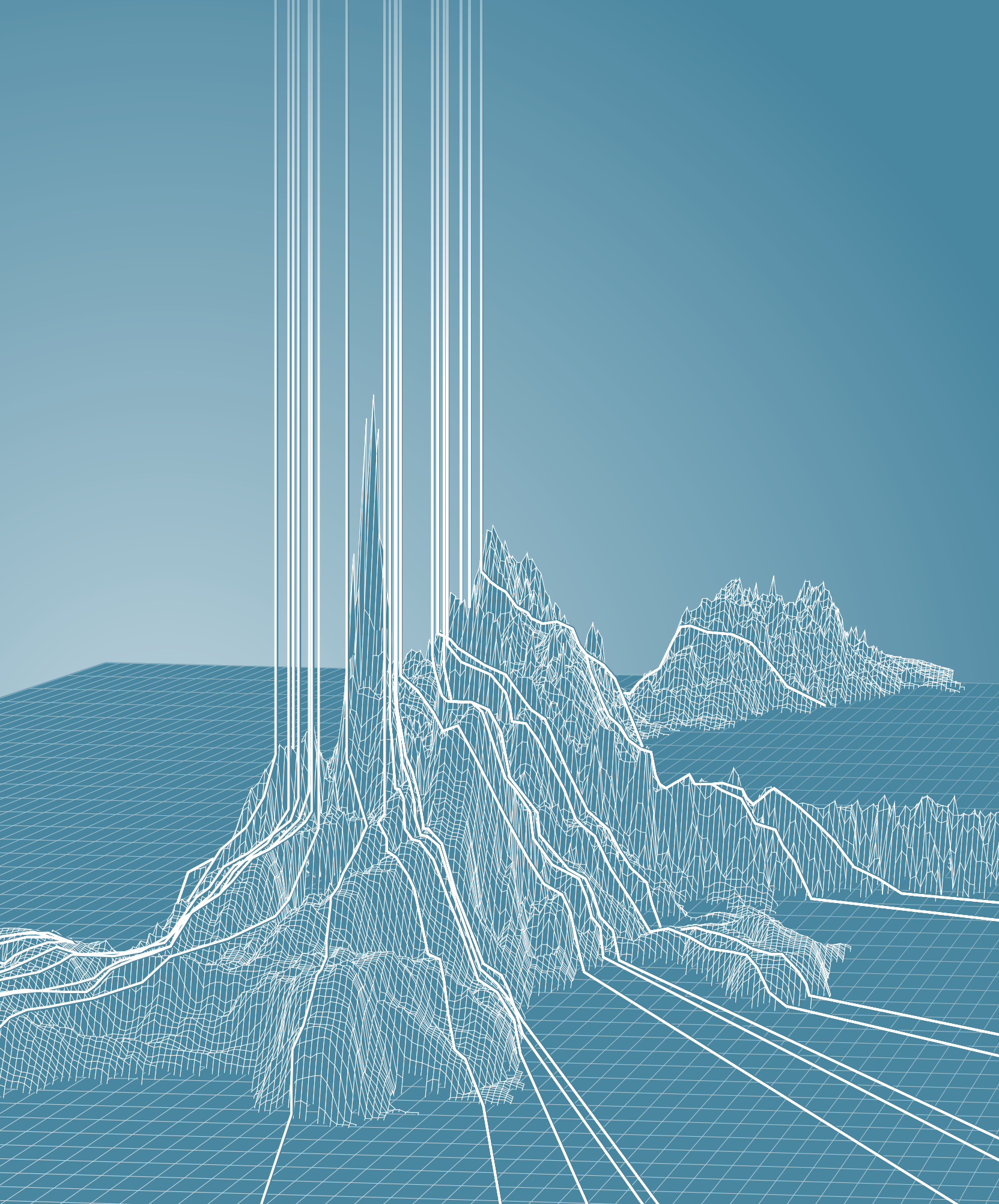
J.W. : Of course, the most difficult one for me was working on the Berlin Biennale. It was a crash course in everything: political self-awareness, conflict theory, working with the media, the negotiation of diverse and shared interests, learning to compromise without getting egg on your face, working with an audience of tens of thousands of people. But, of course, every project is different and teaches you something else. My curatorial strategy often relies on noticing what's hanging in the air: the effect of taking a step back, or re-contextualising the familiar. The departure point for me is often a concrete, repressed problem – such as the invisibility of the Vietnamese minority in Warsaw (*the series Finissage of the 10th Anniversary Stadium*), the oppressive nature of Israeli tourist tours in Poland (*Spring in Warsaw – A Walk in the Ghetto Led by Public Movement*), the philosophy of self-organisation in architecture (*Frozen Moments* in Georgia) or *X- Apartments* – staged situations in private apartments in Bródno, Mirów and Mokotów. Sometimes I feel like doing the same thing over and over... but feel obliged to carry on… Anyway, let me quote the famous Situationist saying: "There are beaches under the pavements!" And this is what can be expected from difficult curating: using one's imagination and turning it into a potential tool for re-contextualisation through art.

Joanna Warsza is a writer and curator in the fields of visual and performing arts and architecture. She was curator of the Georgian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale and associate curator of the 7th Berlin Biennale. Her practice, most often research and context based, stems from the need for revealing social and political agendas. She is also currently a researcher at Olafur Eliasson's Institut für Raumexperimente in Berlin, where she lives and works.

Núria Güell. Offside. *Too Much Melanin*, 7. Gothenburg Biennale, 2013

DIGITAL ART PLATFORM





MEDIA/ART/CULTURE/ INNOVATION

Type of project: seminar

Where: Blekinge Institute of Technology,
Campus Karlshamn, Sweden

When: 13 October 2011

Speakers:
Jay David Bolter, Professor, Digital Media, Georgia Tech (USA)
Annelie Ekelin, Senior Lecturer, ICT, BTH (SE)
Pirjo Elovaara, Senior Lecturer, Feminist Technoscience, BTH (SE)
Oscar Guermouche, Independent Artist (SE)
Lissa Holloway-Attaway, Senior Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE/CAN)
Malin Jogmark, Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE)
Talan Memmott, Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE/USA)
Dmitry Bulatov, Artist Curator, National Center for Contemporary Art (RUS)
Mateusz Herczka, Independent Artist (SE)
Performing Pictures, represented by Geska Helena Brečević, Artist Group (SE)
David Prater, Postdoctoral Researcher in Electronic Literature, BTH (SE/AUS)

Organizer: Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden

PERFORMING EXHIBITIONS: DISPLAYING DIGITAL ART AND MEDIA

Type of project: seminar

Where: Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden

When: 26 October 2012

Speakers:

Ada Auf Der Strasse, Artist (SE)
Kristin Borgehed, Musician, Folk Practice Academy (SE)
Lissa Holloway-Attaway, Senior Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE/CAN)
Elektro Moon Vision: Elwira Wojtunik and Popesz Csaba Láng,
Visual/Interactive Media Artists (PL)
Maria Engberg, Senior Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE)
Susan Kozel, Professor, Digital Media, Malmö Högskola (SE/CAN)
Jacob Lillemose, Curator (DNK), Talan Memmott, Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE)
Jesper Norda, Sound Artist (SE), Mateusz Pęk, Digital Artist (PL)
Rebecca Rouse, Assistant Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (USA)
Astrid Selling Sjöberg, Musician, Folk Practice Academy (SE)
Daniel Spikol, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, Malmö Högskola (SE/USA)
Teresa Wennberg, Mixed Media Artist (SE)

Organizer: Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden

MIXING REALITIES DIGITAL PERFORMANCE– festival

Type of project: public space project, seminar and workshops

Where: Blekinge Institute of Technology
and Blekinge museum, Karlskrona, Sweden

When: 24–26 May 2013

Artists:
Jesper Norda (SE), *Light clock*
(25 901 514 031 485 metres in 24 hours)
Mateusz Pęk (PL), *Dichotomy of a Square*
Elektro Moon Vision (Elwira Wojtunik, Popesz Csaba Láng,
Magdalena Pińczyńska) (PL), *Barbarum Fretum*

Technical Support and Festival Organization:
Jolanta Kołosińska, Digital Culture Student, BTH (SE/PL)
Emma Larsson, Digital Culture Student, BTH (SE)
Christopher Fossto, Technical Support, CrossCorp Productions (SE)
Stefan Wilken, Technical Support, Humming Hamster (DNK)

Speakers:

Martin Arvebro, Videographer (SE)
Jay D. Bolter, Professor, Digital Media, Georgia Tech (USA)
Kristin Borgehed, Musican, Folk Practice Academy (SE)
Elektro Moon Vision: Elwira Wojtunik & Popesz Csaba Láng
Visual/Interactive Media Artists (PL)
Maria Engberg, Senior Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE)
Melissa Foulger, Artistic Director, Georgia Tech (USA)
Ida Gustavsson, Photographer (SE),Trish Harris, Curator/Journal Editor (USA)
Lissa Holloway-Attaway, Senior Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE/CAN)
Talan Memmott, Lecturer, Digital Culture, BTH (SE/USA)
Jesper Norda, Media Artist (SE), Mateusz Pęk, Media Artist (PL)
Rebecca Rouse, Assistant Professor, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (USA)
Matthew Rouser, AR and Urban Space Researcher, Malmö, (SE/USA)
Astrid Selling, Musician, Folk Practice Academy, (SE)
Eric Snodgrass, Ph.D Candidate, Malmö University, (SE)
Daniel Spikol (Senior Lecturer, Computer Science, Malmö University)
along with Interaction Design Students: Antonis Gkhoukos, Emil Ekström,
Nils Ehrenberg, Ali Arifati, Robert Sanescu (Malmö University)
Sonny Rae Tempest, Media Artist, (USA)
Linnea Åkerberg, Digital Culture Student, BTH, (SE)

Organizer:

Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden

Developing a sustainable platform for digital knowledge exchange: artistic practice and creative research

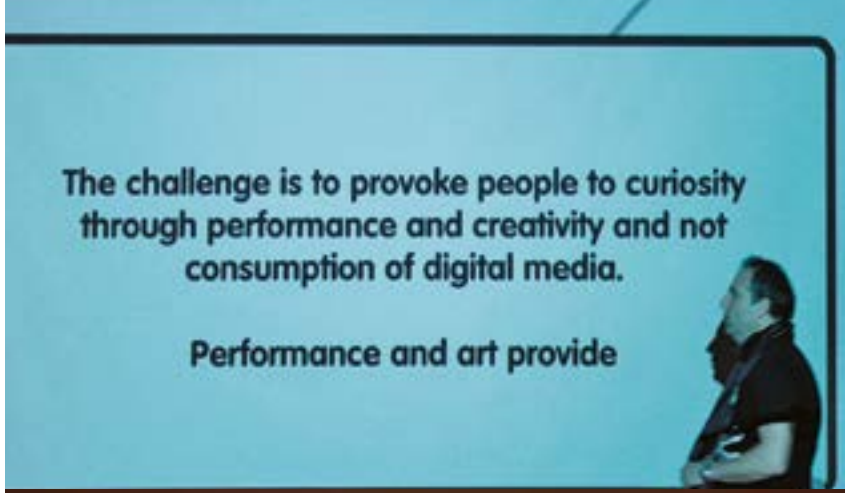
by Lissa Holloway-Attaway

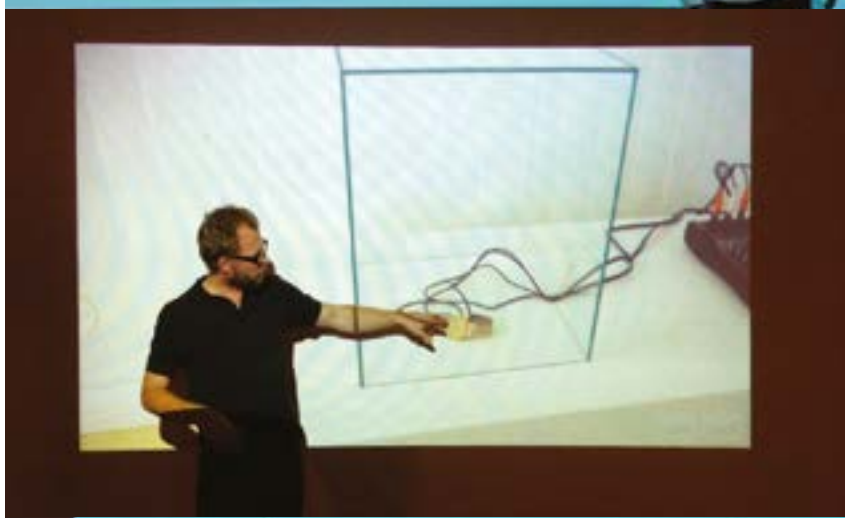
What do a robot, whale, interactive under-sea installation and Facebook have in common? They all engage the many themes and concepts brought together in the seminars and exhibitions designed and organized by Art Line's partners from Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (BTH) as part of the *Digital Art Platform* research initiative. This initiative, which overtly supported the development a "digital platform for exchange" to explore art in its various mediated functions, was much more than the creation of a technical apparatus or a multi-function web forum, as represented by the current Art Line website. This website, which shares, documents, solicits, and exhibits media artworks, fulfills in part Art Line's commitment to explore virtual, physical, and public spaces and bring the processes behind such creative work to the public. But the technical role is only one of the components required in effective platform- and network-building. To support a creative foundation for today's complex digital culture, the "human factor" cannot be overlooked or underestimated as a central element. Within the desired network, those who produce, consume, research and engage with art and art-practices must be as flexible and robust as the technical components of the platform. In order to transfer knowledge across many disciplines and enable core issues to come into focus when viewed through multiple lenses, we must involve people on many levels. We must commit to sustainable exchange and, thus, technical infrastructures can be seen as only part of the equation. The remainder is comprised of more organic means and matters in the circuitry, that is, to the dynamic and vibrant human connections that arise when diverse groups of people come together to share the ideals and values that are inherent in their practices. This human network must work together with the technical infrastructures that deliver information, as they are in essence the true content of any digital platform.

Within the academic subject of digital culture, the discipline from which the primary research was based within the organizing partners from BTH, the hybrid digital/human, is always at the forefront of our studies. In our research, we work to build and integrate knowledge networks and examine tools and emerging media that support new creative expressions and practices. We focus on both the cultural and aesthetic aspects of digital media, and this means studying the impact of media in social (human) contexts, as well as the design of technical apparatuses. To this end, we recognize that a thorough analysis of media innovations, such as those engaged by Art Line, includes the study of creative expression in traditional media (print literature, visual art, TV, and film) as well as in new forms, such as video games, social networking sites, blogs, image and video sharing sites, and mixed and augmented reality. We work to develop theoretical and critical methods for examining practices within our contemporary media culture, and this means the perspective from which we study "art" must come from a variety of fields and disciplines. Therefore, research from a digital culture perspective necessarily draws from a wide range of humanities-based fields beyond art and design theory. For example, in our work at BTH, we work to integrate media studies, cultural studies, history, film studies, literary theory, performance and communication studies. Additionally, we are strongly influenced by information science, computer science, and the social sciences of psychology, anthropology, and sociology. At the risk of suggesting that everything must be a subject for our discipline, we maintain that such a wide field of interest has to be engaged if we are to fulfill our goal of researching a "digital art platform" and exploring what it means to design and implement one for our project. In our seminars, workshops, exhibitions, and performances, we worked to include both theoretical and practical explorations of our primary topics and to draw on the intra-

disciplinarity that is central to subjects like interaction and experience design, as well as to human-computer interaction.

As the primary coordinator and director for the events hosted by BTH, I recognized that there were a number of questions to address, and in some measure I, along with my colleagues and co-participants, worked to include them in the two primary seminars and the three day-festival that we created for Art Line. I have provided summaries and a list of participants for each event below. In retrospect, I believe it is evident from both the backgrounds of the participants and the themes for the events, that our subjects often overlapped and circled around many questions. I see this as a clear bonus, rather than a flaw, however. The recursive nature of our discussions, often returning to issues of communication across media, user-experiences, performing media, and interactive engagement, and creative expression, enabled valuable feedback loops. We circled through and around the topics, discussing, workshopping, demonstrating, and experiencing them in-situ as we exchanged our fields of knowledge and developed processes to support them. We also had a diverse list of invited guests and participants often returned to re-address topics in different contexts, or to display work or research at a further stage of development. Many of the topics focused on media innovation and practice across fields; we always worked to include artists and researchers from multiple disciplines to support the conversation and to maximize our network and platforms for exchange. We had a detailed and diverse range of questions to explore in our discussions and exhibitions: How can we understand and analyze contemporary and future communication models? How can we describe and create physical/virtual sites and interactions that are sustained by touch screens and mobile devices (ipads and smart phones, for example)? How do we tell stories through the media we create? How do we live as embodied entities in our current mixed media ecology? What novel experiences can be fashioned through the use of experimental media? How can artistic practices and academic research come into meaningful conversation, and how can we support such a convergent media practice? In each of the events we organized, these questions and more were addressed in some detail. The complete schedules and programs are available on the Art Line website, and should be referenced for specifics. But





a snapshot of each event is included below to capture the essence of each and to share some voices, still circulating and resonating in our networks, from those who participated with us to build our Digital Art Platform, which is necessarily still under construction.

***Media/Art/Culture/Innovation* Seminar (Oct. 11, 2011)**
This seminar was the first in a series of research and art-based practices organized by the faculty of the Department of Culture and Communication and held at BTH, Karlshamn Campus. Faculty researchers in cooperation with international Art Line partners and invited guests explored the theme of "innovation" in art, digital media, and new cultural contexts, and demonstrated exhibition practices. Practices included artistic demonstrations of work, as well as in academic arenas. The goal was to establish a critical foundation for future workshops, seminars and exhibitions in 2012 and 2013 that would focus on performance, mixed reality, and art in digital, physical, and public contexts. To that end, we created a program that threaded the discussions in a number of entangled topics, subjects, and influences.

In essence, the seminar focused on the ways that mixed media spaces, exhibition contexts, narrative forms, and aesthetics influence and support emerging practices within digital media arts. In particular, the seminar highlighted the influence of social media production on traditional art practices, emerging technologies (augmented/mixed reality), new aesthetics for digital storytelling, and for the construction of "place", as well as interdisciplinary creative practice (art/science/technology/performance). Artists and theorists presented their research, demonstrated their artwork, and participated in panel discussions. BTH students within the Digital Culture and Communication and Literature, Culture, and Digital Media programs also incorporated the seminar as part of their studies within digital culture.

Highlights from the seminar include a film screening by Dmitry Bulatov, a theorist, artist, and curator from the Kaliningrad Center for Contemporary Art. Bulatov shared film documentation of artworks that combine technological and living matter, works of bio-art, robotics, and artificial life. Beginning with central questions that would continue to thread through our work, he asked, through the artworks he screened, what does it mean to be human,

to be alive in a post-biological age, where bodies of art, human bodies, and technology may converge to challenge both what is "authentic" and what is "artificial?" And how can artistic practices help us to imagine what this means? Artists like Geska Helena Brečević from the artist duo Performing Pictures, demonstrated works that include responsive and interactive image technologies (that is "pictures that perform") to show how humans and media can begin to resemble each other. In her works *Men that Fall* and *Women that Turn*, for example, Brečević showed the power of silent responsiveness, as a media body encountered an organic body, triggering a dramatic response in both. Mateusz Herczka showed technology and nature coming together in works like *Puddle Drive-Through Simulation*, which focuses on the unique survival tactics of killifish, simulated through his video artworks and installations that reflect on the connections between art and science. Oscar Guermouche showed the ways that his own tattooed body can be used as an "exhibition space" and how his experiences in social media may be transferred to other materials, re-contextualized and reinscribed with new meanings through such displacement. In *Vad gör du just nu?*, for example, his Facebook statuses become the material for a print text. These artistic practices were combined with reflections by academic theorists from backgrounds in technoscience, ICT, digital culture and media (all included below) who explored the aesthetics of new methods for digital storytelling in emerging forms (via AR and social media, for example). A final moderated panel discussion brought everyone together for more reflection and cross-disciplinary exchange.

***Performing Exhibitions: Displaying Digital Art and Media Seminar* (Oct. 26, 2012)**

Performing Exhibitions: Displaying Digital Art and Media was a seminar that explored exhibition, curatory, and performative practices in digital art and mixed media. A series of questions were circulated to participants for review prior to the seminar that asked them to reflect on and to foreground, in a demonstration and discussion of their own work, how the human actor may become an agent for and a site for driving exhibition practices. Some of the questions that offered inspiration were: How does digitally-mediated art engage human actors, embodied agents, and sensory input? What factors influence exhibition and curatory choices when displaying innovative art, technology and media forms? How do media artists work to enhance and/or perform liveness and human sensation? What questions do researchers explore when working with the aesthetics of techno-human interfaces? Our featured speakers included an international range of artists, curators, researchers, and scientists working across disciplines and media contexts. Their responses to the questions invited a number of different reflections and demonstrations of practice, including dance, music, iPad performance, and interfaces made from fruit. Daniel Spikol, a computer scientist from Malmö Högskola, included the fruit interface in his presentation about art, media, and technology-driven/experience-based practices. He is an academic with experience working in industry, but from an art and computer programming background, he epitomized in many ways the kind of cross-sectionality we hoped to embrace. Suzan Kozel, Professor of Digital Media, also from Malmö Högskola, engaged the audience in a human re-enactment of a phenomenological experience-based media project she is working on to engage affective responses in users. I worked with two folk musicians who research human archives and folk histories in the Baltic region (Kristin Borgehed, and Astrid Selling from the Folk Practice Academy), along with an iPad and some smart phones to demo and "perform" a digital story-telling project we are currently developing to explore "hidden" connections between the Blekinge Region and Lithuania.

Other mixed media and performance-based artist presentations and demos from Ada Auf Der Strasse, Teresa Wennberg, Elektro Moon Vision, and Jesper Norda, and an installation of *Baltic Agora* by the Polish artist Mateusz Pęk, re-made from a previous Art Line exhibition in Gdansk City Gallery for *The Baltic Goes Digital* contest (with Klaudia Wrzask) enriched the discussions with concrete examples from art practice. Teresa Wennberg, who has a rich history working with art, media technology and computers, was able to show early "digital" works that pre-dated internet culture. She reminded us of the long heritage of innovation from which we now explore computer-based art practices. Rebecca Rouse, who shares her work in more depth elsewhere in this catalogue, provided another historical perspective on what it means to augment reality and engage users in media, by returning to 19th-century panoramas to find contemporary influences for digital works. Jacob Lillemose also discussed his own experience curating digital work and

shared the challenges of exhibiting such works in ways that can fully engage the public as essential components of art-performance. As a whole, the seminar laid a solid foundation for more extended work exploring performativity and media arts "in practice" in a three-day festival coordinated for the following spring, the *Mixing Realities Digital Performance Festival.*

***The Mixing Realities Digital Performance Festival* (May 24—26, 2013)**

The Mixing Realities Digital Performance Festival (or *#mixitupfest*) was a three-day-long event that included a number of opportunities for attendees to explore, discover, and interact with mixed media experiences focused on art and culture. Through digital art exhibitions, performances, public lectures, seminars, workshops, collaborative readings and online media channels, visitors could see how contemporary media combine physical and digital environments and encourage revolutionary methods for creation, expression, and participation. International scholars and students working in digital culture, media artists (sound, dance, music, interactive computing, video, photography, augmented reality, digital performance), curators, computer scientists, and others working in and across social media came together, virtually and physically, and were all invited to "mix it up" in Karlskrona. For the festival, the source of "mixing" was a convergence of genres, media forms, methods for exhibition and types of creative digital expression. Again, with a focus on performance, the goal was to capture much of the dynamism attributed to contemporary media. Resisting singular and static means of expression, and engaging instead interactive, alternative and immersive practices for exploring creativity and media, we combined traditional seminar and workshops with live performances and media exhibitions. Some of the works and artists we explored in the *Performing Exhibitions Seminar* were revisited in the *Mixing Realities Festival* in further stages of development, but newly commissioned pieces specific to the festival document the full range of "realities" we worked to engage. With a focus on creating a network of possibilities, influences, experiments, as well as documenting current interdisciplinary research, we tried to capture the essence of a digitally-based art-culture that in many ways epitomizes a primary goal for Art Line as a whole: the exploration of physical, digital, and public spaces. The following brief descriptions of the major works and events in the festival provide a concrete picture of the diversity and creativity we believe is a necessary foundation for sustaining a technical/human platform based on knowledge exchange and transfer.

***MIXING REALITIES FESTIVAL* PARTICIPANTS:**

Jesper Norda, ***Featured Installations***

Light clock (25 901 514 031 485 metres in 24 hours),

A video starts with a single white frame – a flash of light – followed by a counter measuring how far the light will travel during the following 24 hours. The counter is updated every second, like a clock. A meditation on time, speed, light, expanse – eternity.

Mateusz Pęk, *Dichotomy of a Square*

Pęk's installation is based on the "black and white squares" of Kazimir Malevich. Pęk shows how ideas hidden in these paintings correspond to our (Polish /Swedish) contemporary reality. They illustrate how they still change in the context of our current global economy, creating new ways to experience reality.

Elektro Moon Vision (Elwira Wojtunik, Popesz Csaba Láng, Magdalena Pińczyńska), ***Barbarum Fretum***

Barbarum Fretum is an interactive audiovisual installation that reacts to human presence by the illusion of filling up the constructed installation space with waving sea water and taking its user to the depths of the sea. *Barbarum Fretum* also brings the user to different city places - via peepholes, similar to telescopes, that reveal in real time the landscapes of four city places in countries surrounding the Baltic Sea.

Trish Harris, Lissa Holloway-Attaway, *The Re-Making Moby-Dick Project*

The Re-Making Moby-Dick Project is an international multimodal storytelling performance created over several months during 2013. Poets, writers, artists, schoolchildren, scholars, dancers, curators, sailors, and more participated in a video remixing and retelling of Melville's classic novel *Moby-Dick*. The results were screened on YouTube and eventually re-curated in print.

Martin Arvebro, Lissa Holloway-Attaway, *24+ Hour Moby Marathon Reading*
This 24+ hour non-stop reading of Herman Melville's classic 1851 novel Moby-Dick was read in full (600+ pages) on location at the Blekinge museum, in select locations around Karlskrona, and online with participants from around the world. This re-mediation of traditional reading practices was live-streamed on the internet and connected to many social media outlets and activities.

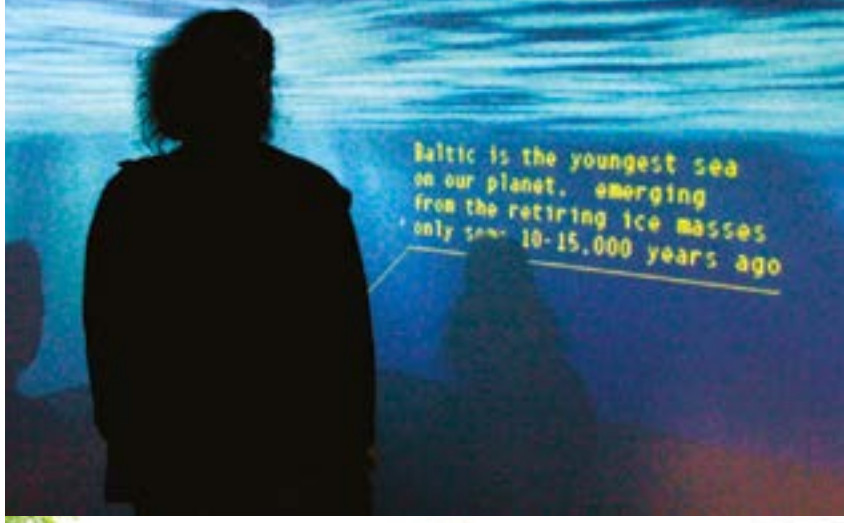
OTHER PERFORMANCE *EXHIBITIONS* INCLUDED:
Talan Memmott, Eric Snodgrass, Sonny Rae Tempest, *Huckleberry Finnegans Wake*
A combinatoric performance work bringing together Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

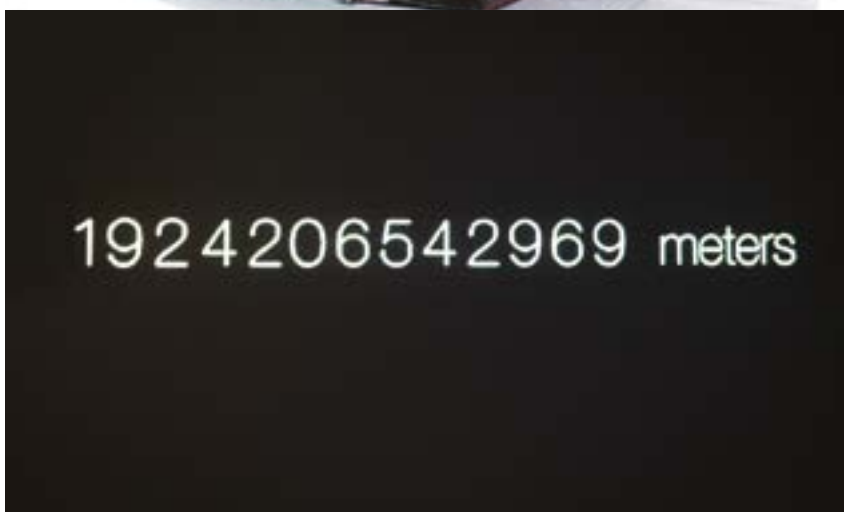
Melissa Foulger, Rebecca Rouse: Actors: Rosa Auf Der Strasse, Konrad Holmqvist, Johanna Martinsson, Julia Sundqvist, Louisa Sundqvist, Joel Wennberg, *After the Quake*
A performance using live actors and responsive technology, excerpted from a play by Frank Galati and adapted from short stories by Haruki Murakami.

Kristin Borgehed, Lissa Holloway-Attaway, Astrid Selling, *sAND (waves)*
A mixed media storytelling performance that explores the physical landscape and sea cultures around Nida, Lithuania and the Blekinge Region in Sweden.

Martin Arvebro, Astrid Selling, Linnea Åkerberg, *White*
A live/YouTube-based dance performance exploring the quality of whiteness as inspired by Herman Melville's reflections on the "whiteness of the whale" in his novel *Moby-Dick* and reinterpreted by Visual Artist Matt Kish.

Lissa Holloway-Attaway, Ph. D., Senior Lecturer in Digital Culture, Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, Karlskrona Sweden





Augmented Reality and the polyaesthetics of digital media

by Maria Engberg and prof. Jay David Bolter

Context: In May 2013, Maria Engberg and Jay David Bolter participated in the *Mixing Realities Digital Performance Festival (#mixitupfest)* in Karlskrona, Sweden, where they presented keynote and video lectures on Augmented Reality in a seminar focused on this topic. The following text outlines the research they presented and many of their projects in which they have explored ways of using Augmented Reality as a tool for engaging innovative cultural, expressive and artistic practices in mixed media contexts.

Augmented Reality (AR) on smart phones and tablets now offers a platform for innovative forms of education, entertainment, social expression, and art. In our presentation during the Art Line AR seminar, we focused on one particular visual application: the AR panorama. As a form of exhibition, the panorama dates back to the beginning of the 19th century, and it is now remediated for mobile devices. We invoked the AR panorama to illustrate a new aesthetic, a new mode of addressing the world in and through digital media, which one of us (Engberg) calls "polyaesthetics". We are becoming increasingly polyaesthetic as we combine the senses of sight, hearing, touch, and proprioception to engage with hybrid and multiple media forms today. Polyaesthetics describes the changed relationship between ourselves and our environments as defined through our multimodal interfaces, multiple simultaneous applications, and the combining and overlaying of virtual data onto the physical world. Panoramas are polyaesthetic in two ways: 1) they combine the senses of sight and touch (and sound too). We see and feel our way around the visual world of the panorama; and 2) they locate us "here and there". We see one world when we look beyond the phone and another when we look at the screen and move it around. We presented our work during the Art Line AR seminar, and discussed it as an example of the impact of mobile media on the changing media landscape.

AR forms explore interfaces, possibilities for interaction, and different kinds of design. The design space is different in that it resides both in the screen and in the world. The device itself becomes both the window to another "mixed" reality and a surface for interaction. There is plenty of evidence of AR in mobile devices for general use, so-called AR browsers such as Aurasma, Wikitude, Layar and Junaio. AR, particularly in these mobile devices, becomes a genre that has characteristic affordances and design styles. At present, the two most common forms of AR are geolocation and image tracking. Geolocation-based AR uses GPS, compass, wifi and other sensors in a user's mobile phone to provide a "heads-up" display of various geolocated points-of-interest for the user. In this configuration, the screen of the phone uses the video camera to duplicate what the user/viewer can see by looking beyond the phone. At the same time, text and images are added to the view on the screen, so that the screen becomes a window onto a world in which digital information appears to occupy space in the physical world. It is a world that is in this sense hypermediated. Vision-based AR uses many of these same sensors to virtually display digital content in context with real-world objects - like magazines, postcards or product packaging - by tracking the visual features of these objects. This suggests different affordances and design approaches. It is screen-based in a different way from geo-location. The viewer is more focused on the screen, which presents a more intimate interaction and concentrated space, which can be used for aesthetic or performative purposes.

The performative aspect of engaging with AR, and in this case, AR panoramas, becomes a productive design space. In tourism-related applications, it puts the viewer/user in a new performative relationship with images of the world. One example is TourWrist, an application that allows professional and amateur photographers to upload their 360° panoramas of places all over the world. Essentially a virtual tourist application, the name is de-

scriptive, because with such a panoramic application the user does use her wrist (or arms) to explore the image space. Viewing requires physical engagement, as she looks into the screen while she rotates the phone around her. The panorama appears to surround her. Augmented panoramas form part of a larger genre of mobile experiences that combine visual representations, present and past, live and recorded.

Although we can not have access to complete panoramic projections from the past, we do often have photographs that can be inserted in appropriate places against the video background provided by the phone's camera. As a number of applications illustrate, such as *HistoryPin* (www.historypin.com) and *WhatWasThere* (whatwasthere.com), the user can align the historical photograph with the video scene that she sees in her phone. On the app, the user may then operate a slider to make the historical image more or less opaque. This is a striking and again performative way to visualize historical change - a way to see the past in the present.

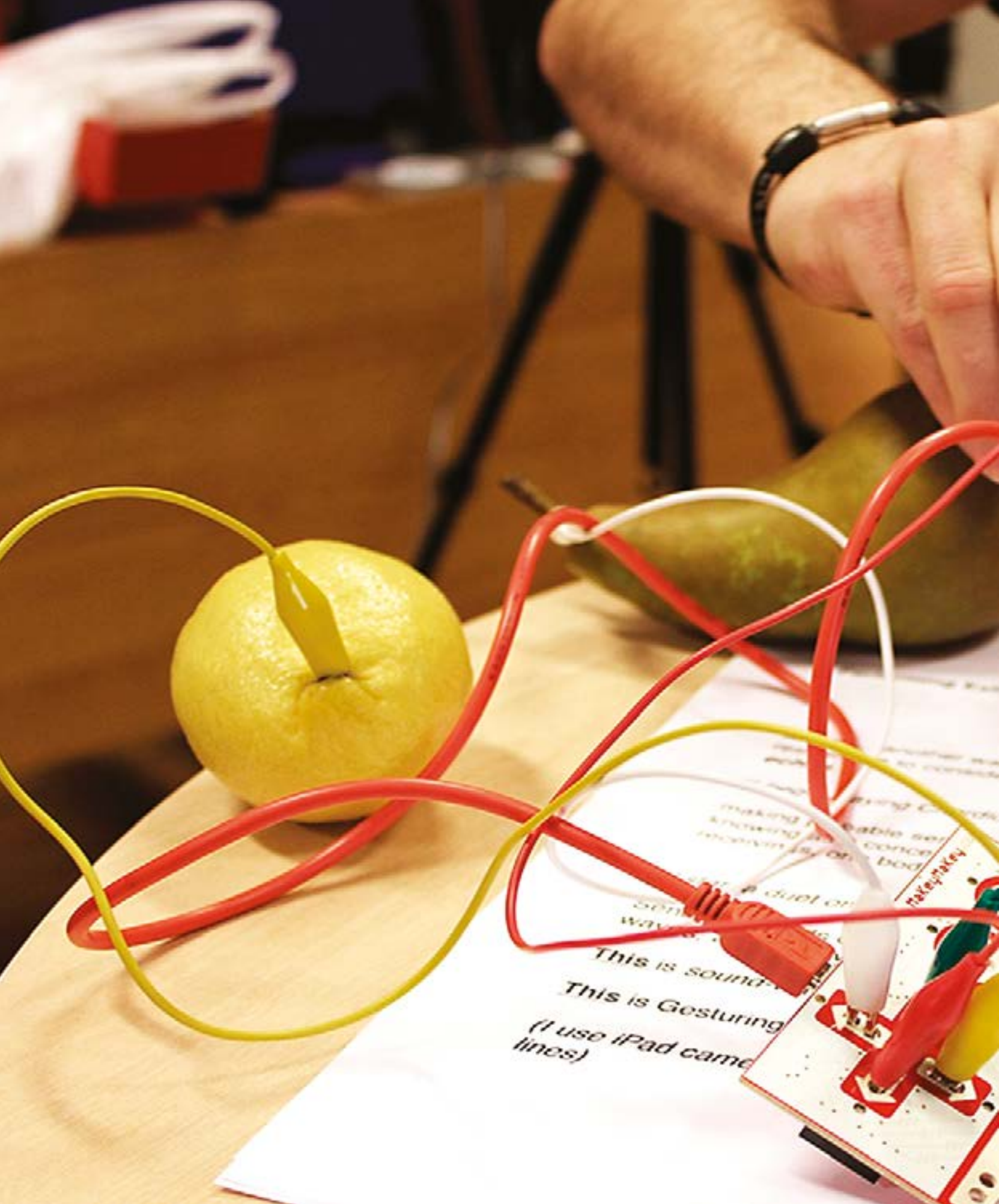
This genre is all about aura, the special feeling of veneration instilled by a historic place. In fact, it is interesting to consider how it injects aura into the everyday. Applications such as *HistoryPin* transform the place you occupy by recalling a past moment, which - though now gone - is inherent to this place.

Panoramas and panoramic exhibitions have a long history. In *The Panorama History of a Mass Medium* (1997), Stephan Oetterman tells the story of the remarkable popularity and meaning of panoramas as a virtual experience that had a significant historical impact during their heyday. There, is however, no straight line from panoramic immersion to Virtual Reality. The complex and ramified history of screen-based technologies, from panoramas and dioramas in the 19th century, cinema and television in the 20th, and now digital screens in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, has been studied by both media and film scholars: from Crary and Gunning to Friedberg, McLuhan, Rae Cooley and Laura Marks, just to name a few.

In our projects, we (the authors) work through the question of what the history of media, such as the panorama, offers for the design and shaping of new media experiences and applications. We seek to combine the notion of critical theory, which tends to look at media with a view to analysis and critique, with what one of us (Bolter) has called "productive theory", which looks to media history and art to produce insights for creative production. For decades, if not centuries, the task of those in the humanities has been to explain certain artifacts of culture: first literature, and then art and music, and much more recently, film and other forms. The task of the humanities has not been to make such artifacts or to provide explanations that would help others make or improve them. Our projects, and many of the projects that were presented during the Art Line AR seminar, seek to change that.

Maria Engberg, Senior Lecturer in Digital Culture, Blekinge Institue of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden.

Jay David Bolter, Professor and Wesley Chair of New Media, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.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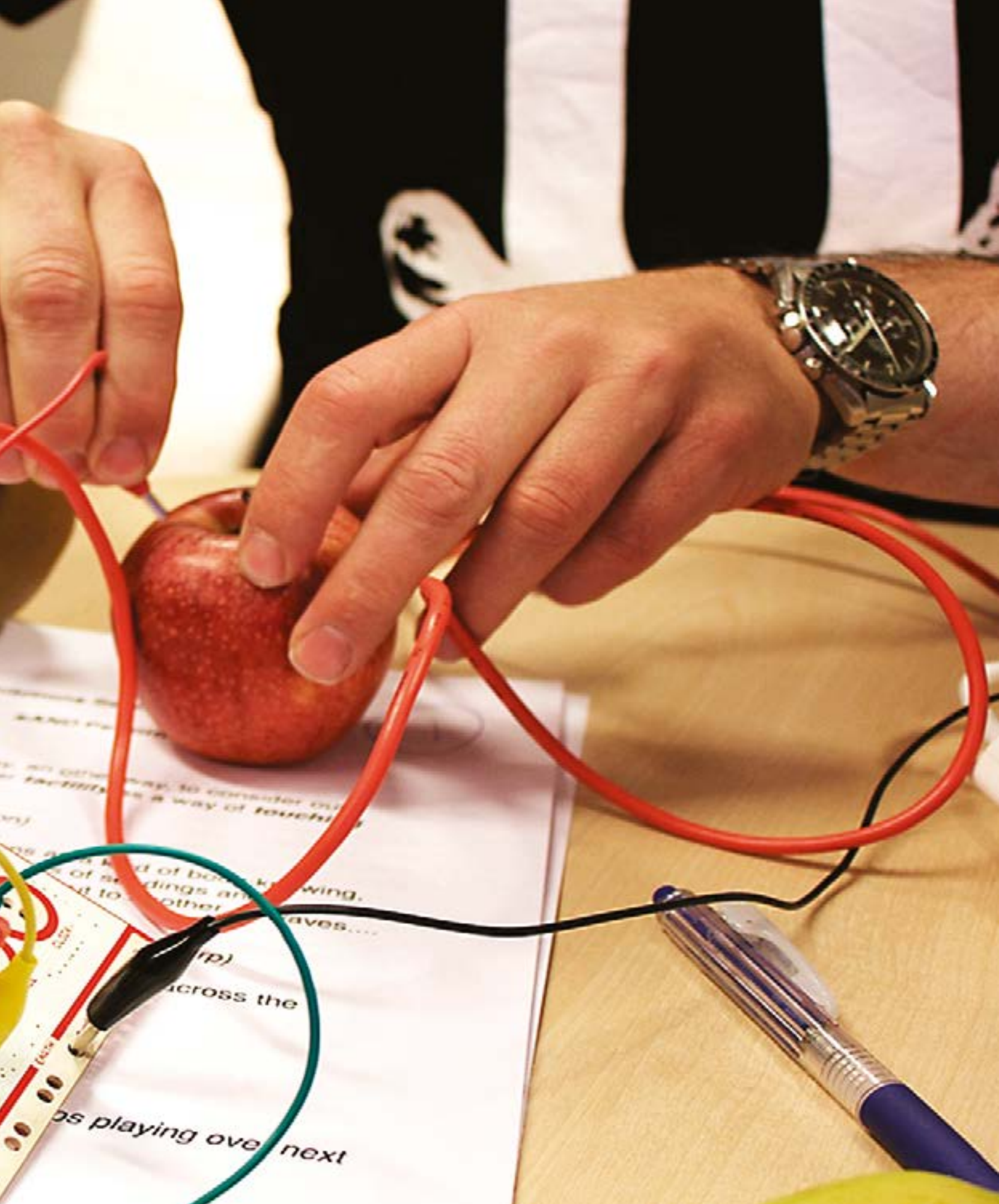


Negotiating immersion and critical distance in panoramic forms from the 18th century to Augmented Reality

by Rebecca Rouse

Context: In October 2013, Rebecca Rouse was a visiting lecturer and participant in the *Performing Exhibitions Seminar* at Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, where she presented her research on Augmented Reality and its historical relation to panoramas. In the following text, she provides an overview of that research and reflects on digital technologies in relation to contemporary museum exhibitions and cultural heritage.

Contextualizing current research at the Georgia Institute of Technology in mobile handheld Augmented Reality (AR) within the history of technologies of exhibition and display design in the museum can help us to understand the rich possibilities for current AR technologies in museums and at cultural heritage sites. We are lucky to be working in an exciting moment today for exhibition and display in the museum. Particularly in museums of science, history and contemporary art, we find a more integrated approach to uses of digital technologies than has been seen previously. For example, the Miami Museum of Science's Interactive Theatre exhibit *Vital Space* (2006) casts visitors in teams battling an infection in a multi-console computer game that teaches concepts about anatomy and disease. The Atlanta History Center makes use of a large-scale interactive map display in an exhibit about the civil war in *War in Our Backyards: Discovering Atlanta 1861–1865* (2010). The Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago, Chile provides an interactive touchscreen database within a memorial to provide insight into the victims of Pinochet's oppressive regime (2010). Sander Veenhof's *Augmented Reality Art Invasion* at MOMA in New York (2010) allowed the artist to superimpose virtual works within the physical galleries of the museum. Additionally, many compelling examples have been presented through Art Line, such as *Baltic Sounds Good*, *Art & Apparatus*, *The Baltic Goes Digital,* and *Telling the Baltic.* These projects have likewise implemented digital media in innovative ways to aid expression and storytelling in installation and display design.

What does the plethora of contemporary digital technologies mean for museums today? Just as 18th- and 19th-century panoramas negotiated the discourses of popular entertainment and scientific innovation, new technologies today also straddle both innovation in display and the Disneyfication of culture. How will museums and cultural heritage sites utilize new technologies with this challenge in mind? Museum studies scholars Ross Parry and Andrew Sawyer suggest a trajectory of phases in the evolution of museums' incorporation of information and communication technologies in their chapter in the anthology *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions.* Parry and Sawyer see museums on a course towards an ever-increasing integration of digital technologies both inside the gallery (explicitly on display) and outside it – in both support roles within the presenting institution, and to engage potential and past museum visitors in their own homes or in classrooms. Parry and Sawyer envision a future for digital media and the museum in which the relationship between on-line technology and on-site experience becomes innate.[1]

The fascinating history of display design and exhibition technologies referenced by Parry and Sawyer is beyond the scope of this paper. However, one major strategy of display – immersion – will be discussed here. While immersion may seem like a contemporary concept, it has an interesting history that pre-dates the digital. The objective in tracing older examples of immersive strategies is not to trace a lineage, as narrativizing the development of technologies runs the risk of oversimplification. Instead, the aim is to bring an art history approach to bear on the understanding of the virtual art of present-

day culture, so that we are not restricted to a technology-centered approach. In other words, art history is vital so that we are not limited to understanding digital art solely through its technological functions. As discussed by Oliver Grau in *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion*, virtual reality can be understood through the lens of art history as any immersive image environment. This broadens the commonplace technical definition of VR as a fully computational environment to allow for a more nuanced, historical approach.

From the perspective of the museum, there is at first glance a tension between virtuality and authenticity. The museum has a mission of authenticity, and the center of this is often the object – the original, physical object – but as Klaus Müller has suggested in his chapter *Museums and Virtuality,*[2] anything in the museum acquires a type of virtuality because it is curated, and no longer in its original context. This notion of virtuality is related to the concept of framing, which is relevant to a discussion of panoramas as well. Panoramas, like contemporary VR, exemplify the expansion of the frame. On the other hand, most museum exhibits re-frame the object, and in the AR applications for museums and cultural heritage sites being developed today, we see a layering of multiple frames. In terms of creating immersive experiences, removing the frame, which delimits space, also results in diminishing physical distance and "diminishing critical distance," which Grau has identified as the psychological hallmark of immersion.[3]

What does immersion and "diminishing critical distance" mean in the context of exhibition or display in the museum environment? Critical distance is often desired in many of these environments, as it is a condition for learning, but engagement is also a necessary condition for learning, and immersion can facilitate engagement. A central question emerges that is not easy to answer: how to strike a balance between engagement and critical distance? Some of the older, pre-digital immersive forms provide interesting examples of how this tension has been navigated.

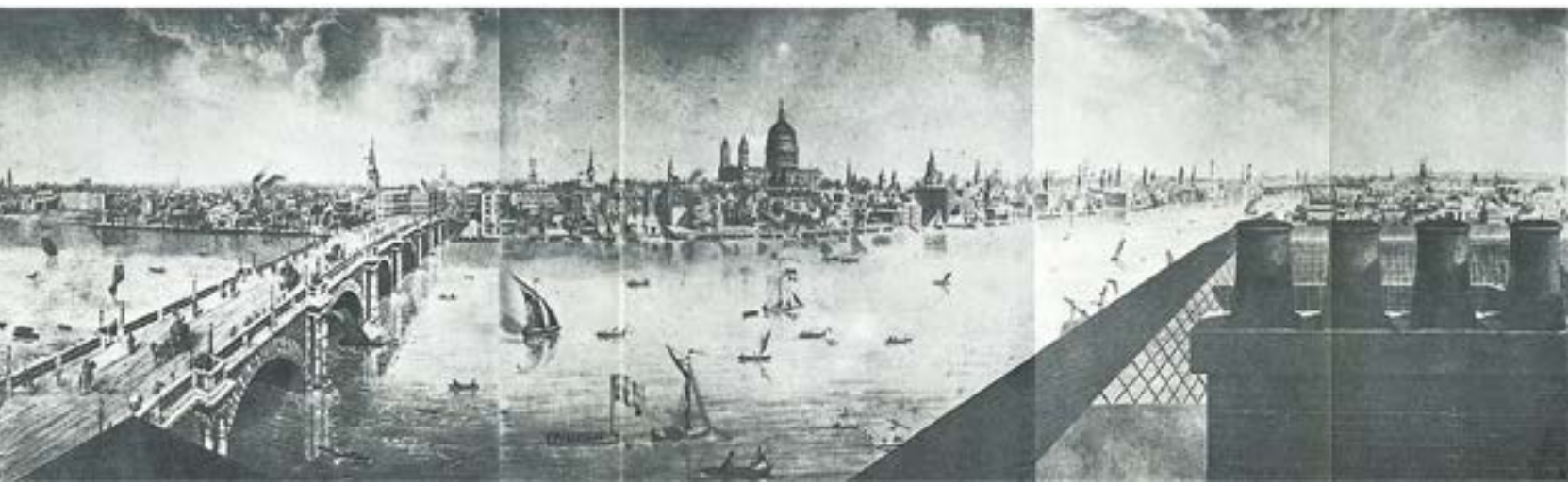
Grau describes a striking example of immersion in antiquity, the Villa dei Misteri at Pompeii from 60 b.c.[4] This room was used by worshippers of Dionysus, and a frieze covered all the walls of the chamber, filling the visitors' field of view. The image depicts the gods and humans, bringing them together on the same level, and bringing them to the level of the visitor in the room. What is remarkable here is the role of the frame in this example. In one area of the frieze, a girl's foot is about to lead her out of the painting into the room. In another area of the frieze, across a corner of the room, the implied trajectory of a whip passes through the spectator's space in the chamber.[5] It is notable that this example was created centuries before the development of linear perspective, but nevertheless achieves a measure of the illusion of depth, and immerses the field of view.

Another compelling example described by Grau is the Sala delle Prospettive from 1516 a.d.[6] This immersive space was commissioned for the home of a Sienese Banker, Agostino Chigi, a Renaissance-era business tycoon. Grau considers this room "the most remarkable example of a High Renaissance space of illusion [...] [because] three-dimensional architectural features with a real function combine with purely pictorial elements in a total effect where nothing interferes with the illusion or interrupts its effect".[7] However, because this work was based on linear perspective and was created in a square room, there is only one "best view" of the space. This view is from the western entrance, as this was the location used to determine the central vanishing point of perspective for the room.[8]

This near-perfect synthesis of space and perspectival image brings us to the development of the panorama, which was first patented by Robert Barker, an Irishman, in 1787. The panorama has been discussed by many theorists as pre-cinema or pre-VR. Grau, for example, feels the panorama is "a prehistory of the immersive procedures of computer virtual reality".[9] Even with advances in linear perspective techniques, it was no easy task to create these large-scale, meticulously painted panoramas. In *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*, Stephan Oettermann goes into detail about the process.[10] The first step was to scout a location, which needed to provide a high central point from which one could have a clear view of the surrounding landscape. Then, a 360-degree scale sketch was made of the view. Next, the canvas needed to be prepared and mounted. This created a complication for drawing perspective correctly, as there were two curvatures that needed to be accounted for, both the

cylindrical curvature of the canvas that creates the panorama's surrounding circle, but also the curvature of the canvas bowing inward, produced as a result of stretching the fabric on its frame. The next step was to apply the outlines of the sketch. This process was difficult as well, because the artists who worked on drawing the outlines were so close to the canvas it was not possible for them to draw in perspective correctly. Therefore, another worker acted as a guide, located in the center of the panorama. He would use a long pointer with a charcoal on the end to mark corrections for the artists working close to the canvas. After the outline of the sketch was completed, paint was applied. Lighting and architecture also needed to be considered. The incremental, laborious nature of this process is reminiscent of the process required today for working with contemporary emerging technologies, such as VR, AR, and others.

An etching based on the Panorama of London survives, although the original painting has been lost. The panorama was taken from a view across the Thames river from Leicester Square from the top of the Albion Mill building. The Albion Mill was an interesting building in its own right. It was the first purpose-built industrial building in the world that was powered by a rotary steam engine, built by none other than James Watt himself. The mill was significant not only because it afforded a high vantage point but also because of the technological innovation of the building itself, as well as the purpose of the building, which was to supply all of London's milled flour. But in 1791, just two years before the panorama opened in Leicester Square, the Albion Mill was destroyed by a fire, and so it was no longer possible to take in the view of the city from the roof of the mil.[13] Fortunately, there was another high place in the city from which one could



Six years after Robert Barker filed his panorama patent, the first panorama rotunda built explicitly for the purpose of showcasing panorama paintings was erected in 1793 in London's Leicester Square to house the Panorama of London. By this time, the "panorama had developed into a presentation apparatus that shut out the outside world completely".[11] The rotunda was designed to maximize the illusion of the panorama, by first plunging the visitor into darkness at the entrance to the rotunda, then leading them up a darkened walkway or stairs to a dimly-lit space where vellum was stretched over a skylight above. This skylight allowed for variations in light, as from passing clouds, to create the most realistic impression possible.[12]

see a panoramic view of the city of London: St. Paul's Cathedral.

Imagine – the year is 1793, you are in London, in Leicester Square, and you think, yes, I'll pay to go see the inside of Robert Barker's Rotunda building, where there is a huge painting of a rooftop view of London, when you could also see a similar view of London, live and in-person, from the top of St. Paul's. Leicester Square is not far from St. Paul's, in fact. But the panorama was wildly popular. The question emerges, why is the panorama, as opposed to the cathedral view itself, a compelling experience? Alison Griffiths provides a discussion of the phenomenon in *Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums & The Immersive View*:

(...) was it the pleasure of mediation, of seeing someone else's rendition of what the London skyline looked like? Or possibly the idea of the panorama 'experience' as a social event, a destination, where being seen and being able to say one has visited the latest painterly 'rage' was as important or worth even more than the sight itself? Or, more pragmatically, was it because the cathedral roof was restricted at the time as a result of renovations?[14]

Most compelling is a combination of Griffiths' first and final suggestions – the pleasure of mediation, along with Barker's shrewd business sense to take advantage of the cathedral's rooftop renovations as the moment to debut his Panorama of London. The panorama was a great success, and was followed by a *Panoramania* throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, drawing millions of visitors to the specially built rotundas which popped up across Europe and the UK.[15] Panoramas even went on tour to other rotundas, which was no easy feat as there was no agreement on the standardization of dimensions among panorama creators. Additional innovations were added to the panorama to increase the immersive and performative effects: three-dimensional elements like clay figures, effects such as sound, wind and smoke; a live performer acting as a narrator; souvenirs in the form of miniature panoramas; scrolling panorama toys; moving panoramas that simulated journeys or were used in theatre productions or dioramas; and even panorama "rides".[16] Of these panorama rides, both the Cineorama and the Mareorama sound particularly spectacular in the few accounts that detail their presence. Both were exhibited at the 1900 World Fair in Paris. The Cineorama was the first film panorama, and was designed to represent a hot-air balloon flight. Spectators climbed into a viewing platform that resembled a hot air balloon basket with a large balloon base tethered above, and then panoramic footage of an ascent and descent were shown on all sides to give the feeling of ascension.[17] While the Cineorama was hugely successful, the other panorama ride, the Mareorama, was less so. The Mareorama represented a Mediterranean sea voyage. Visitors climbed aboard a steamship platform that pitched and rolled, with side-scrolling panoramic paintings to represent forward movement. Fans produced ocean breezes, lighting effects simulated day, night and a lightening storm, and actual seaweed and tar added olfactory aspects to the experience, while actors played the part of deckhands and performers from local ports at stops along the journey. However, like many experiences we create in research labs today that push the envelope of creativity as well as technical capability, the Mareorama never worked reliably, and had more hype than actual visitors.[18]

Robert Barker, *Etching of London Panorama*, 1792

Despite these innovations, the basic, painted panoramas remained a popular, reliable favorite. In fact, they were so popular there were even miniature panoramas to take home from the experience – meticulously detailed guides to the panoramas that were known as "souvenir programs".[19] As the panorama's popularity increased, innovations were added, such as movement and narration. *Banvard's Mississippi River Journey* (1852) was a

good example of this theatrical version of the panorama. Audiences sat in a darkened auditorium, watched a side-scrolling painted panorama on stage and listened to an accompanying narration. These performances were several hours long, with the panorama scrolling horizontally in real-time to represent the actual experience of boating down the Mississippi river.[20] This version of the panorama experience begins to sound pre-cinematic, with an audience seated together in the dark, watching a real-time representation of a river journey, narrated by a charismatic performer. This experience is perhaps not so different from many IMAX films today, such as *The Greatest Places* (1998), which includes a segment navigating the Amazon River, not to mention a selection of other spectacular and hard-to-reach geographies.

Across all these variations on the panoramic form, it is striking to note the similarities. The stories that are told seem to fall into a few categories: historic battles (reflecting the military connections of landscape painters); far-away places (virtual travel); new technology (railroad, steamship and hot-air balloon journeys). Fiction is notably not represented here. And, interestingly, these are the same types of stories we are drawn to tell with AR panoramas today.

At Georgia Tech, we have been working with Argon, an Augmented Reality browser that is being developed in the Augmented Environments Lab. Argon runs on the iPhone and iPad, and is unique in that it is comparatively accessible to program and allows content developers to retain control over their productions. A panorama mode was originally created by the Argon development team as a developer's tool, to allow for the testing of location-specific data in the lab. When it became clear that the panorama mode was compelling beyond expectation, it was implemented as a feature for content presentation.

Argon's AR panoramas can be geolocated or accessed independent of location information, and are interactive in that they respond to data from the phone's sensors, based on the user's movement of the device. Each panorama is situated around the user, and the user's physical movement of turning the device (and therefore, one's self) provides navigation of the spherical image space. The early prototypes we created even included a project with a hand-drawn panorama, similar in some ways to the traditional, painted panoramas of Barker's time. The aim was to create an artist's rendering of the original environment of a museum object, allowing the museum visitor to understand through the partial immersion of AR where the collected object had been located before it was brought into the museum gallery space.

However, in many ways, today's AR panoramas provide an experience that is not so similar to the experience of the historical 18th- and 19th-century painted panoramas. The AR experience is handheld, and unlike the total-body immersion created by the historic form, provides only a small window to the virtual space surrounding the user. Today's handheld AR experience might be closer to something like the miniature panoramas from souvenir programs, scrolling panorama toys, travel guidebooks with fold-out panoramas, or even stereoscopes. One can imagine collecting a set of AR panoramas on an iPhone today, much in the same way stereoscopic views were collected in the 19th century.

Returning to the practices of exhibition and display within the contemporary museum, emerging technologies today bring with them not only exciting opportunities but also significant conflicts. Immersion can result in a lessening of critical distance, and new technologies can also present challenges in terms of accessibility and sustainability. If applied thoughtfully, however, with these challenges in mind, new technologies can achieve spectacular results for the museum visitor. While the experiences designed for mobile handheld AR platforms most resemble older handheld forms like the stereoscope, other AR experiences embody more of the spectacle associated with the original panorama.

For example, London's Natural History Museum has used AR in combination with video projection in a traditional museum auditorium setting to create a dynamic hybrid experience entitled *Who do you think you really are?* The museum classifies this as an "interactive film", but in reality the experience is more complex than this phrase implies. Contrary to the common movie-going experience, pre-filmed narrative segments are combined with interactive segments as well as AR, resulting in an interesting mix that pulls the viewer in and out of an immersive mode, bringing both critical distance and immersion to bear at different points. Using a custom AR system, us-

ers interact with 3D models of prehistoric creatures that appear to be projected into the center of the room. Photographs of users are also integrated into the narrative, which centers on the science of evolution and genetics. Multiple screens create a patchwork of narrative trajectories. At the end of the experience, users can email themselves a record of their participation. This personal digital archive can be accessed by visiting the museum's virtual community online, extending the museum visit beyond the institution's walls.

This example from London's Natural History Museum is interesting for many reasons. This particular museum itself is remarkable for its role in museum history alone, but with this AR exhibit and others, the museum continues to find itself at the forefront of innovation in exhibition techniques and the implementation of immersion, critical distance, and interaction. Tensions between virtuality and authenticity are also ingeniously played with; while the 3D renderings of prehistoric creatures may seem overtly virtual, what could be more authentic than a photographic image of oneself that is smoothly incorporated into a representation of the human genetic tree? Additionally, the way this particular exhibit is integrated into the rest of the museum, as well as the way in which the visitor's physical museum experience, virtual museum experience, and the continuation of those experiences at home are linked through the email sent at the end of the experience is thoughtfully done, and represents a step forward in the innate relationship between the museum and digital technologies envisioned by Parry and Sawyer. AR seems to be a technology that may be particularly adept at addressing the challenge of developing this innate relationship between the digital and physical, balancing immersion and critical distance, and authenticity and virtuality, due to the nature of AR as a technology of overlapping frames.

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Inter-Act! – Art and activism in social media

by Nicola Bergström Hansen

Marshall McLuhan began his book *Understanding Media*[1] with the statement that every media always contains a different media. Although the book was written in the 1960s, it is more relevant than ever in today's society. The digital world, with its abundance of information, has created a copy-paste culture where everything is reusable. Mash-ups, cut-ups, edits and remixes are just some examples which highlight the "paraphrase condition" manifested in today's society.

The purpose of this workshop is to go one step further. Instead of creating new contexts and meanings by sampling two different materials, we will be using the same material to create something new. The only ingredient required for this is the popular and somewhat worn out concept of interactivity. We start with the record player (changing the pitch or playing a record backwards can change a gospel recording into a Satanic manifesto) and land in today's advanced computer games. We will look closer at concepts like "counter gaming" and "culture jamming", in which digital software in public space are used (or abused) to create social and political awareness.

The purpose of the workshop is to get students to analyze a digital social media platform in public space (an app, a community, a game, etc.), and then use its interactivity to comment upon, develop or criticize the platform itself or its context.
The idea is that students are free in their choice and that the results will vary from the performative and practical to the theoretical and visionary.

Nicola Bergström Hansen has a BFA from The School of Photography in Gothenburg and a MFA from Konstfack. She has also studied at Hyper Island in Karlskrona.

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INTER-ACT!

Type of project: seminars and workshops

Where: Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona, Sweden

When: 03–07 December 2012

Organizers:
Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona;
Karlskrona konsthall, Karlskrona, Sweden

THE BALTIC GOES DIGITAL

Type of project: open contest and exhibition

Where: Gdansk City Gallery (exhibition), Gdańsk, Poland

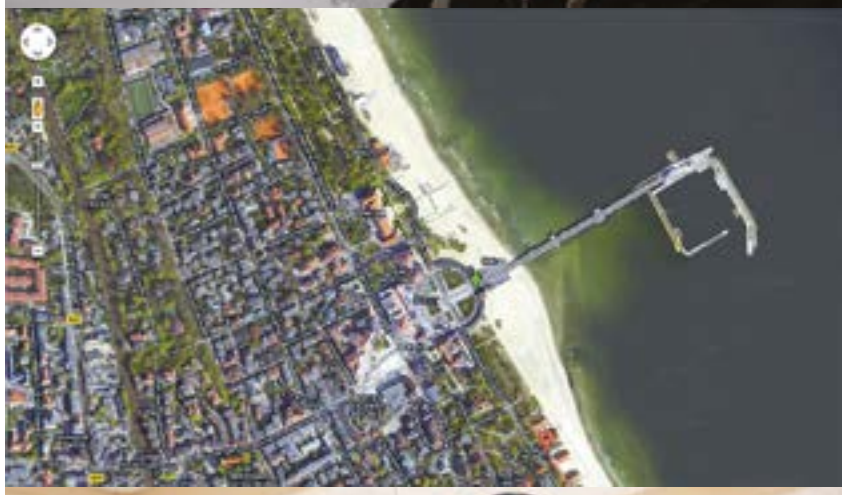
When: 14 September–04 November 2012

Artists: Mateusz Pęk (PL) and Klaudia Wrzask (PL), *Baltic Agora*
Varvara Guljajeva (EST) and Mar Canet Sola (ESP), *Baltic Sea Radio*
Marek Dybuść (PL), *AudioElsewhere*

Organizers: The Baltic Sea Cultural Centre;
Gdansk City Gallery, Gdańsk, Poland

Contest organisation: Aleksandra Kminikowska,
Anna Zalewska-Andruszkiewicz, Marta Korga-Bistram

Production of exhibition: Iwona Bigos, Dorota Lewandowska




AUDIO
ELSE
WHERE


BALTIC
GOES
DIGITAL
Marek Dybusć
Varvara Guljajeva &
Mateusz Pęk & Klaudi

The Baltic Goes Digital

by Iwona Bigos

As part of the international project Art Line, Gdansk City Gallery together with the Baltic Sea Cultural Center organized a contest called *The Baltic Goes Digital* which gave birth to works presented simultaneously in virtual space and in the real space of Gdansk City Gallery. The subject of the competition was the vision of a non-existent, imaginary "Baltic City". An international jury made up of Iwona Bigos, Andreas Broegger, Ryszard Kluszczyński, Martin Koplin and Anna Zalewska-Andruszkiewicz distinguished three projects in which a grand vision was coupled with the use of new media and the internet. Locative media allowed the artists to create works whose reach far exceeded their physical location and, in consequence, bring seemingly distant Baltic countries closer. These works are interactive in principle, as it is up to the viewers to give them their final shape.

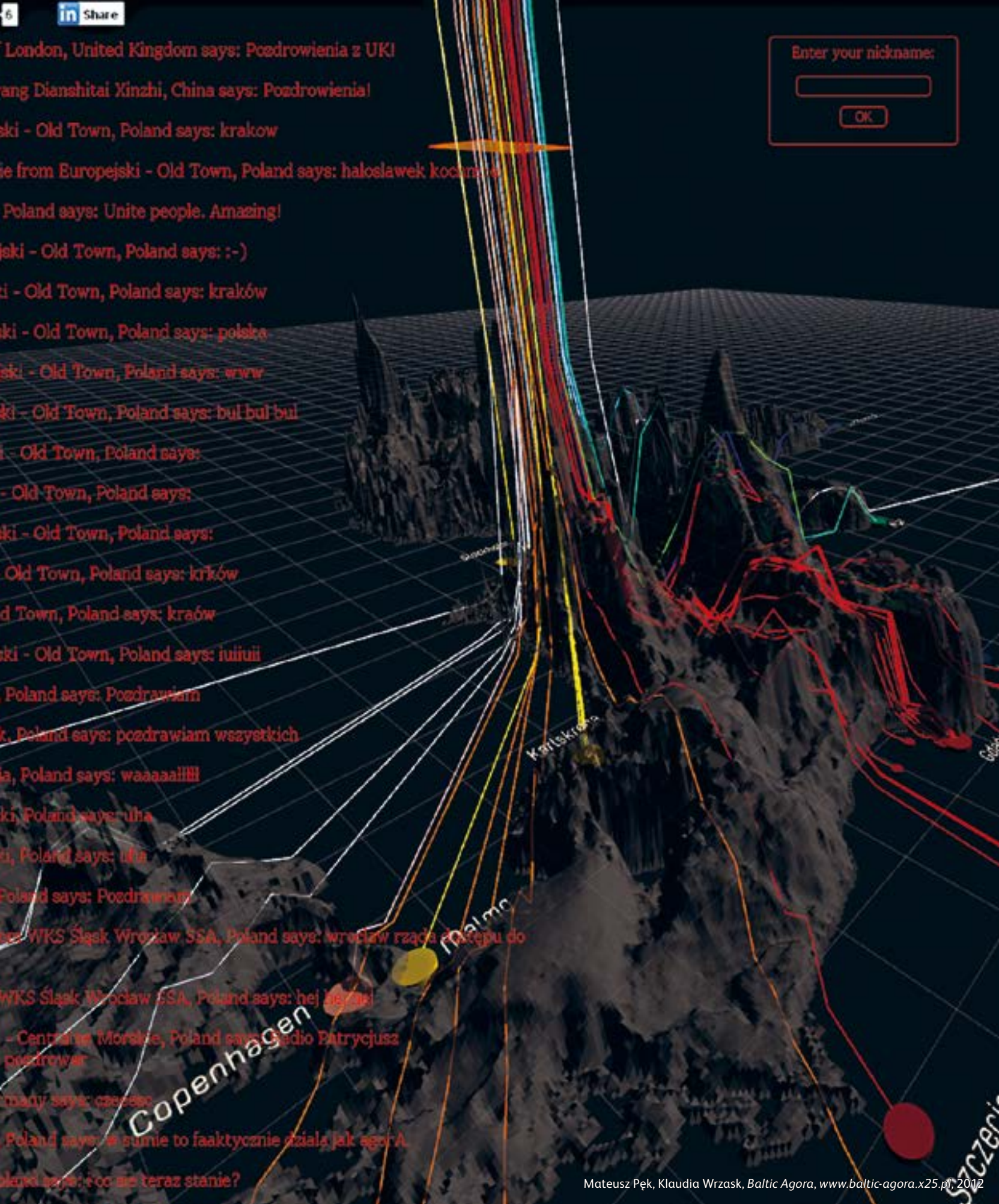
The winning works were presented in the Gdansk City Gallery, on the website of the international project Art Line (art line-southbaltic.eu) and on mobile phones, thanks to an application created especially for *The Baltic Goes Digital* contest.

The Jury selected three works:
Baltic Agora by Mateusz Pęk and Klaudia Wrzask was a project for an imaginary Baltic City, based on a 3D topographic map of the Baltic Sea floor and functioning as a web platform. Any user could become a builder of this agglomeration, and the user's impact depended on his or her geographical location in relation to the centre of the city – the Agora of the Baltic City. An inverse image of the seafloor showed that its optical center lied at Landsort Deep (459 m) located north-west of Gotland. This is where Mateusz Pęk and Klaudia Wrzask located the Agora of the Baltic Sea. Anyone who logs onto the project's website immediately started to contribute to its construction as, thanks to a commonly-used database of IP addresses, the information of the user's location was immediately sent to the server. Thanks to an application built for this project, an impulse created an axis leading from the user's location to the Agora. As a result, the sea was surrounded with a mosaic of the Baltic City Agora.

AudioElsewhere by Marek Dybuść did not seem much at first sight – just a chair, speakers and a cutting-edge phone in one of the rooms of the Gdansk City Gallery. Actually, this work allowed us to contemplate sounds coming from the other side of the Baltic Sea. A robot installed in the Blekinge Institute of Technology transmitted the sounds coming from Karlskrona into speakers worn by visitors to the Gdańsk exhibition. The robot moved its head simultaneously with the head movements of the visitor. When listening for sounds coming from a given direction, the visitors were able to experience the audiosphere of a far-away place in a realistic way. In order to make it easier for the visitors to concentrate fully on the signals received from their aural apparatus, the visitors did not have the possibility to talk about their sensations while they were still experiencing them.

Baltic Sea Radio by Varvara Guljajeva & Mar Canet Sola was a sound installation. Radio waves replay in real time the processed sounds produced by the movement of local sea vessels. During the exhibition, a special receiving aerial was installed near Sopot Pier in order to register these movements. The sounds registered by the aerial and processed by computer were then transmitted to the gallery, whose visitors could listen to them inside the artistic installation created for this very purpose.

Iwona Bigos, director at Gdansk City Gallery, Gdańsk, Poland.



Mateusz Pęk, Klaudia Wrzask, *Baltic Agora*, *www.baltic-agora.x25.pl*, 2012

Baltic Sea Radio: on data flows and life in real-time

by Pau Waelder

One of the largest seaports on the Baltic Sea, the port of Gdańsk, constantly receives ships that dock on the Dead Vistula or sail along the Port Channel and the Kashubia Canal into the city. The vessel traffic is converted into data as each ship's identification, position, course and speed is tracked in real-time by the Automatic Identification System (AIS) base stations located on the coast. Easily available on several web services, this data becomes an additional layer of information that extends over the port and the city. It increases the flow of data already present in wireless networks and adds content that is specific to this location: it belongs to the port of Gdańsk.

We usually perceive the information displayed in our digital devices as ubiquitous and unlocated: even when it refers to a particular place (such as the weather forecast in our city or a Wikipedia entry about a certain town), it seems to come out of nowhere, to belong to that vast, formless cloud (formerly cyberspace) we call the internet. It travels invisibly over a network of servers and routers, and finally pops up on the screen as if it had always been there. Even if Wi-Fi network coverage has taught us that we live surrounded by data flows, and that we have a growing need to interact with them, we are seldom reminded of the geographical and physical origin of the data we have access to. Furthermore, the fact that this data is generated by some kind of human activity is usually overlooked. In this sense, if we are "immersed in data", as Lev Manovich points out,[1] we should not forget that the large amount of data that surrounds us is not an abstract entity, but the output of billions of actions carried out by people almost everywhere in the world. Artistic projects that convert these data flows into something meaningful should, according to Manovich, "represent the personal subjective experience of a person living in a data society"[2]. In doing so, only if the collected data is related to a particular location and a certain human activity, can we avoid the impression of simply observing an infinite array of numbers and network packets. Data becomes information when it has meaning, and as such, it can be integrated into an artwork.

Varvara Guljajeva has explored interaction with data flows in the context of particular locations in a series of artistic projects developed with Mar Canet Sola. In *The Rhythm of the City* (2011), several metronomes are modified to react to the flow of data from Twitter, Flickr and YouTube in a particular city;[3] in *Wireless Poetry and Revealing Digital Landscape* (2013), the network density in the city of Seoul enables a novel means of written expression.[4] *Baltic Sea Radio* (2012) belongs to this series of works, as it culls data from AIS base stations located at the port of Gdańsk, and applies it as a score in a sound installation.[5] In a previous project, *The Flux of the Sea* (2011), this process was tested at the seaport of Palma (Majorca, Spain) in the form of an open-air concert and a limited series of prints in which the location of the ships at a particular moment was rendered as a generative image.[6] *Baltic Sea Radio* has been further developed as a temporary exhibition and an online radio stream, enhancing its relation with the port and the audience. The sound installation uses an old boat as a listening station, providing an element that establishes a visual connection with the origin of the data generating the score. The audience listens to the real-time composition (which is, therefore, unique to every visitor at any given time) in a setting that suggests an intimate experience: the boat is placed upright, as a sort of chapel, while the composition can be heard by putting on a set of headphones. In this manner, each person is invited to listen attentively to the score by isolating herself from the environment and imagine the activity that is taking place at the port and far away at sea. Additionally, the online radio broadcast enables anyone to listen to the real-time composition in a different location, providing a way to experience the maritime traffic as sound, just as it can be seen on a website that visually displays AIS data.

While *Baltic Sea Radio* takes the ethereal flow of data back to its specific context in the sound installation at the Gdansk City Gallery, it also introduces a concept that is recurrently addressed by Guljajeva in her artistic practice. "Unaware participation", states the artist, "is an artistic concept that explores a novel way of applying real-time human or animal activity

for artistic purposes without their awareness of participation in the artwork".[7] It implies the re-contextualization of an everyday activity, which acquires an additional meaning while not being altered by the fact that it is integrated into the artwork. In this case, the maritime traffic is not affected by the sound installation, while it is, at the same time, transformed from a daily activity into an artistic performance. Artists have long sought the fusion of art and life, and while unaware participation only provides this possibility in one direction (from daily life into the artwork), it enables a different form of exploring the everyday by observing it in real-time. This observation is carried out by means of a détournement of the data flows, that allows the data to simultaneously serve its original purpose (here, to locate ships at all times and prevent them from crashing) while providing an input to the participatory artwork. Surveillance comes to mind, as in fact the network provides the means to obtain information about a human activity without requiring conscious involvement on the part of those who are engaged in such activity. And while it is true, as Boris Groys states, that "the internet is by its essence a machine of surveillance",[8] it must be pointed out that it is not the specific action of one person that is being traced, but the activity as a whole, which generates and modifies a certain output. In this sense, *Baltic Sea Radio* provides a new form of experiencing the constant coming and going of ships at the port, not focusing on the vessels themselves, but on the "life" that is happening, at that moment, on the sea front of Gdańsk.

Pau Waelder is an independent art critic and curator, and a researcher in new media art. A PhD Candidate in Information and Knowledge Society, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) and Bachelor in Art History from the University of Barcelona, he has obtained the Diploma of Advanced Studies in the Department of Historical Sciences and Art Theory at the Universitat de les Illes Balears.

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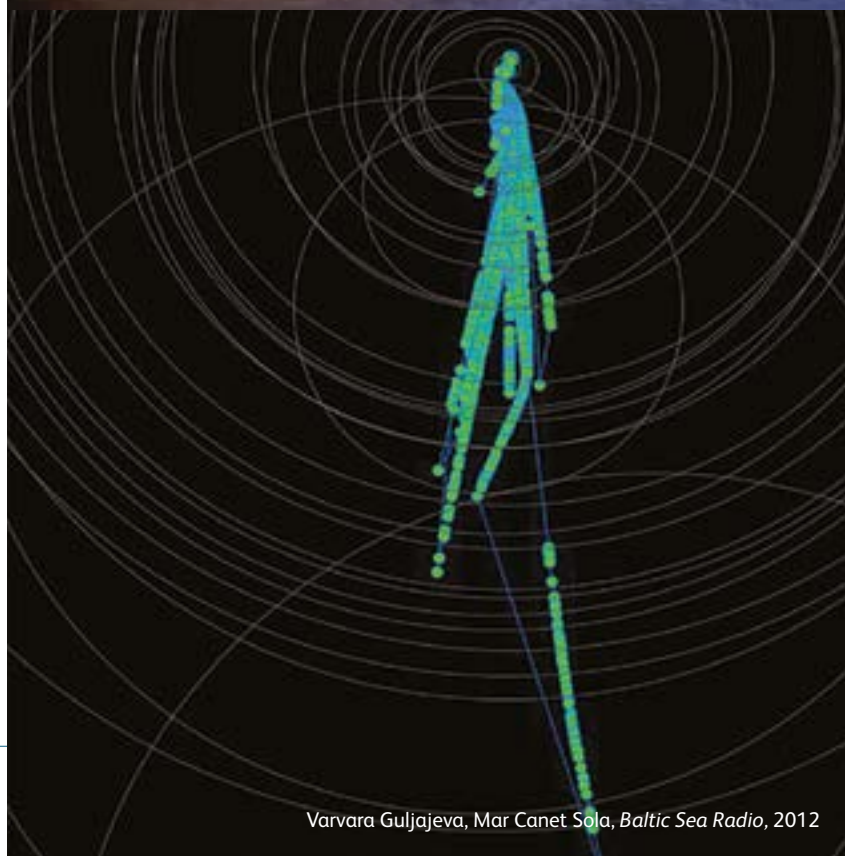

Varvara Guljajeva, Mar Canet Sola, *Baltic Sea Radio*, 2012

Varvara Guljajeva, Mar Canet Sola, *Baltic Sea Radio*, 2012

Occupying public networks

by Joasia Krysa and Geoff Cox

Public art has been much debated in terms of its ability to reach beyond the institutions of art and engage wider constituencies. Commentators on public art, such as Miwon Kwon, have expressed concerns about "socially-engaged" art operating as a form of social work.[1] The well-meaning artist unwittingly becomes part of a cynical strategy where communities and social relations are effectively commodified. Through such means, critical arts practice is subsumed into a neoliberal agenda that corresponds to the social inclusion agendas of governmental public policy which attempt to gloss over social inequality and result in the exclusionary practices of urban regeneration. In Kwon's essay *Public Art as Publicity* he refers to *New genre public art*, as defined by Suzanne Lacy, which seeks a "democratic" model of communication based on the participation and collaboration of audience members in the production of a work of art. This emphasizes the shifts in public sphere discourse and their impact on contemporary art, encouraging "a shift in thinking about the function of art as a form of publicity" or "public address".[2] We are reminded of the uncompromising message of the public art billboard poster by the art collective Freee, which states: "The economic function of public art is to increase the value of private property".[3]

Figure 1: *Freee billboard poster*, 2004

So if, in general, this leaves public art as neither really serving the interests of the public or art, then where do we find alternatives? Even Freee's billboard poster ultimately renders political art as part of the same machinery that turns dissent into value. Critique is indeed an essential part of capitalist production and the ability to express opinions in public allows the system to verify itself as democratic and open to people acting and speaking freely. But what kind of freedom is expressed here? If the political realm arises from acting together, in the sharing of words and actions in public, as Hannah Arendt stated in *The Human Condition* (1958), then it is no wonder that this has become a battleground and that communications technologies limit rather than enhance our inability to speak and act.[4] To what extent have commodified technologies appropriated collective speech acts and social intelligence? If Twitter has become the technology of choice for political mobilization then what does this indicate about politics today?

Is it still possible under these conditions to imagine public art, whether online or offline, as anything other than soft control? Certainly the pseudo-public space of the internet has long since been subsumed, not least inasmuch as the private monopolistic practices of social media and cloud computing dominate online networks and increasingly offline ones, too. It is questionable whether it is possible to conceive of the public sphere at all. F.A.T.'s parody of the *Occupy movement, Occupy the Internet!* (2011), resonates with this problem, suggesting revolution from the comfort of your private home computer by "force-occupying" a chosen website.[5] All you have to do is paste the following JavaScript into an HTML file, and an animated GIF army appears on the webpage:

<script src="http://occupyinter.net/embed.js"></script>

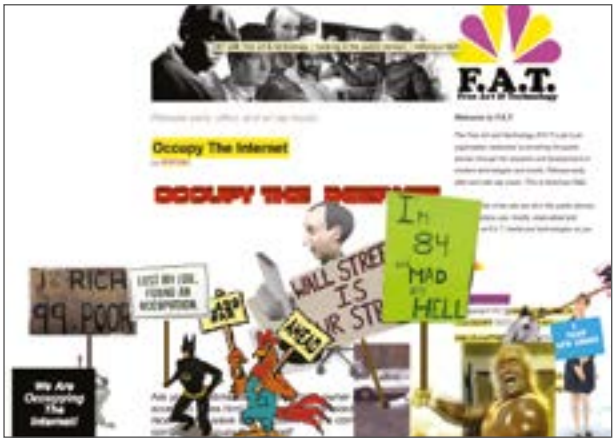

Figure 2. F.A.T., *Occupy the Internet!,* 2011

But even with the apparent triviality of this project, other possibilities are registered that might encourage wider interpretations of what constitutes public action, and more encouraging conclusions than those presented thus far. Furthermore, the Occupy movement serves as an interesting example of the way that public space has been reappropriated in places where power is centred (initially to express indignation about the handling of the financial crisis since 2008 as #OccupyWallStreet).[6] #OccupyGezi unfolds in Istanbul as we write, as yet another more positive instance of the public reappropriating its ability to speak and act freely. Perhaps we might claim that publicness has itself been "occupied" in such examples.

If a few years ago the very notion of public space seemed to be subsumed into tightly controlled urban plazas for commercial activity, recent events have tended to revive the politics of publicness. In *Two Bits* (2008), Christopher M. Kelty argues that the free software movement is an example of what he calls a *recursive public*, extending Arendt's definition of a public through speech and action, to incorporate technical and legal infrastructures.[7] Thus publicness is constituted not simply by speaking, writing, arguing, and protesting, but also through modification of the domain or platform through which these practices are enacted. A good example of this might be the trend for artists to occupy public networks, to expose how connectivity increasingly operates in the tensions between corporate-owned telecommunications infrastructures and community-owned networks. For example, Danish artist and critical designer Linda Hilfling's *A Public Domain* (2011) does just this, parasiting existing network structures and filtering content accessed via that network to question the utopian notion of the net as a public space.[8] The project is a network intervention into language as a commons using an open wireless network to expose words that are registered as trademarks in the National Trademark Registry.

Figure 3. Linda Hilfling, *A Public Domain,* 2011

Also referring to language, Kelty's argument is that free software is a special kind of speech act, underwritten by the freedom to be able to modify the discourses and infrastructures through which it operates. Yet sharing and releasing source code represents a number of ambiguities in representing both a belief in open standards and, at the same time, a business move to capitalize on the ethic of sharing and free labour. Furthermore, the analogy to freedom of speech that the free software movement promotes – "free as in free speech (and not as in beer)" – is problematic in other ways, too. As we know the very notion of free speech is enshrined in hypocrisy: and is used both to legitimate state power through allowing diverse voices to be heard and to promote the fantasy of individualised freedom of choice. Similarly, free speech by technology is

subject to covert and overt regulation, and further compromised by the increasing use of filtering software and surveillance practices when running on proprietary platforms. Under such conditions, social media offers the freedom to speak and act but paradoxically only through the neoliberal logic of the so-called free market. Indeed if the liberatory claims for free software seem exaggerated nowadays, this is partly explained by the ways in which speaking, acting, and running code have become incorporated into the mechanisms of domination, especially in the extreme case of service-based online platforms, where code is locked down and simply not available to be shared in public.

If the concept of the public has lost some of its efficacy, and its actions have been largely nullified, it is because the rationality of the market as an organizing force tends to offer choices, experiences, and subjectivities that suit its own narrow definitions. Instead, alternatives need to be posed that explore the many paradoxes over open/closed forms that arise when code is invaded by economics – for it is the recognition that all language is inherently paradoxical that reveals the political realm. If lived experience is ever more prescribed through scores, scripts, and programs, then a reconceptualization of political action might be developed through running code inasmuch as arguments can be run by speaking, acting and coding freely in public. To conclude, we present an example.

Export_friends.py (written by Alex McLean, in 2012) destroys each of your Twitter friendships, in turn, so you are left following no one.[9] Yet before "unfriending", the program script also sends a message, asking each friend to meet one of your other friends in the same public space. The social network that relates to the proprietary space of Twitter is replaced with an embodied social network of a quite different character. The script responds to a paradoxical situation in which the human capacity to speak and act in the world remains restricted despite the proliferation of devices and software that seemingly allow for increased communication; with Twitter as a case in point. The export_friends.py script indicates something of this possibility as well as the enduring capacity of the public to modify preprogrammed scripts that delimit their actions and speeches. Could this be a way of reconceiving public art?

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
import twitter, random
api = twitter.Api(consumer_key='xx', consumer_secret='xx',
    access_token_key='xx', access_token_secret='xx')
friends = api.GetFriends()
for friend in friends:
    friendName = friend.GetScreenName()
    friend2 = random.choice(friends).GetScreenName()
    message = "%s wants to meet in the main public square
tomorrow" %
(friend2,)
    api.PostDirectMessage(friendName, message)
    api.DestroyFriendship(friendName)
```

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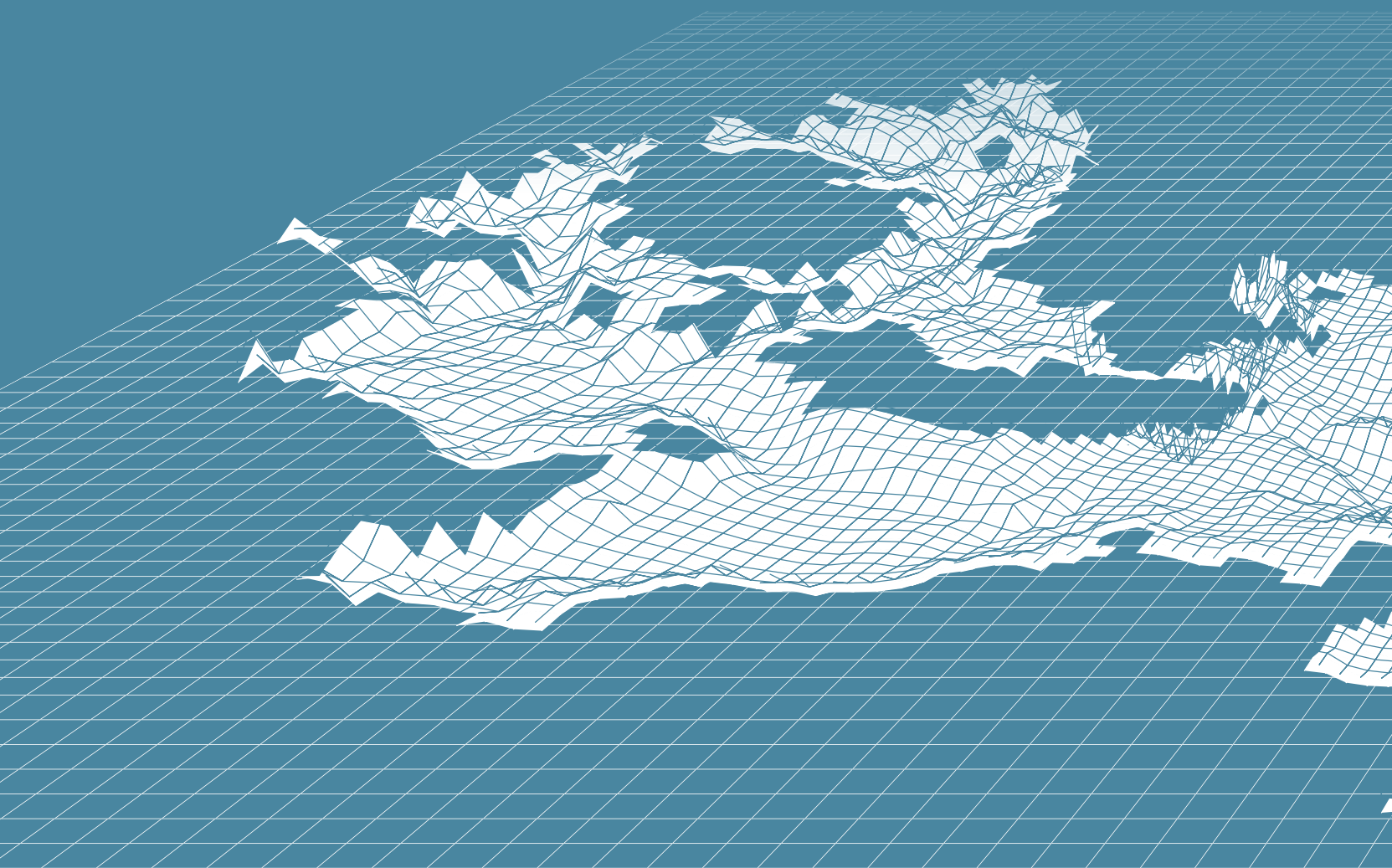
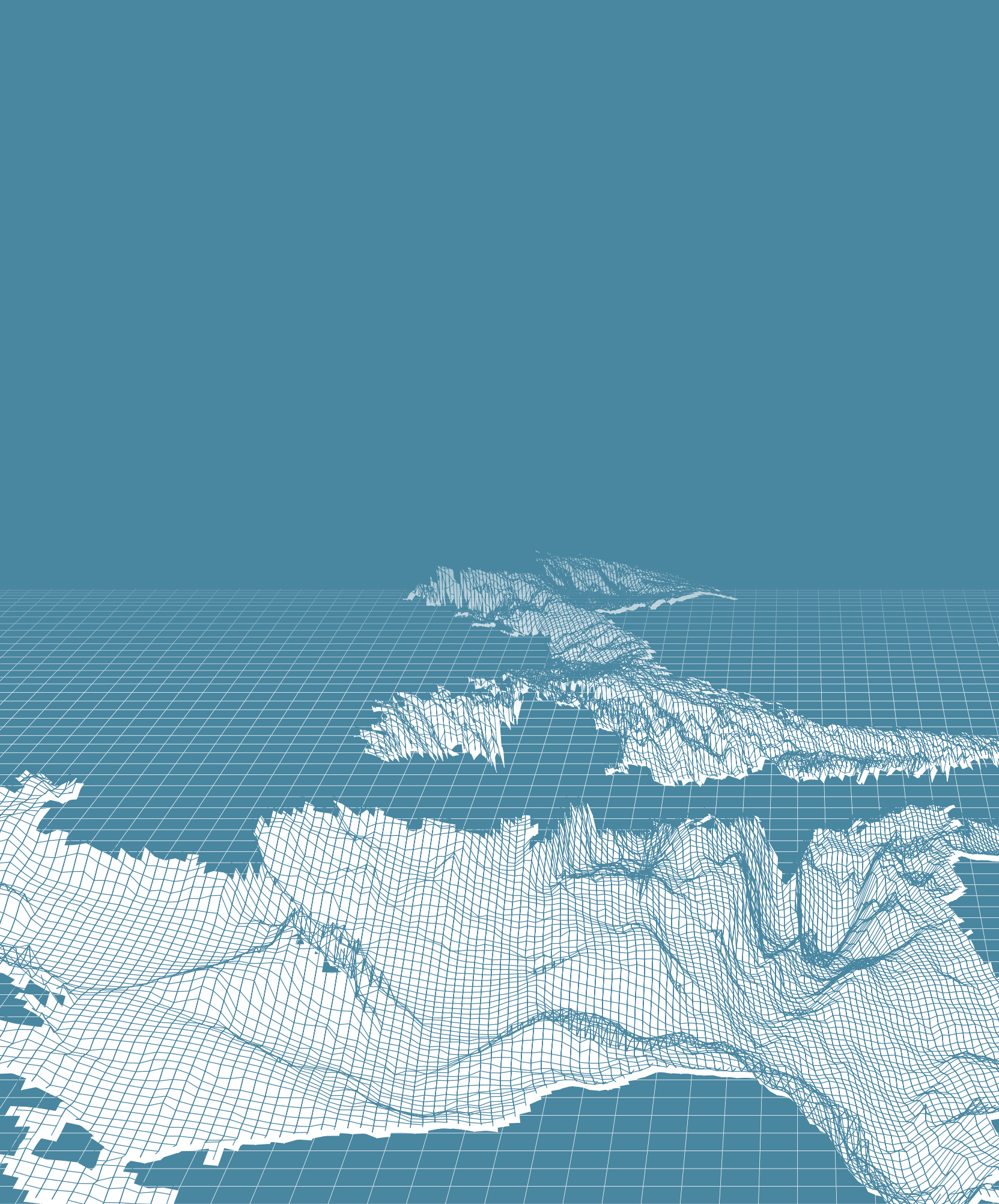
8. Hilfling L. (2011), *A Public Domain*, http://www.skor.nl/eng/site/item/netartworks-linda-hilfling/
9. McLean A. (2012) *export_friends.py was written as an example*, along with others, in: Cox G., *Speaking Code: Coding As Aesthetic and Political Expression*, Cambridge, Mass:, MIT Press.

TELLING THE BALTIC






TELLING
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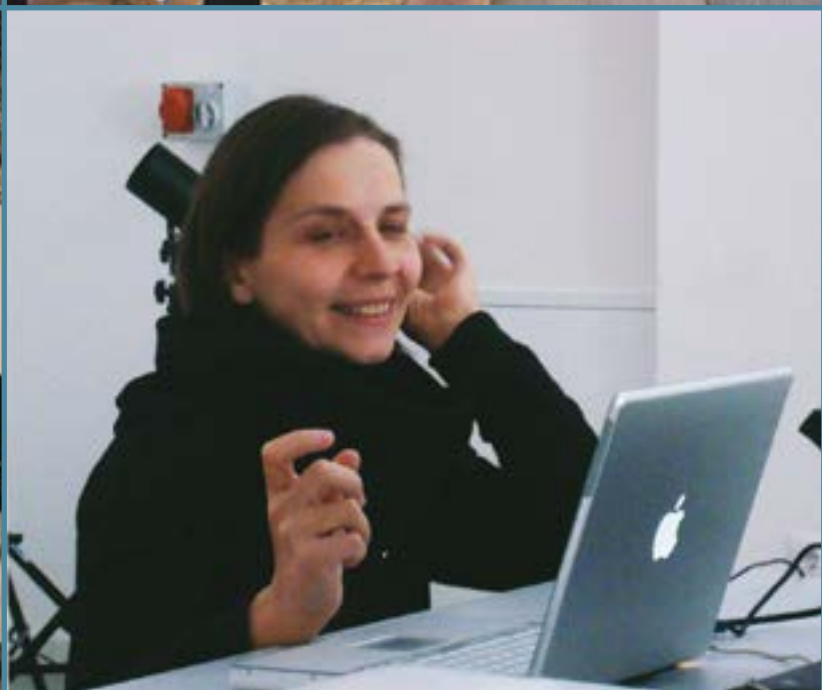


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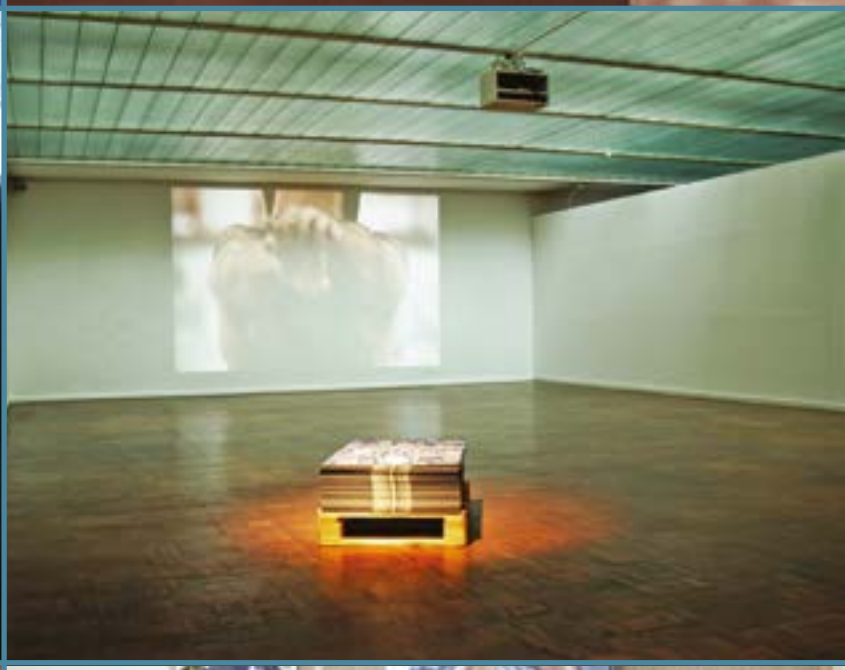

TELLING THE BALTIC
collaborative storytelling project

Workshops:

Karlskrona 05–16 March 2012 (organizers: Blekinge Institute of Technology; Blekinge museum / Karlskrona, Sweden)

Nida 01–05 April 2012 (organizers: Nida Art Colony of Vilnus Art Academy/ Nida, Lithuania; Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts & NGO, ArtMission / Kaliningrad, Russia)

Exhibitions:

Blekinge museum, Karlskrona 09 June–16 September 2012

Gdansk Science and Technology Park, Gdańsk 19 October–02 December 2012 (organizer: Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art / Gdańsk, Poland) Support: Ministry of Culture and National Heritage / Warsaw, Poland

Kunsthalle Rostock, Rostock 07 February–17 March 2013 (organizer: Kunsthalle Rostock / Rostock, Germany)

World Ocean Museum, Kaliningrad 19 April–03 June 2013 and exhibition hall / mansard of the barrack Kronprinz 19–21 April 2013, 17–18 May 2013 (organizers: Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts & NGO ArtMission / Kaliningrad, Russia; Nida Art Colony of the Vilnius Academy of Arts / Nida, Lithuania). Support: European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) and Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation

Stena Vision and Stena Spirit, ferries Gdynia-Karlskrona, 12 July–30 Sep. 2013 (organizer: Blekinge museum / Karlskrona, Sweden)

Artists:

Danil Akimov (RU), Oleg Blyablyas (RU), Anna Brag (SE), Vadim Chaly (RU), Alexey Chebykin (RU), Katerina Cherevko (RU), Dainius Dapkevičius (LT), Astrid Göransson (SE), Henrik Lund Jörgensen (DK), Alexander Lyubin and Vassily Kolesnik (RU), Gintaras Makarevičius (LT), Patrycja Orzechowska (PL), Jurgita Remeikytė (LT), Paetrick Schmidt (D), Michael Soltau (DE), Irma Stanaitytė (LT), Laura Stasiulytė (LT), Anna Steller (PL), Łukasz Szałankiewicz (PL), Konstantin Traschenkov (RU), Katrin Roeber (D), Johan Thurfjell (SE), Alexey Trotsak (RU), Agnieszka Wołodźko (PL), Anton Zabrodin (RU), Iwona Zając (PL), Anna Zaradny and Szymon Rogiński (PL), Marek Zygmunt (PL)

Exhibition design: Marek Zygmunt (in Karlskrona, Gdańsk and Rostock), Evgeny Umansky and Elena Tsvetaeva (in Kaliningrad)

Film documentary: Justyna Zając

Research project: Lissa Holloway-Attaway (SE), Daniel Spikol (SE)

Curators: Torun Ekstrand, Agnieszka Wołodźko, Elena Tsvetaeva, Yulia Bardun, Rasa Antanavičiūtė, Ulrich Ptak

Coordinator Russian part: Zinaida Shershun

Paetrick Schmidt, *Storm around the Baltic*, 2012

Telling the Baltic – curators' coversation

by Torun Ekstrand and Agnieszka Wołodźko

INTRODUCTION
31 July 2013 kl. 13:42 Till: Torun Ekstrand

Dear Torun,
As I remember well, you're coming back soon from your vacation but I am about to leave for mine (on August 10th) and I'll be travelling until the end of the month. We were planning to meet for some days to start writing a text about *Telling the Baltic* together for the Art Line catalogue, but because of our different obligations it seems to be very difficult. And as always there is the distance of the Baltic Sea between us... But on the other hand, we have to write about this project so that a trace of it will remain, because it was so specific and unusual.

In this complicated situation I have an idea to write this text in a collaborative way but to use a methodology of putting it together in an exchange of e-mails. Once, I read a text written this way by two authors whom I know from Finland. I found the result of such a method of narrating to be very interesting and innovative. So we could write about the project, sharing reflections about it and then our e-mail correspondence "glued together" would constitute the "body" of the text. What do you think about it?
Of course, we would need a structure in this type of text, too - some kind of chapters. I suggest the following:
1. Collaboration
2. Process
3. Role of non-artists
4. Nomadic art
5. And finally: what the exhibitions looked like?

Well, that's it for today. I am very interested in your reaction.
Best, Agnieszka

INTRODUCTION
ti 2013-08-06 18:29 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

Dear Agnieszka,
We can start with a summary of the idea and content of, *Telling the Baltic*:
In a unique collaboration, institutions, academia, museums and sea travellers around the Baltic Sea have gathered together with a narrative as their starting point. *Telling the Baltic* is structured into several parts, with a collection of stories as a start, followed by workshops for artists and storytellers and finally an exhibition that toured the Baltic countries. The exhibition changed in terms of shape and the number of artists depending on the location. It will continue to be shown in new art institutions after the project is over. An exchange of stories and cultural identities was the starting point of the cooperation.

Stories from people who work and live close to the Baltic Sea, including fishermen, lighthouse keepers, marine scientists, captains, ferry personnel, sailors, islanders and shipyard workers have been collected by artists, scientists, museum curators and journalists using different methods. There is a chorus of individual voices that have spoken and have been heard and documented. The authentic stories are far from the solemnity of history books and have been gathered in a very colorful cross-border archive, a memory bank, and are published on the internet.

The project was developed together with all participating artists during workshops in Karlskrona, Sweden and in Nida, Lithuania and continued to be developed during the exhibition tour. The stories served as a basis and inspiration for the artists who created new works for the exhibition. The exploration of the researchers', the artists' and the curators' working methods has been an adventure and a growing work process.
Around 30 artists from Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Russia, Germany and Denmark participated in the process. The number of artists varied from place to place.

Should we concentrate on each chapter and headline at a time and schedule a timeline for writing? Start when you are back from vacation?

Here, there is still almost tropical heat and the sea is warm,
Torun

COLLABORATION
Skickat: den 6 September 2013 15:36 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

Dear Agnieszka,
Let's start off by writing to the catalogue. We can't let the planning of programs take all the time of the day, neither the reports nor indicators. I constantly remind the other writers about their deadlines, but seem to forget that I also have one. There is always something more acute. In less than two weeks we'll be meeting our catalogue designers.

The first chapter about COLLABORATION.

The idea of writing a text like a dialogue connects to our practice in *Telling the Baltic*, in which the project has been developed through constant collaboration and dialogue. Our working methods have changed during the project, especially since the touring exhibition took place at new locations and under new circumstances and contexts several times.

We did not plan for a multiple or collective curatorship in the beginning of our joint adventure, but soon realized that our working methods should be transparent. We, as curators from five countries, made a selection of artists from our own countries; we discussed and presented artists' portfolios to one another and decided that the artists we were looking for should be able to reflect about the project and the exhibition as a whole.
The artists we were looking for should have a genuine interest in other people's stories and they should pursue a personal practice of storytelling in their work.

We also agreed upon certain vital elements regarding the story collecting. Mainly, it was about the fact that the collected material should be gathered in as many different ways 'as the individual participating institutions and external story collectors chose to use in their professional working methods.
In the storytelling phase and during workshops with artists, both storytellers and artists became part of developing the exhibition. The artists engaged in the exhibition making made a significant change in the way we had talked about presenting the original interviews and storytellers' stories. They suggested that the original stories should take on a larger role in the exhibition and should be presented at the exhibition locations and not only online - the contributions of the storytellers should be visible and the artists' working method explored.

The storytellers themselves were also engaged on different levels. Some wanted to remain anonymous. I remember well the fisherman from Sopot in Poland whom you interviewed and who had insisted on coming to the workshop in Sweden. He wanted to join the artists, other storytellers and academics in order to take a more involved part in the project, but also to get his voice heard in a new context; to start up a dialogue. It was such a great moment when Witold Tilsa, the Polish fisherman from Sopot, met Bengt Larsson, the Swedish fisherman from Ronneby, in a gathering with artists and curators. Both had 24-year-old sons, and while the fishing profession had run in both of their families for many generations, neither of these boys wanted to pursue that line of work. The fishermen agreed to meet at sea…and we continue to hear their tales in our bank of cross-border stories. To have curators from the five countries involved discussing the choice of artists resulted in a broadened knowledge about artists from different contexts. A collaborative art practice is more democratic and is consistent with the Art Line project's purpose to develop and strengthen networking, co-production and collaboration. One curator, as the single sender of content, authorship, definition and theoretical background, would defeat our joint process. In our dialogues many authors were heard, and this means something like a shared authorship. That doesn't mean there was always unity; at times there was dissonance, contradictions and differences.

When starting up any art project collaboration it is vital that the discussion and sharing of knowledge between artists, curators, collaborators and institutions is always "on", otherwise an exhibition or project would not survive. Are we now part of the production of curatorial practice?

What is important as a curator? Among several things it can be to offer a framework for the art, a first conceptual base and a discussion about location. We had the basic framework, as it was discussed in preworkshops when developing the application and also how it was finally described. We had the cities/locations and the arranging art centers, but the actual exhibition places were changed several times.

I read a text by Jan Verwoert describing the art of curating as a way of talking things into being.

> The art of curating resides in the capacity to grasp the potentials inherent in the magic of social encounters and the power to activate these potentials in the act of facilitating collective cultural manifestations. The medium of this art is communication. To curate means to talk things into being, not just exhibitions or events but the very social relations out of which such manifestations emerge, through the effort of creating and sustaining the channels of communication between the parties involved (…).[1]

Jan Verwoert wrote that all this means responsibilities for a curator and that mistakes can be made and miscommunication can happen.

> What form could an exhibition (or any curatorial endeavor for that matter) take if, instead of conjuring up the illusion of seamless communication, it were to allow for the seams, ruptures and sutures, occurring in the process of producing a collaborative cultural manifestation, to become visible?[2]

He quoted Nitzer Ebb, "Control I'm here. You don't need me. I'll slip away",[3] and argues for people to find ways to slip away from control.

In the curatorial part of the project it's interesting to think about slipping away from control. Artists' working processes might be closer to the uncontrollable, not knowing the end result. In terms of constructing the exhibitions and meeting the opening deadline, one can't lose control, and seen from the financial point of view, it is absolutely necessary to have control over the required reports that have to be submitted to our main funding body, the EU. But, then again, this has nothing to do with the artists' working processes. Lisa Chandler wrote a paper about a model of cross-cultural contexts and curatorship in a text for museums and society. Although she especially focused on the Asia-Pacific Triennials of Contemporary Art and in her point of view their need to "rethink expectations of curatorial coherence and closure if pluralism is to be genuinely incorporated into the development and presentation of exhibitions",[4] I think the underlying ideas can be employed in our context too.

> Over the past twenty to thirty years, many art museums have sought to incorporate a more inclusive approach in the development and presentation of exhibitions. This has led to the adoption of more varied curatorial practices as institutions have increasingly acknowledged the perspectives of some of the differing cultures they claim to represent. As a result, many curators have been striving for greater plurality in the presentation of particular exhibitions. While there are various examples in museum literature of projects seeking to incorporate diversity, dialogue and difference there is less overt discussion of the disjunction between these ideals and their practical application.[5]

She continued, "Although this can entail a loss of curatorial control, the inclusion of multiple voices and diverse perspectives can create edgy exhibitions which unsettle expected ways of seeing".[6]

Click. Send.
I lose control and just send it to you now.
A mail is a mail is a mail.

Enjoy the weekend, the sea is still warm and here, there is beautiful fog over the sea before the sun hunts it away.
Torun

COLLABORATION
Skickat: den 6 September 2013 15:59 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

And, I must write that it is and has been a fantastic collaboration.
One can image that we are seven art institutions, academies, museums - which cooperated with more than one hundred storytellers and around thirty artists.
And, even more unorthodox in the art scene, a shipping company.
Torun

Skickat: den 6 September 2013 15:53 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

I read all the headlines for our chapters again and realize all the subjects are intertwined in my text already...
but so is the work,
See you on Skype next week,
Torun

COLLABORATION
Skickat: den 7 September 2013 17:14 Till: Torun Ekstrand

In the beginning I would like to concentrate on the idea of "collaboration". I think that it became the fundamental principle of organizing the process of planning and then implementing *Telling the Baltic*. I remember well my first visit to Karlskrona and the Blekinge region in 2010, because it fell on St. Lucia's Day celebrated so much by you – the Swedes – and on the following days. The purpose of my visit was to make contact with culture institutions and to start thinking about a project, which we later called Art Line. You took me by car to Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH) and introduced me to Lissa Holloway-Attaway and Pirjo Elovaara, who both had experience with the realization of projects based on story collecting methodology. For me it was very attractive and interesting, because I also had some realizations of this kind in my artistic achievements. So we immediately decided to do something in in the future. It was only a question of what kind of stories we should collect. After some time a decision was born that, because it was the Baltic Sea which united us, we should collect stories from and about people who lived and worked in close relation with the sea.

The next step in this collaboration was taken during our kick-off meeting on the ferry. Elena Tsvetaeva and Yulia Bardun were present there as representatives of the Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts (NCCA) in Kaliningrad, which is an additional partner of Art Line. When they heard about *Telling the Baltic*, they liked this idea so much, that they decided to join it, and subsequently they received a grant from European Culture Foundation that made it possible.
We initiated a complicated process of preparations for an exhibition, to which we wanted to invite artists from our countries. We were a few curators, each of us had our contacts, but finally we were to select a group of artists, on whom we would have a consensus. It was an unusual and experimental way of curatorial work that none of us had experienced before. In practice it became difficult for outsiders to understand who indeed was the curator there and at some point even caused some misunderstandings among us, but finally I think that it was a very interesting and innovative experience.

Finally, because of the processual way of creating this exhibition – first workshops, then the exhibition that travelled to so many venues – the participating artists and the curators had many occasions to meet and so the relationship among them has transformed into a complex network of interactions that does not happen in the case when artists meet each other only once, during a vernissage.

Best, Agnieszka

PROCESS
Skickat: den 9 September 2013 14:50 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

Dear Agnieszka.
Our emails overlapped during the weekend, since I sent my text and some added comments about collaboration to your other e-mail address. Computers, e-mails, time-delay and technical stuff is also one part of collaborations over the sea.

I like the idea of a looping curatorship. It was a new way of working for us as curators, for the artists, institutions, storytellers and other collaborators. It's like growing a garden, some things are planned, and some things are surprises.

Language came to my mind. Some artists were worried about not being able to speak English well enough, as English is our working language. But we assured them that this is a collaborative project and we will be there to help and it worked out. English is our language for communication, and sometimes we translated since it's not a native language but for a few. When I'm writing now I know the language turns into Swenglish sometimes, but I know you understand anyway.

Thinking about the process, let's start to write about the next phase, the storytelling.

When I was the program manager of a program called Crossmedia at the university we arranged storytelling as one course, from classical oral storytelling to digital storytelling; it was about learning and about storytelling in contemporary art, culture and society. Narration and storytelling have been vital parts of contemporary art for a long time. When we started, some students could not understand the relevance of storytelling today; their reference-points into storytelling were fairytales. I'm thinking of fairytales now, although our stories in the projects are real life everyday stories and not fairytales. There are fairytales everywhere, in TV-dramas, films and even in advertising. They repeat universal ideas about change, courage, dangers, intelligence, good and bad and they mirror personal and existential questions. In a way, our collected stories turn into fairytales for the future.
I remember an evening at Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH) when Pirjo Elovaara from Technoscience and Crossmedia and I worked late and we sat so still that the automatic lights turned off and it became dark. The sea outside and the glow from the computers mixed and mirrored in the windows. Magic appeared in some sense. We talked about how we could find a way of cooperating in a project where her work as a researcher in new ethnographical methods in everyday stories and mine as a curator could merge, and that is how the first seed of *Telling the Baltic* was born. We wrote a little, then met in between darkness and light, and suddenly had some lines on a piece of paper. Then we presented the first sketch and you immediately saw links between your way of working as both curator and artist. Discussions started and continued with Lissa Holloway-Attaway from Digital Culture and Communication at BTH, Elena Tsvetaeva, Yulia Bardun and Zinaida Shershun from NCCA Kaliningrad, Rasa Antanavičiūtė from the Nida Art Colony of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, Ulrich Ptak from the Kunsthalle Rostock, Karin Nilsson and Christina Berup from Blekinge museum and Marek Zygmunt as the exhibition designer. Then curators, exhibition producers, researchers and archivists came into the process of developing the idea together with artists.

The stories we gathered, heard, read and saw during the storytelling phase became a very rich cross-border archive of experiences. It made me connect even more to people around the Baltic Sea. I devoured some of the written material. One can compare with our own stories: get into a new relationship with people and countries and get connections between our countries, societies, people, lives, ideas, values, fates, work and leisure through the stories. I will never forget some of the stories and they are what I have in the back of my mind when thinking about, for instance, the sandy coastal area of Nida in Lithuania or of an abandoned lighthouse in Sweden and lighthouse keepers in Poland. I think of the people behind the stories and create my idea of the Baltic countries from it. I weave them into my life and they become part of who I am. The stories are universal, comprehensible and relevant to many.

I have saved some texts from the course about storytelling, one of them describes the basic questions that storytelling raises.

> Until the twentieth century, paintings and sculpture were often vehicles for storytelling, and effective storytelling has always used rich visual metaphors for immediate, sensory effects. Recent research also suggests that people process and retain information in narrative structures and that stories are fundamental to making meaning. According to learning theorist, Roger C. Schank, stories are the core of human intelligence. Stories allow us to share our experiences and build a sense of community with others. Peninnah Schram says that storytelling connects people. It connects hearts. It helps answer questions like: Who am I? Who are my people? With what values did they live? How should I live? How should I die? What are the legacies that I want to transmit to my children and to the next generation?[7]

The stories that were gathered are in many forms and formats, as is the mix of interviews, oral stories, short and long stories, in-depth and quick questions, films, new and old photos and texts. These stories will not be found in future history books, when reading about this decade.
History books are often filled with accounts of wars, borders and strategic and political planning, as told in many cases, by militaries and men of power. In our project many people's voices are allowed to be heard. Everyday stories. Sometimes I find old photos or photo-albums at flea markets, people whose stories are lost and they are disconnected from friends, families and history. I wonder who takes care of them or maybe gives them another context.

In the essay, *The Storyteller*, Walter Benjamin (1936) wrote that he was afraid that traditional storytelling would soon disappear. He wrote about the world after World War I and the difficulties soldiers had when trying to tell their stories, after coming back to what he sensed was a very different and fast-moving society. I guess it is the story of every decade, that people experience society as a fast speeding train. At the Modernist Lab at Yale University, Leo Hall wrote,

> (...) the essay attributes the fall of the storyteller to a time in history devoid of shared experiences. According to Benjamin, people

have become unable to reflect accurately upon their experiences, in part because of the dramatic influx and rapid distribution of information in the early twentieth century. Moreover, he asserts that the rise of information is incompatible with storytelling, and contributed to the diminished efficacy of the storyteller.[8]

In Sweden the oral tradition of storytelling is experiencing a revival in the public. The word storytelling, however, is used in a sloppy way sometimes, about almost everything.

I want to share a few lines by Jonas Frykman and Billy Ehn, two my favorite professors of ethnology: "Much of the discussions during the last years about cultural heritage and history culture have shown that people use the past to answer questions about the present. We look for the magic roots that can provide an anchorage". [9]

Take care, Torun

PROCESS

Skickat: den 10 September 2013 15:02 Till: Torun Ekstrand

Another important aspect of this *Telling the Baltic* was how the exhibition was prepared. It was a long process and this is why we should describe the whole project rather than just the exhibition. Its first stage was collecting stories, so we started our curatorial work not from artists but from people who might be interested in this type of work. We invited journalists and researchers, and in Lithuania and Russia artists collected stories themselves. There were many ways of recording stories: texts, sound recordings and video, and there were a wide variety of people, whom the collectors approached: marines, officers on a ferry boat, fishermen, sea rescuers, lighthouse keepers, marine scientists, sailors, islanders, shipyard workers and others. And only when the collection of stories was completed were they submitted to the artists.
Mika Hannula writes that a problem of our time is that "we are fascinatingly good at producing more talk, talk, talk, while we are amazingly out of grace at being able to listen – to listen to ourselves and our surroundings".[10] This is why he postulates the "ethics of listening", saying that:

> Listening becomes the evident and missing counterpoint in contradiction to producing more talk, more works, more action. […] Listening to what's been said tells you about your life. From there on, it is about following the original catch-and-boom bang effects, thinking through what you hear and how it then relates to your immediate surroundings, and finally how what you heard allows you to, and makes you, think again, and think in a slightly different way about the person who just said what he/she said.[11]

This is what we wanted the invited artists to do: to listen to the stories collected from people associated with the Baltic Sea before they started to work. Such was the purpose of a workshop held in Karlskrona in March 2012 and in Nida in April 2012. The artists were asked to take the stories with them, to "digest" them and finally to produce an artwork for the exhibition. Of course, we didn't want them to make "illustrations". In the end some of the artworks were quite close to the stories from our archive, for example Astrid Göransson's piece, *Life Jacket*, which was made into posters, the video by Anna Brag, *Whistle in the boat* or Irma Stanaitytė and Jurgita Remeikytė's, *Crow catching*. Some other works were more distant from the original stories and reflected the artists' sensitive reaction to the topic of the sea, as it was for example, in the case of Patrycja Orzechowska with her work *Deadline*, Łukasz Szałankiewicz's, *Horsahallen*, Katerina Cherevko's, *Feel yourself like light flow in sea water*, Anna Zaradny's, *Cosmos of fish (Fish in outer space)* or Paetrick Schmidt's, *Storm around the Baltic*. And finally, some of the artists brought still new stories, which were presented in their artworks, like Anna Steller, who, in her performance, *Unrelenting beauty of disaster*, was relating to the catastrophe of the passenger liner Wilhelm Gustloff, which was sunk by torpedoes in 1945 or Henrik Lund Jörgensen, who, in his video, *The Reenactors*, included a story about Baltic soldiers extradited from Sweden after World War II.
There was also another process involved in our project. Some of the artists developed their works or created new ones for venues to come. Iwona Zając's project was evolving the whole time: from embroidered pictures placed in the garden at the Blekinge museum, to the video, *The Shipyard Nike Is Leaving* shown in Gdańsk. For the exhibition of the ferry, she also created a series of photographs, *Miracle of Hard Work*, in which she used the original embroidered pictures in a totally new way.

Patrycja Orzechowska started in Karlskrona presenting collages glued directly to walls, and in Gdańsk showed framed collages, in Rostock an artists' book, and finally in Kaliningrad and on the ferries she presented the same collages in a digital artists' book along with texts of some other authors.

Another aspect of this process was the way the exhibition evolved in each venue, but this is a story for another chapter…
Best, Agnieszka

PROCESS

Skickat: den 12 September 2013 15:30 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

Dear Agnieszka,
Maybe our society faces a problem both in terms of listening and of telling stories? (which means we are not open for dialogue?)

Already the Greek philosopher, Plutarch wrote about the art of listening and hearing! He wrote that most people can hear, but to really listen is an art in itself, and continued by saying that most people were poor listeners and that one should be an active listener to be able to be a good speaker.

I will continue to write about PROCESS.

How to tell a story? While a scientist and an artist work with different methods and different languages, there are similarities in their way of exploring the world.
During the workshops we arranged in Karlskrona and Nida the artists met with some of the storytellers, but also went on excursions, took part in other museum archive material, conducted their own interviews and

shared their own stories with one another in the workshops, which totaled three weeks. I think we were able to listen and talk; to reflect and then come back and compare with one another. The artists were curious and eager to search for more information.

Documentary practices have been a part of the contemporary art scene for a time now, but the idea was not that the artists should document the stories. Just as you wrote, they were not supposed to make "illustrations". The artists were to get familiar with the stories, the area and the people and get inspired by them. Artists who could not come to any of the two workshops could not be part of the *Telling the Baltic* exhibitions, since collaboration and sharing was an important part of the project.

I will add reflections to your descriptions of some of the artists' work. There were different ways of approaching the subject from the artists' points of views. For instance, Paetrick Schmidt listened to a story about a Russian lifesaver collected by Alexey Trotsak, and then talked about storms on the sea with all participants. On our last day of the workshop in Karlskrona Schmidt had a sketch of his first ideas and held an enthusiastic and humorous speech about his idea of monuments to lifesavers around the Baltic Sea, an idea which turned out a series of drawings. His main work for the exhibition was, *Storm around the Baltic*, which consisted of the sculptures of leaning lighthouses from Baltic cities. The beacon is a symbol of spotting land, of safety at sea and Schmidt's work became the symbol of equality in nature where dramatic weather conditions can appear anywhere around the Baltic Sea.

Anton Zabrodin borrowed a bike to cycle around the coastlines of as many islands as possible in Karlskrona to explore the archipelago and take photos. The photos he showed in the exhibition later were taken in the deserted spits, the no-man´s land, between Poland and Russia and Russia and Lithuania. The photos from Karlskrona are to be developed by hand and used in other projects, which means the work continues in another way and in another place. Łukasz Szałankiewicz wanted to visit prehistoric remnants to find inspiration and made a metaphorical connection to the mysteries of rock carving for his sound piece.

Jurgita Remeikytė and Irma Stanaitytė were very active in the part of story collecting in Lithuania. They made an artistic reenactment of the stories in their films, photos and postcards.
One of their stories had its origin in the way people in the Curonian Spit captured crows and killed them by biting their necks and then cooked them in different ways to eat during poor times. Today the habit is retold through postcards of old photos sold to tourists who come on vacation to the area.

They wanted to arrive to Karlskrona with a sailing boat, but their trip was cancelled the week before due to a forecast of bad weather. We all took a guided tour of the naval base, which is a restricted military area and a large part of Karlskrona's World Heritage. Among other things we visited the 300-meter-long rope factory building, the Rope walk. Remeikytė and Stanaitytė worked in the Rope walk on a new work for the next exhibition in Gdańsk, a film they recorded in situ and the interior of the building turned into a fictionalized space in a surreal sequence.
Astrid Göransson gathered stories from the archive but also from the workshop participants for her poster, *Life Jacket*. The stories were the ones many people tell – advice on how to behave on or by the sea. Anna Brag collected the stories about superstitions at sea, which turned out to be very similar in all of our Baltic countries. Brag decided to perform some of these "forbidden" things in her animation, for example, bringing women onboard, whistling on the boat or bringing cheese on a boat.

Astrid Göransson has a habit of going for a swim at the local bathhouses in all the cities where her exhibitions are shown, and hence visited the almost 100-year-old bathhouse in Karlskrona. She decided to come back later and produced two films for the exhibition, with the people she saw there performing at the first time as actors. One of them focuses on a lifeguard, he sits very still and watches over the bathers. We can't see what he sees, but we follow the reflections of the water from the pool on the wall behind him. In Samuel Beckett's play, *Waiting for Godot*, waiting and silence can symbolize that life is meaningless, that we are waiting for something that will never happen. The situation is uncertain in the film, *The Lifeguard*; silence is prevalent, daydreams seem like an escape and time is both relentless and at a standstill. Göransson's other film, *The Instructor* shows a close-up of a swimming instructor who "dry swims" by the side of the pool. He is very dedicated and distinct in his movements and instructions. It's intense action with a focus on safety.

Henrik Lund Jörgensen brought with him an interest in working on the controversial Swedish extradition of Baltic soldiers after World War II and the notion of refugees. Jörgensen's work, *The Reenactors*, mixes time and place, history and contemporaneity, reality and fiction and poses several existential questions like, When can one feel safe? Is there such a thing as being evil or good? What choices in life do we have or take? The video he produced later during spring was recorded with the help of the fisherman from Ronneby, among others.

Johan Thurfjell had a personal starting point which was photographs taken by an old man he knows who lives alone on an island by a little bay. He had seen the man's photographs of the sea view taken from the same position in the archipelago over many years. The same view looks different every day depending on the weather, season and time of the day. A documenting process can start with a desire to record, to retain and hold every moment, a wish to seize time in the here and now. Or, the photos can be an attempt to register, systematize and organize something as unmanageable as nature. It doesn't matter, we don't need to know the purpose. Instead we conjure up a picture and myth in our minds about a man, a sea and a solitude which evokes an atmosphere of Hemingway. The photographs, *I picture the island*, by Johan Thurfjell were taken in his own studio from a model he built over a sea view. A picture of a picture of a picture.

I can't stop thinking about the film *Smoke* where the main character Auggie Wren (played by Harvey Keitel), who owns a cigar store, takes a photo from the same corner of the street outside his store every day. The film is based on a novel by Paul Auster and links together people and stories in an everyday setting. Wren observes the small differences in each day and says, "People say you have to travel to see the world. Sometimes I think that if you just stay in one place and keep your eyes open, you're going to see just about all that you can handle".
Katrin Roeber's father was a captain in the navy and her grandfather was a shipbuilder, but she told us during the workshop that they never

spoke with her about their work at sea. Katrin Roeber decided to spend time at the old Saxemara shipyard in Ronneby, which is unique since it has been a functioning shipyard since 1927 and today is also a museum. She took a hands-on approach to reveal her own never-before-told stories and her new relationship to the boats and the stories took on a material form. Sketches and frottages of the boats and old wood found on the premises were done. Some of the other artists helped her on location and she also built up her own studio at the museum for a week. Her work became a kind of image and structure of reality, and then she playfully juxtaposed the frottages with collage elements – an homage to her relatives and to the unspoken.

Let's write about more of the artists' work under "nomadic art". You mentioned the artists who decided to make new works for new exhibition places, like Anna Zaradny, Patrycja Orzechowska or Iwona Zając. Their works showed an interesting process, a process that would be interesting to develop in yet another project. A dream would be to have several workshop weeks at each location.

Thanks for the Skype-meeting yesterday, I will get back to you with proposals for invitations,

Kind regards, Torun

ROLE OF NON-ARTISTS

Skickat: den 12 September 2013 16:29 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

Agnieszka, I added a few lines about memory, stories and the role of non-artists.
What is fact? What is fiction?
What is truth? What is fabula?
Whose truth is it? Whose memories? Whose stories?
Why do I especially connect to this story, or that one?

I wrote in the introduction that the exploration of the researchers, the artists and the curators working methods has been an adventure and a growing work process. The continuing process, together with the storytellers and the story collectors was also an exciting experience. The cross-disciplinary work was very rewarding in terms of sharing and talking, when knowledge and experience from boat builders, fishermen, shipyard workers, light house keepers, artists, curators, researchers and faculty at an institute of technology and at an art academy, museum archivists, exhibition producers and journalists, hybridized. Many personal stories got to be extended out in the public sphere.

During the next stage, the exhibition, more stories appeared. For instance a visitor approached me during one of the exhibitions and told me that he wanted to share his meeting with a mermaid.

Storytellers' stories weave together past and present, they mingle personal memories with historic events. I just read a book by the psychotherapist Patricia Tudor-Sandahl, titled, *Ordet är ditt (The Word is Yours)*. She wrote that our memory is in a constant development process and has the potential to be activated again through happenings in the moment. She also writes that memories from the past interact with mental processes in the present. The memory transforms rather than copies, it is an active, creative process that goes on in the moment.
Warm regards
Torun

ROLE OF NON-ARTISTS

Skickat: den 15 September 2013 18:42 Till: Torun Ekstrand

Dear Torun,
I still want to come back to the role played by non-artists in the project. I don't know if you agree with me that their role evolved throughout the process. In the beginning we were planning to involve the so-called sea people, whose jobs or lives were somehow connected to the sea, just in the first stage. And that was supposed to be it. The later stage of the project was meant for artists. But when we started to collect stories, and began to meet real people, our attitude changed. There were two reasons for it. The first of them was that people, when they heard about our project, also became interested in it and wanted to be more deeply involved. This is why Sopot fisherman, Witold Tilsa, informed me that he wanted to go with us to the workshop in Karlskrona, and in the end, he and a colleague of his did come and were able to meet fishermen from Blekinge.

A similar thing happened in Lithuania, when local sea people came to meet us during the workshop in Nida. They brought delicious smoked fish and we had a fantastic supper together and a lot of new stories were told...
The second reason for the expanded role of the non-artists was the value of their stories. There was a moment when we realized that they were so interesting and full of life that they should be presented at the exhibitions along with artworks. It was only a question of how to do it. Finally we found a resolution in the form of two boxes: one of them included a compilation of video-interviews and the second - an electronic book with textual stories. Anyway, I write about it because I'd like to stress this experimental side of this exhibition, in which not only the artists participated but also "ordinary people" with their real stories...

Well, that's it from me today,
Agnieszka

NOMADIC ART
Skickat: den 13 September 2013 16:07 Till: 'Agnieszka Wołodźko'

Dear Agnieszka,
The content under all of the headlines is intertwined, together we are weaving a process. It's like we're sitting at a loom together and deciding what thread to use next.
When it is finished, it can't be undone easily since it is already there.

As curators we were able to support the ideas of the artists and add new perspectives to their work. Since we knew what other artists were planning for the exhibition it made it possible to see connections between different artworks.

Iwona Zając planned to bring the tradition of murals from Poland to Sweden but her request to paint on the walls of the Blekinge museum's baroque garden was impossible, because it is a cultural heritage site. Iwona Zając had to rethink her idea and decided to create canvases and used both paint and embroidery. It was a site-specific work in three parts, composed to fit into the old walls of the baroque garden, which dates back to the beginning of the 18th century. Zając wanted to mix the traditions of southern Sweden with the stories from the Pomeranian area and to mix the tradition of murals with the embroidery-tradition from Sweden in an innovative working practice. She made the embroideries together with the help of several people.

The everyday stories of the shipyard workers in the iconic shipyard of Gdańsk were gathered by Iwona Zając for many years, especially from the time when the shipyard was a restricted area for those other than the workers. In her work, *Patience*, she mixed the shipyard stories with symbols and colors from the folk art and handicraft of southern Sweden. Traditionally, time-consuming embroideries were mostly made by women for use at home, most of the time their works were never seen in public. In *Patience*, Iwona Zając connected time and place, public and private, female and male, hand work and handicraft and elevated the stories of people, whose work has previously been invisible to the public, into a public arena.

In Gdańsk Iwona Zając painted a mural on a raw industrial wall as a companion to the triptych she had shown in Karlskrona. This was done in the Science and Technology Park where Laznia CCA arranged the exhibition. In the Kunsthalle Rostock the triptych was shown in a gallery context. During the summer of 2013 a photographic work from the working process of *Patience* was shown on the ferries going in between Gdynia and Karlskrona, together with the video *The Shipyard Nike is leaving*. The video was about the wall which used to divide the city from the shipyard in Gdańsk. It was torn down in the beginning of 2013. A 250-meter-long mural was painted by Iwona Zając on the shipyard wall several years ago. The mural contained stories from the shipyard workers and hence the "inside" stories of the shipyard workers were visible on the "outside", in public. The most iconic part of this mural was a self-portrait of Zając as Nike with cranes as wings. In Greek mythology Nike is the Winged Goddess of Victory. The industrial landscape with cranes and large-scale architecture is disappearing and hence the well-known outline of the city along with the visible story of the shipyard and the symbol of the civil-resistance movement contributing to the Walls coming down in Europe. In the video, Nike frees herself from the wall, she comes to life and leaves the wall symbolically, this time without wings, into the age in which we are living. If the mythological Nike used to fly around battlefields to reward the victors, the shipyard Nike has no-one to reward in the demounting of the shipyard area. As an artist Zając is now free.

Anna Zaradny challenged the idea of what a museum is or can be when she presented her work about a new species of fish called, *Esox Lunaris*, in a special room at Blekinge museum which was in between the collection and permanent exhibition. In an assemblage of sculpture and film, the astronaut fish was accompanied by sound and videos. The *Esox Lunaris* had supposedly explored outer space and landed on the moon long before us humans and knew about space technology. On the museum sign the artifact was said to be from 7000 B.C. The artwork was ambiguous for visitors, who could wonder if the figure was part of the collection of the museum or not. In a museum context one can reflect upon what, how and whose history the museum presents and how it is displayed. In Gdańsk her work turned into a larger digital media space laboratory, whereas in the Kunsthalle Rostock she decided to develop a new artwork.

Dainius Dapkevičius made a work which connected the Baltic countries in an installation where he let all lighthouses around the Baltic Sea sound together. All their signals, their light types, frequency, etc. were transformed into a sound composition. Katerina Cherevko's poetic installation was in constant movement and depended on the viewer's presence.

The triptych, *Sun-diver,* by Konstantin Traschenkov was an installation to rest in and was about the similarity between being in a dream and diving under water. Its starting point was a dream described to Traschenkov by a friend in their childhood. The installation reminded you of how sounds transmit underwater in a surreal way. Aleksandr Ljubin and Vassily Kolesnik made a series of photographs from the Marine Brigade in Baltijsk to present the people there who work in a male-dominated and secret military environment with artifacts and symbols of war all around them. I wrote about the sound works of Laura Stasiulytė and Łukasz Szałankiewicz in the text about *Art onboard*, since their installations were heard by thousands of people in the cabins during the two summers when we had exhibitions on the ferries Stena Vision and Stena Spirit. I


TEKSTY
BAŁTYKU
TELLING
THE
BALTIC

haven't got the texts from our Russian and Lithuanian colleagues about how the work process was developed by the Russian and Lithuanian artists yet. Should we write about this part further?

And, we have to mention the fantastic performances by Anna Steller and Oleg Blyablas as part of the openings and exhibitions.

/Torun

NOMADIC ART

Skickat: den 15 September 2013 18:42 Till: Torun Ekstrand

How to explain the nomadic aspect of our project? It was present on many levels. First of all we - the partners - were from many cities and countries situated along the coast and there was ever the Baltic Sea between us. So we always had to cross it by boat in order to meet or to do something together. Hmm, sometimes it turned out to be problematic... Do you remember how I arrived too late at the ferry terminal in Karlskrona and even though we could still see the ferry standing at the waterfront, the terminal staff didn't want to let me on board, because the moorings had already been removed?

So we were nomads ourselves when working on this project. But also the activities we produced were being moved from one place to another. It started at the workshop organized in March 2012 in Karlskrona, during which the collected stories were presented to the invited artists. Artists from Poland, Sweden, Germany, Russia and Lithuania participated in the workshop. However, because some other invited artists from Russia and Lithuania were unable to attend due to lack of funding, another workshop, something like a twin-brother of the one in Karlskrona, was organized at the Nida Art Colony and there we discussed the stories and planned art projects proposed by the artists from Russia and Lithuania.

Then, of course, there was the exhibition itself, which also traveled. Starting in Karlskrona, it then moved to Gdańsk, then Rostock and Kaliningrad and finally it was even shown on board the Stena Line ferries going from Gdynia to Karlskrona and back.

Do you remember when we discussed how interesting it was that our project caused a transformation of the notions of "the audience" and "the tourist"? It was just the nomadic nature of *Telling the Baltic* that caused its audience, who wanted to see the exhibition in its different venues, since it changed to a great extent at each location, to become tourists and travel. And, on the other hand, the exhibition on the ferries also caused regular tourists to suddenly become the audience of an art show, whether they wanted to or not, since the art was displayed in the corridors, in the spa and even on the cabin radio.

Agnieszka

Skickat: den 15 September 2013 18:42 Till: Torun Ekstrand

It was surreal to see the ship leave and there was no chance of getting on board. Watching the smoke from the large funnel and the slow movement of a large ship. Seeing the empty waiting hall. And, I remember you had no one to look after your dog the next day. You had to have your office on the ferry the entire next day…

EXHIBITIONS

The exhibition tour

Blekinge museum, Karlskrona, Sweden
June– September 2012

Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdańsk, Poland relocated to the Science and Technology Center in Gdańsk due to a delay of the opening of the new Laznia CCA in Nowy Port. The exhibition was planned to be the inauguration exhibition in this building.
October – December 2012

Kunsthalle Rostock, Rostock, Germany
February– March 2013

The Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts & NGO ArtMission, Kaliningrad, Russia. The exhibition was shown at the Museum of the World Ocean as to present contemporary art works in the most popular parts of the permanent exposition of this institution. In this way the art works and the stories collected by the project participants were linked to the context of the world maritime history. Besides this localisation of the exhibition created a possibility of reaching new audiences.
April–June 2013

On board the Stena Line ferries, Karlskrona/Gdynia, Stena Vision and Stena Spirit.
July–September 2013

The exhibitions

The exhibition displayed everything from existential and poetic works about impermanence; works that accommodate drama and politics, to works with absurd humor and superstition.

The touring exhibition was not an exhibition with the exact same artworks packed into boxes and presented at different art gallery locations. It changed form and there were new works from artists when it was moved to a different place, along with some artworks that were presented at each location. Artworks were created during the project to be shown in a new cultural context. Artworks got new interpretations and meanings for every new situation. It was like an open-ended series of exhibitions. It would have been great to have had an even larger production budget so that all of the artists could have realized new work at every location.

If storytellers brought their personal memories and artists brought their memories, research and work to the project, the visitors from the Baltic countries brought their lives and memories which they reflected against the works they met. It would be fantastic to know more about how the

works triggered lashes, recognition, estrangement, new histories and how the memories of the visitors mixed with the artworks and stories.
Marek Zygmunt was the exhibition producer and made the exhibition plans for each location, with the exception of Kaliningrad and on the ferries. He had a hectic time of organizing so many works of art in new locations. His exhibition design gave each artwork its own space. The exhibition at the spacious Kunsthalle Rostock in particular turned out like an open space where the dialogue in between artworks and the visitors offered a long-term view and a lot of space for each work.
The exhibition in Gdańsk was made into a large intriguing maze where the visitors didn't know what they were going to see around the corner. In Karlskrona, the exhibition moved into several rooms and blended in with the museum objects. The sound installation by Laura Stasiulytė was in the glass entryway, a symbolic passage. Zając's work was in the garden.

The grey felt Marek Zygmunt decided to use in the exhibition design was inspired by the grey Baltic Sea. It was also functional as it was made into covers for the cubes that visitors could use to sit on and into walls to prevent sound from leaking between artworks, like an insulating protection. Felt is an everyday material, familiar to many. One comes to think about the German artist Joseph Beuys, who used felt in many installations. Zygmunt was perhaps also inspired by Beuys in his own video about saving energy in the different locations where the exhibitions were shown. Like a contemporary monk dressed in orange, he circled around places of worship of any kind, places vibrating with energy. Beuys caught and recycled life energy in many of his works.

NCCA in Kaliningrad was very inventive when finding a location for the exhibition. The space of the Museum of the World Ocean gave a chance to make an unique combination of contemporary art works from *Telling the Baltic* with the museum's permanent exhibition and the context of the world maritime history. Employees of this institution invited us to visit all their localities, each with its own atmosphere and content. The artists spread out in locations where their works could find connections to the collection. Elena Tsvetaeva and Yulia Bardun from NCCA had a tough time to arrange all works but the result was very interesting: the permanent exhibition added new layers and interpretations to the artworks

The exhibition was censored once in Kaliningrad when the World Ocean Museum did not want to screen the video, *The Instructor*, in the Aquarium during the feeding hour for their fish. The argument was that many of the visitors would be children and since the man in the film is bare-chested and wearing only a swimsuit, it would be construed as offensive. The author of the work, Astrid Göransson, went to the swim center in Kaliningrad to swim and discovered that the men there were also bare-chested. Finally NCCA Kaliningrad managed to mediate between the artist and the museum and the film was shown during all opening hours. The artists wrote short presentations of their works for the exhibition. We added texts around the exhibitions to inform the audience and to put the work in a location-based context.
I've been planning for our workshop in October and today have been preparing for next week's Project Report. We will also meet about the catalogue on Tuesday in Gdańsk! Our deadline for the text is today, Friday 13th. There is sunshine and there is a weekend ;)

Take care, Torun

Skickat: den 25 september 2013 15:31 Till: Torun Ekstrand

Dear Torun,
I would also like to write something about the architecture of the exhibition and its spatial context, because they seem to be very meaningful for this nomadic exhibition. Everything started at the Blekinge museum in Karlskrona – an institution that has had stories collected from people living close to the sea in its program for many years. Its rooms are filled with objects representing the region's cultural heritage, crafts and fishing tradition. In this way, artworks belonging to the exhibition, *Telling the Baltic*, were located in the immediate context of the themes to which they related. Even a baroque garden in the museum's inner yard became a place of display as Iwona Zając's pictures which combined statements from shipyard workers in Gdańsk with embroidered ornaments from Blekinge were presented on its walls. And Anna Steller's dramatic performance, *Unrelenting beauty of disaster*, took place among its carefully modeled shrubs. People living in houses surrounding the museum could observe the performance from their balconies…
In Gdańsk, the exhibition was larger than in Karlskrona, because more works by Russian and Lithuanian artists were added to it. We found a space large enough for it in a building belonging to the Gdansk Science and Technology Park. Previously it had been part of the biggest printing house in Gdańsk, which went bankrupt some years ago. In this postindustrial hall with an area of 550 square meters, a labyrinth, designed by the exhibition's architect, Marek Zygmunt, was built in such a way that the individual works of art occupied separate spaces.
The Kunsthalle Rostock, which was another place where the exhibition was shown, is a typical modernist museum building from the late 60s of the last century: the classic "white box" with its beautiful open spaces on different levels and huge glass walls. For sure the exhibition benefitted greatly in this architecture.
Our Russian colleagues who organized the presentation of *Telling the Baltic* in Kaliningrad, were challenged with the space in the World Ocean Museum, where the exhibition was shown. It was not an easy task. This institution has a number of buildings and facilities, in which a permanent exhibition is located that could not be temporarily shut down, and so the artworks had to be placed among the exposed objects. While in Karlskrona the exhibition was shown in the context of the local cultural heritage, in Kaliningrad it functioned in the context of natural heritage - models of flora and fauna or history, such as the inside of a submarine. Certainly, this kind of environment was very interesting, but also required additional, extremely precise conceptual work by the curators.
And finally there were the last venues – on the Stena Line ferries which sail from Gdynia to Karlskrona and back. It was also a big challenge to place at least part of the exhibition here. Unfortunately, on the day of the opening I was very ill and could not attend. So I didn't see this show, because the ferry is a ferry and in everyday circumstances, you cannot go aboard, unless you're a passenger. Maybe you could write a few lines about how the exhibition was arranged there?

Hugs, Agnieszka

OPENINGS AND ENDINGS
Skickat: den 22 September 2013 11:37 Till: Agnieszka Wołodźko

Dear Agnieszka,
It was great to meet you in Gdańsk this week in between all the projects. It was good to see Evgeny Umansky and Jurij Vassiliev at Laznia CCA too, I will see their exhibition next time. The tour back was on a calm sea. How symbolic that we had our text discussion at the restaurant Perła Bałtyku in Nowy Port. There is still so much we could write about *Telling the Baltic* - it could be a novel of its own.

When travelling on the ferries back and forth I saw our exhibition onboard again and watched the video, *Inner sea everywhere*, by Oleg Blyablyas and remembered his performance when a specialist let loose leeches on his body, sucking his blood. When seamen were injured at sea it is said that they were injected with salt water from the sea if there was no blood donor around. Blyablyas connected seawater, nature and the human body in his work.

I saw the digital artists' book by Patrycja Orzechowska again when on the ferry, an artist who changed her work for each location. Her irregularly built room in Sweden, the abstract oily paintings behind the collage of numerous paper cuttings from old books and magazines mixed with new black and white photographs, covering the walls from floor to ceiling. Seducing at first, and when immersed in the space you discovered the dead birds covered in oil, fish bones and shipwrecks.

"Don't deliver yourself as a finished package: scream in your laughs and laugh in your screams" is a quote I wrote in a notebook and I think it belongs to the poet and writer Michaux. It came to my mind when I first saw the performance by Anna Steller.

Her breathtaking performance, *Unrelenting Beauty of Disaster*, illuminated and awakened one of the world's worst ocean liner catastrophes ever. In January 1945, a Russian submarine fired torpedoes and sunk the German ship Wilhelm Gustloff after it had left Gdynia/Gotenhafen.
Over 9000 people died, most of them civilians, but also German soldiers. Now the Baltic is their underwater cemetery. The history of the people onboard is intertwined and combined with her own dramatic personal experience about playing on the beach and in the sea as a child.

This catastrophe turned up several times in other projects within Art Line.

In connection with our project, we heard of the ship, Wilhelm Gustloff, at our first storytelling workshop when the journalist Małgorzata Żerwe told us about her interview with Jerzy Janczukowicz from the diving club Shark.

Our equipment during this, we can say, greatest Polish seadiving expedition, that is the expedition to the wreck of MV Wilhelm Gustloff would today be disqualified right from the start. What we were wearing at that time, would today be simply classified as life-threatening, we wouldn't be allowed to go into the water in such gear. That really was real free diving. Flippers, mask, wetsuit – they were just beginning to be used. Back then, the basic diving equipment was that heavy metal helmet, lead boots, all that gear that weighed about 100 kg. This diver was connected to the surface by means of hoses, which were linked to the base. In our case, there was really no connection, no Ariadne's thread linking us with the shore. The diver would just take a cylinder with a supply of breathing air, jump into the water completely freely. He was swimming like a bird…[12]

The diver said he was sorry that it is forbidden to dive in the wreck of Wilhelm Gustloff today because it disturbs the peace of the dead and compared it to walking in a cemetery at midnight. The wreck of Steuben, sunk only a few weeks after Wilhelm Gustloff, also lies on the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

The summer of 1973. Communism at its peak, and yet we managed to find a perfect key for this expedition. Namely that we, the divers of Shark Club, want to find the Amber Chamber in the wreck of Wilhelm Gustloff, retrieve it and hand it over to our great friend, the Soviet Union. The party notables of the time, whom we had to reach in order to obtain some permits, were totally flabbergasted indeed. 'Cause you know, it was risky to say no /laugh/. After all, those students from the Shark have such a noble aim, how to forbid them.[13]

The Amber Chamber was unique treasure from the beginning of 1700, given to the Russian tsar Peter the Great, which later was brought to Königsberg castle where is disappeared just at the end of WWII.

The shipwrecks were shown in the photographs by Magnus Peterson who took part in *Art & Apparatus*, another Art Line project, and presented his earlier work in an exhibition connected to digital media. Peterson used side-scan sonar, which can read the bottom of a sea and render the sound waves into images. He went searching for shipwrecks on the dark bottom of the Baltic Sea, unattainable for humans and impossible to see. Secrets waiting and lurking in the invisible depths. Many people dream of finding a well-kept, never-before-seen secret. Gustloff was one of the shipwrecks presented in the exhibition *Art & Apparatus*. Some war crimes are depicted over and over again in films and books about World War II, this is not the case with Gustloff. When we arranged workshops in Kaliningrad, we walked past a memorial by a lake on a cold and beautiful winter day. It was a bronze sculpture of the submarine commander Alexander Iwanowitsch Marinesko, who sunk Gustloff.

Onboard the ferries photographs by Iwona Zając were displayed in the spa's dark brown lounge area. There was a long glass vitrine wall perfect for the lighthouses by Schmidt and some selected stories from lighthouse keepers. Almost all of the exhibition's video works were shown onboard on the TV channels, in the spa, or in the specially built orange boxes in between the bars and restaurants. All the passengers passed by this spot. The sound installation by Laura Stasiulytė was heard in every cabin onboard. Showing art on the ferries proved to be a real challenge, since the overall design of ferries seemed to be dominated by horror vacui along with marketing for what to drink and do onboard. Astrid Göransson's work, *Life Jacket*, was made into posters which were given out to the ferry passengers as gifts, and now many people around the Baltic know the advice on how to behave when at sea.

CONTINUATION

I was thinking about the Moomintrolls by Tove Jansson. In *Moominpappa at Sea,* Moominpappa is writing his dissertation about the sea by a lonely lighthouse to which he brings his family. He is trying to understand the sea and thought that when he finally could grasp what the sea is about, he would also understand himself. The forces of nature and the inner forces intertwined. But the riddle is never unveiled. There is no answer. From the start we had the idea to save the original stories in the archives of the maritime museums around the Baltic Sea, in a cross-border memory bank. When we applied for a six-month extension of Art Line we wanted to make the stories and storytellers more visible. Now we are to present them online and make a presentation for all the museums which means they can show it to their visitors. Together with the documentary of the project made by Justyna Zając and Marek Zygmunt, it will be possible to present *Telling the Baltic* again and hopefully encourage more people to tell their stories about the Baltic.

I use the sentence which artists from each country translated for the first opening:
Östersjön är det som förenar oss – Bałtyk nas łączy – Baltiĭskiĭ nas obiedinyaet – Die Ostsee verbindet uns – Baltijos mus vienija – The Baltic is what connects us.

Mare Balticum.
/Torun

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Digital bridges and liquid borders: everyday storytelling and/as Baltic identity

by Lissa Holloway-Attaway

Telling the Baltic is an International collaborative storytelling and art exhibition initiative within the larger Art Line project involving the Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art (Laznia CCA), Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Blekinge County Museum, Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts, NGO ArtMission (Kaliningrad), Nida Art Colony of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, Kunsthalle Rostock and Stena Line Ferry. During the course of the three-year Art Line project, participating partners gathered a range of materials and "stories" from individuals who live within and who travel throughout the South Baltic region. The collected materials span many forms and types and include traditional interviews, photo essays, digital stories, historical and archival media, as well as accidental encounters, ambient sounds, and abstract images, all gathered from sea-travelers, sea-dwellers, and from the sea itself. The collected stories formed the raw materials and inspiration for artists, who were selected from our partner countries, and who rendered stories or abstracted elements from stories, regions, and personal experiences of the Baltic into works of art. These works were exhibited in museums, galleries, and other venues around the Baltic (including on the Stena Line ferry traveling between Poland and Sweden) throughout 2012–2013. Both the storytelling and artistic development process was enhanced through joint meetings, seminars, workshops, and other research practices that explored storytelling, interdisciplinary art production, and intercultural cooperation.

As a researcher in Digital Culture and Media at Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (BTH) in Karlskrona, Sweden, and a project leader in the Telling the Baltic initiative, who both collected stories and produced digital interventions and media with the stories collected, my participation has provided many unique challenges in the exhibition and story-collection process. What is a story? What makes a story unique from the artworks produced within the exhibitions? How does a landscape tell a story, and how is this unique from a personal narrative collected from someone who lives and works on the sea? How are both uniquely intimate and expressive, and how can digital media complement this expressiveness? These are some of the questions which have engaged me during the development of Telling the Baltic and in the exhibition process, and which will continue to resonate with me after the project concludes. The project did not, in fact, provide answers to these questions, but much like the materials we collected, which remained diverse in theme and form, it remained irresolute in terms of international influences and poly-vocal in terms of the narrative and characters they embodied. They continue to ripple the surface of our intentions, to make waves and disrupt clear and linear reflections. The stories we found were not static mirrors of one Baltic presence, nor were they unified in terms of their form, or even for that matter, formal in their identification as traditional stories; yet, this proved to be a valuable lesson provided by our encounter. That is, the diversity of storytellings forges multiple bridges of experience across the Baltic region and across the sea. 'Liquid' narratives which refuse simple form and definition also assure that borders are permeable, and art, story, landscape, history and culture can be accessed through a variety of means to reveal a multiplicity of Baltic identities and perspectives.

We believe the Baltic Sea has many stories to "tell", and it can reveal its narrative(s) in countless outlets from which we may explore and share its rich surfaces, depths and all the spaces in between. We thus sought stories from those who travel the sea on holiday or for work (ferry passengers, island dwellers, sailors, ship mechanics, dock workers, and galley staff), but also from those who live by the Baltic's international shores and from those whose lives are influenced by its beauty, mystery, hidden dangers and secrets. Our goal was to collect an array of materials which reflect the many ways the sea can represent an inter-cultural and multi-cultural identity. Just as there is no one Baltic Sea, or one Baltic Sea-story, there is no singular way to represent the numerous ways in which the sea can influence those who encounter it. Therefore, our international profile – with story collectors and researchers in Poland, Germany,

Sweden, Lithuania and Kaliningrad – supports our goal to promote multiple perspectives on the Baltic. Our research trajectory as we engaged this process has been informed by a number of questions relevant to cross-cultural digital media(tions) and expressive (new) narrative forms enabled by emergent mixed media forms. These questions included: How can digital media provide a bridge between "material" and "immaterial" experiences and support/express our sensations of place in a contemporary mixed-media ecology? How can storytelling form sustainable cultural bridges among diverse disciplines (art, media production, humanities, social sciences and cultural studies) and populations (Swedish, Polish, German, Russian and Lithuanian)? How can digital media give "voice" to the everyday, accidental, ambient and liquid life of the sea and its borders (to the sounds, sensations, and embodied expressiveness outside the medium of "pure" language)?

To this end, we tried several methods of collecting stories. For example, we interviewed passengers and workers on ferries both big and small: the Aspö ferry (a small local car and foot passenger ferry in Karlskrona) and the Stena Line ferry (a large commercial ferry traveling between Sweden and Poland). What were the differences, we wondered, between these expanses of water and they people who traversed them? To investigate, we spent time talking to passengers and recording responses from those who took the 20-minute journey between Trossö, in central Karlskrona, and Aspö, a small island in the Swedish archipelago, fittingly near the mouth of the open Baltic sea, populated mostly by summer residents and tourists. What could it tell us? What would it say? Although we did ask those traveling on the ferry personal questions about who they were, we also asked them for 'stories' about their journeys, the why of their travels, and invited them to express what the ferry and this particular part of the Baltic sea meant to them. "Tell us your story", we prompted. "Why are you here, now?" From a German family exploring a holiday destination on bikes, and a young man scouting a site for his impending marriage, to an older woman who lived on Aspö and saw the ferry journey as a "roadway" between very different places (Aspö and Trossö), and a postman delivering mail and collecting it from the floating mailbox on the ferry, we heard many responses. We found many small and personal stories that reminded us that the Baltic could have both a local and international profile at the same time; it could be both foreign and exotic, as well as an invisible work-a-

Anna Steller, *Unrelenting beauty of disaster,* 2012

day place, nothing special at all, merely a place to "get over and across", as one Aspö resident shared. "Why are you here?" many seemed to wonder. "What's so special about this place to you?" And still many others knew already what was special and were happy we asked them to share.

Our interviews on the larger Stena Line ferry took us down other roads, as we focused there primarily on those working on the ferry, asking them if they had any specific reflections on the sea and what it meant to them. Again the range was diverse, as we discovered: to some the sea and their colleagues on the ferry were a second family, and the ship a "home". Many spent up to two weeks at a time on board, making it a living space and workplace combined. But, surprisingly, the Baltic was not even necessarily a "seaplace" to some, especially to those who worked in housekeeping or in the engine rooms, as they often forgot they were not on land and rarely even looked at the water. They separated themselves from the passengers, but not in a negative way, as they knew they could not share the experience of a tourist. The ship was too familiar, not foreign enough, and was not a vehicle taking them across to some other place, but was rather already a place, with the journey itself being inconsequential. The ferry sounds too became a kind of invisible background hum, or alternately, a cause for alarm, we discovered as we entered the deafening noise of the engine rooms to which the mechanics seemed almost oblivious, unless it changed slightly, and then they tuned in to find the problem. To the ferry Captains, the sea was hyper-present, something they scrutinized carefully, looking for signs of alarm, danger, or just local traffic. Their panoramic views did not fade into "work-only" views though, as the Swedish Captain we met said he often was astounded by how beautiful it was, and he also spent his vacations aboard ships in other seas, as he never grew tired of the water and its romance. To the Head of Security, who allowed us to visit the "prison" on board the ferry, it was a place that sometimes inspired anti-social activities, ending in a jail cell, but also led to close friendships and long conversations with some who just needed to calm their nerves. As he shared with us the story of a voyage where he stayed up long into the night to calm an elderly man, traveling alone, who grew very anxious, away from his wife from whom he was seldom apart, we realized that stories of connection can come from unexpected sources. The ferry "prison guard", became a kind of "therapist", and then ultimately a friend to someone who reached out to him on the sea, and they began a years-long friendship and correspondence. This story was to Stena Line's Head of Security one of his most meaningful connections to the Baltic, and it was clear as he shared it that he saw his work on the sea as one where people-in-need were central to his best experiences. The sea, he reminded us, brought out both the dreamers and the fighters, but you could never know which you might find on any given day, and especially at night.

Our more general research framework for this project – foregrounded within the Art Line initiative as a whole, seeksing to sustain creative networks among artists, theorists, cultural institutions and tourism – provided a solid foundation for exploring how the sea both connects and divides us in differing and interdisciplinary contexts. The *Telling the Baltic* project is based on a mixed model for critical/creative practice, and the researchers at BTH are committed to documenting our methods and supporting research in storytelling methods, interdisciplinary art practice, experimental exhibition, and intercultural collaboration and to networking through productive practice. To that end, information about the *Telling the Baltic* participants, selected stories, and documentation of our collection and production methods, as well as a gallery showcasing the artworks selected for the exhibitions, can be viewed on the *Telling the Baltic* and Art Line websites, as well in the exhibitions themselves in the form of text, image and video narratives. We worked with archivists at the Blekinge museum, for instance, to find old photographs of Baltic Sea life, as well as with a local Karlskrona photographer, Ida Gustavsson, to create contemporary images from both sides of the Baltic (in Blekinge and in Nida) from which we made postcards and asked visitors to Art Line venues and to *Telling the Baltic* events to tell us what the pictures meant to them, and to share their own stories. The postcard images are displayed in a book of stories at the *Telling the Baltic* exhibitions, are online on You Tube, repurposed as "digital postcards" asking for viewers commentary, and also serve as the basis for a spin-off project called *Drawing Lines* (by Maria Björkman and Erika Deal), which explores postcards in the context of locative and tactile digital media storytelling. The ways in which our raw materials (such as our postcard image stories), our connections across cultures, and our mixing of physical and digital platforms, as well as the inter-development among projects (from the *Telling the Baltic* postcards to *Drawing Lines*) is a new model for interdisciplinary collaboration and multimodal exhibition. Like the sea we are trying to capture and tell, the means

and methods we evoke are fluid and invite multiple ways to traverse the Baltic networks, and beyond, and seek connections among them.

The *Digital Art Platform* (DAP), another Art Line initiative related to the *Telling the Baltic* project, and to which BTH researchers have made significant contributions, is another experimental venue for exhibiting works that include digital components and explore innovative uses of public space, but which also combine and confuse virtual and physical spaces. In parallel to our participation in the *Telling the Baltic* project, the development of the DAP also illustrates the ways in which artistic and cultural narratives may be sustained and developed with a consciousness towards the materiality of the media employed to inspire/produce/display it. This includes not only foregrounding the "stories" and story-types we collect within the *Telling the Baltic* project (and within Art Line as a whole), but also within other art pieces, performances, and media (designed within our research network of theorists and artists) to support a cross-cultural conversation among international partners and contexts. This diverse network necessitates an informed critical perspective on story collection, production and exchange, and throughout the process of development, we contribute to a reflective process to share the methods and practices we use to bring interdisciplinary perspectives together (humanists, social scientists, artists, technicians, and cultural workers). We have engaged this process through active research seminars, workshops with the artists, participation in conferences, and the development of media.

The *(s)AND* project reflects the dynamic development methods we have tried to maintain in research related to the *Telling the Baltic* exhibitions, and was inspired by a research residency I held at the Nida Art Colony in Lithuania (another Art Line partner) in late 2011. Working with collaborators (Daniel Spikol at Malmö University) and media developers and musicians in Sweden (Ida Gustavsson, Martin Arvebro, Astrid Selling Sjöberg and Kristin Borgehed), we worked to develop a multimodal method for telling the story of two distinct coastlines around the Baltic, and to both find common ground and to recognize and mediate distinctions. In the project, we explore the physical landscape around Nida, Lithuania and the Blekinge Region in Sweden with an emphasis on allowing the landscape to dictate its character and reveal its natural histories. The project fo-

Iwona Zajac, *Patience*, 2013

cuses on the murky and indistinct cultural histories that connect and disconnect the regions throughout this Baltic Sea border. Thus, it focuses on shifting sites of location for "true" historical storytelling and includes imaginative "additive" content to forge connections. Hence, the project title, which alludes to "sand" as a physical property characterized by its shifting nature, at the border between solid land and liquid water, as well as ("and") the additive possibilities that such shifting allows: If borders shift, then what, one may ask, is lost or gained as the renegotiation occurs? What are the Baltic stories held within, washed away, and re-deposited in the iconic *(s)ANDs* and dunes of Nida and the rocky shores of Blekinge, and how do they exemplify all stories as historically liquid, multitudinous (countless, like grains of sand on a beach), immense (like the dunes and the boulders), and intimate when one participates with them? "Sand", too, as a property connected to time – through its containment in an hour-glass – supports other explorations of it and its relationship to history-telling, to history-making. The project uses many methods to reveal the stories and adapts them to a number of different contexts and venues. This includes the use of iPads and mobile devices to access augmented reality and other media content comprised of photographs and video from Lithuania and Sweden, as well as live music, song, and poetry based on a telling of the landscapes. Using panorama landscape images/video, and touch screens, for example, users in the *(s)AND* installation are able to access (to "touch") abstract narratives based on the histories and locations of Nida and other Baltic sites that evoke the themes of the project. But the story has also been presented as a digitally enhanced performance in which texts and images and responsive technology converge with live actors and musicians. The work has been exhibited in a number of different forms and international venues (and will be throughout 2013), including a video installation, live media performances, and an interactive installation.

The artistic rendering of the raw-material of our stories into contemporary digital media artifacts and exhibitions (mediated and live, or both) maps an important trajectory within interdisciplinary digital culture studies emerging from literary traditions: that is, the movement from text-based literature production to digitally-mediated creative cultural expressions and embodied narratives that foreground multi-modal "textual performance". Such performances – in print media and in digital (art) forms – depend on identifying complex textual composition and production practices to capture contextualized meaning-making ("storytelling") within expressive forms without reducing those narratives (or reducing them to narratives) as simple representative structures and/or holistic mediations. We understand that the technical rendering of information within the context of "media representations" requires critical aptitude and nuance to avoid reductive linear storytelling formulas. Bringing our research into conversation with creative practice (such as workshops that draw together theorists, story collectors and *Telling the Baltic* artists) illustrates how active interpretative methods, ones which overtly engage the story-matters (the documents, media types, and the cultural contexts) can deepen our knowledge of how culturally-informed expressions circulate in emergent technically-mediated contexts, and also encourage participation, collaboration, and experiential sharing.
In closing, I will share the words, one final story, from one of my colleagues at Blekinge Tekniska Högskola, Pirjo Elovaara (Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, BTH), with whom I worked during the story-collection process. As a feminist technoscience researcher with experience in ethnography and digital storytelling, her insights about her own research process (before and during the *Telling the Baltic* experience) and her understanding of everyday stories also reflect the diverse ways in which a "telling" of Baltic stories must draw on a number of perspectives in order to reflect the richness of "the silent and seemingly small". This is true if the source is an image, a landscape, a sound, a sailor, or a personal history: "a Baltic story about collecting stories..."

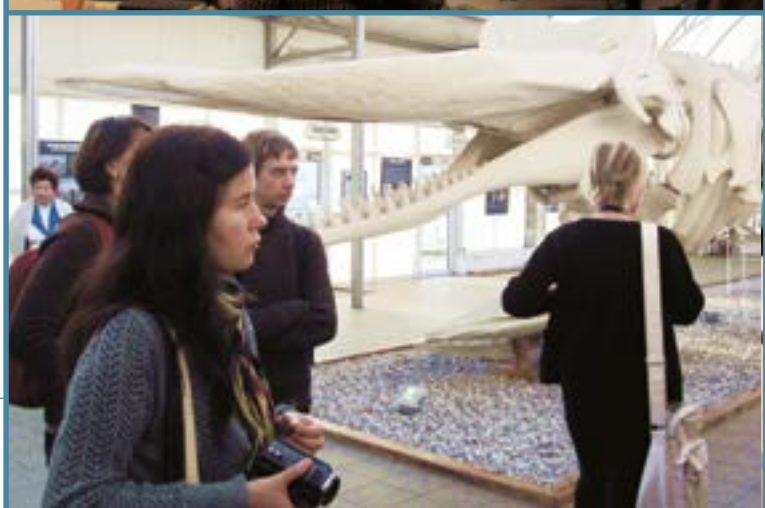
When you are interested in everyday life, you suddenly find your way to everyday knowing, and the need to ask yourself how to study everyday practices, especially their tacit aspects, and how people make meaning of their everyday lives. In order to be able to learn more about the complexities of everyday knowing as a researcher I realized that I needed unique methods. In my case, it was the ethnographic approach, in particular, with its focus on observations and interviews, that provided me with a valuable tool kit. And things worked out rather well – I visited many different places and environments and observed and interviewed. Ethnographic skills are not easy to acquire, but slowly, my own understanding of how to respectfully and carefully do research on ethnographic premises expanded. However, somewhere during my own learning process, I started to feel uncomfortable. Observation and interviews


BLEKINGE MUSEUM
TELLING THE BALTIC

are well known and respected research methods, but they were not good enough to notice the unnoticeable, the silent and the seemingly small.

My journey of methods continued. Along with my colleagues, I started to experiment with methods beyond those of ethnography. The most important demand for the inclusion of new methods into our repertoire came from the clear observation that nothing in the everyday is uninteresting, and that we need methods that appreciate and respect this position. We as researchers, coming from outside, stepping into practices unfamiliar to us, do not know in advance what is important, and hence we need open-ended and inclusive methods; the most silent voice should be the voice of the researcher's meaning. In a research situation, the main actors should be people in their own contexts; everyday stories can come in many shapes, and we need to listen to learn and appreciate them; we should tolerate our own uncertainty when working with creative methods, which should be based on the idea of participation, and finally, should be fun for all partners and participants.

Suddenly I found myself in the middle of the Art Line and *Telling the Baltic* projects. Bringing my previous experiences into the project, I decided that here once more there was an interesting opening for testing and developing my methods further, methods needed for collecting stories in their everyday contexts. And since I am convinced that stories are not equal to interviewing, there is a linear trajectory from questions to answers, other ways of accessing people's stories from and around the Baltic would be necessary. Why not start with a simple and clear invitation when meeting the storytellers: "Tell me your story?", we asked many times. And then we opened ourselves up to the accidental transformations and translations that were told across the encounters, across the seas.




APPLAUSE

Remember!
- a museum collecting stories
by Karin Nilsson

The term museum is derived from the Greek word mouseion, a place sacred to the muses, goddesses of art and science. The Romans used the word museum to describe places where they had scientific discussions.
A museum nowadays is an institution that collects, systematizes, preserves and communicates. There are hardly any limits to what a museum can collect. It could for instance be objects, data, video, audio and stories. The reason for collecting varies, but in short it can be described as: The museum collects so that we will not forget- but remember!
Telling the Baltic was a collaborative storytelling project. Stories have been told of those about those who travel the sea on holiday and for work. The stories were stored in a public cross-border archive and formed the raw material for artists who could use them as inspiration in creating artworks.
Within the *Telling the Baltic* project, Blekinge Museum also collected stories. Our geographical investigation area was the Baltic Sea, and the timespan was anything from today to historical epochs.
My role in the project as the person responsible for the Blekinge museum archives and documentation activities was to put the museum's stories at the artists' disposal, to be the pilot into mousseion.
For bringing together the material, three methods were used, namely:

- Searching in archives
- Searching on the internet
- Interviews

Archives
Blekinge museum has a considerable collection of photographs, articles, interviews and other documents describing life in the archipelago. In this material, we found interesting material, telling about the lives of men, women and children. From this collection, some photographs with descriptive texts were posted on the *Art Line/Telling the Baltic* website.

In the historical stories, we find that the sea mainly was a place for people to make their living, for example, as fishermen, pilots or customs officers, whilst in contemporary stories, the archipelago is mostly a site for recreational activities.

Interviews
Interviews were made with different persons having connection to the Baltic Sea. For example one man who had visited Lithuania told this story.

> At one occasion I think it was 1990 I sat at a dinner table in Vilnius with various representatives for Sajudis, the Lithuanian independence movement. I sat next to a man I did not know and we exchanged some pleasantries. I asked if he had been in Sweden or Western Europe sometime. He had not and that was not a surprise. He asked me where I came from and I said: From a small town near the Baltic Sea called Karlskrona and you can not really know where that is. Then he thought for a moment and said; I know the town. It is where The Old man Rosenbom stands outside a church. I looked at him and said: How can you know that? Well he said. I remember a chapter from Nils Holgersson. That book we read to our children. It was our way during the repression to teach our children Swedish geography. I also asked if it was translated into Lithuanian and it was the course. I had not thought of literature's power and importance on that way earlier.

Internet
Today we find many stories on the internet, where those who want to share their experiences place them. Through the internet, we found both ancient and contemporary stories. A man wrote about his island far out in the sea. On his website, we found a story about a boat that came drifting during the second world war, no one knew from where. The children of the island took care of it and used it in different ways.

Håkan Bergström writes:

There was an old boat laying in the grass of Långören. You could see it for quite a while until finally it was completely gone. The last thing we saw was the outline in the grass, the outline of an old boat. Nothing special, perhaps, just an old boat. Forgotten and so finally given back to nature, as it always happens.

It was winter and the year could have been 1944, when the abandoned boat drifted over the sea and eventually stranded on Långören. From where she came, nobody knows, perhaps from overseas. Many crafts were coming from there in those times…

Collected stories

The collected material was systematized and presented in different ways. One example is the presentation at the workshop held in Karlskrona in March 2012.

Some of the participating artists were inspired to look further into the museum's collections, and so it came about that... Irma Stanaitytė, Jurgita Remeikytė and Patrycja Orzechowska worked with the photo collection and Iwona Zając used traditional embroidery as inspiration. Katrin Roeber was inspired by traditional wooden boats and made a frottage at the museum´s boat yard. Łukasz Szałankiewicz visited historical sites. Patrycja Orzechowska visited boat grave yards. Irma Stanaitytė and Jurgita Remeikytė made a film from the Rope Walk in the shipyard of Karlskrona and Anna Brag drew inspiration from stories about supervision on the sea.

***Telling the Baltic* – a Museum**

It is possible to describe the *Telling the Baltic* project the same way as you would define a museum. The idea was to collect stories, systematize them, preserve them and tell them again. Re-narration was done with artistic expression in places for art and science and with the purpose, among other things, to generate scientific discussions.

And finally, the stories are archived for the future and the collective memory – so that we should not forget, but remember.

Karin Nilsson ethnologist and pedagogue employed at Blekinge Museum. In charge of the museum's documentation, archives and research service.

Telling the Baltic

by Dan Jönsson

When it sounds like the storyteller's imagination has run away with them, we call it a sailor's yarn. It needn't be a sailor telling the story; it just has to sound like it's more or less a lie. Or at least highly improbable. The sea does something to the imagination, as if distances also stretch facts. The imagination always takes wings when the horizon is limitless.

The fact that the Baltic is actually only a small inland sea makes no difference. In their *Crow Catchers*, Irma Stanaitytė and Jurgita Remeikytė tell us that in the early twentieth century the coastal population of the Curonian Spit – which is now Lithuania – were known as "crow biters" for their habit of hunting crows and breaking their necks with their teeth. A real sailor's yarn, you might think. But Stanaitytė and Remeikytė back it all up with references to historical sources and documents, probably the most intriguing of which is an old postcard of two boys demonstrating how the killing was done.

So it's true, then? Or is it just clever historical fiction?

And what should we believe when Oleg Blyablyas tells us in his film *Semper Domestica Mare* that in olden days, injured sailors were injected with sea water to compensate for blood loss? Blood and seawater are said to have virtually the same chemical composition – so an old sea dog could very well be telling the truth when he claims to have "the sea in his blood".

If the story is true, that is. But is that actually so important?

Maybe; maybe not. The travelling exhibition *Telling the Baltic*, which in 2012 and 2013 was presented in Karlskrona, Gdańsk, Kaliningrad and Rostock as part of the three-year collaborative project Art Line, was based on a large number of stories collected in the countries surrounding the Baltic. Prior to the exhibition, the artists were given access to these stories, taking them as a starting point for their work. There were tales of people who live and work near the sea: lighthouse keepers, fishermen, dock workers and soldiers. Tales of altered living conditions and geopolitical shifts. Tales of different worlds and common resources.

But there were also a number of stories of a more lurid nature. Andrius Varnas, a skipper (of course) from Nida in Lithuania remembers his youth with the 1970s *Hikers*, a kind of Soviet beatnik group, and how he was once imprisoned for drinking milk (!) at one of their wild beach parties. From Poland, Jerzy Janczukowicz tells how he and his diving club obtained authorisation to dive the wreck of the Wilhelm Gustloff on the pretext that they were going to search for the mythical *Amber Room* on behalf of the Soviet "sister nation". And according to Alexey Chebykin from the Russian enclave Kaliningrad, the sea was once said to have washed up three tonnes of amber on the beach – stones that people gathered in buckets and took home to use instead of wood, amber being said to make an efficient fuel.

It's understandable that a creative artist, faced with such extensive source material, would select the lively, exotic tall tales. But it also shows the complexity of documentary art projects of this kind. As American critic Hal Foster observed as early as 1996 in his book *The Return of the Real,* contemporary art has a strong ideological attraction to the "ethnographic", i.e. to documentary stories from worlds that are at a comforting distance from artistic life. Foster interprets this anthropological trend as a symptom of the hunger for "reality" that has characterised much of the art and culture in an age in which practically everything is reduced to market relations. Contact with "the other", he explains, is a way for the artist to legitimise his or her position, to anchor it in social reality. But it is a position which, according to Foster, runs the risk of becoming reductive and "narcissistic".

Konstantin Traschenkov, Triptych *Sun – Diver,* 2012

Irma Stanaitytė & Jurgita Remeikytė, *Crow catching*, 2012

Today – some twenty years later – Foster's analysis is more relevant than ever. Not only because documentary and scientific approaches seem to be more and more central to the art of our time (they were, for example, the focus of *Documenta 2012*), but also because the basic problem remains, that the aesthetic distance and subjectivity of art allow it to relate to the facts as it chooses. This is also key: a work can build its entire effect on the fact that the viewer doesn't know where the line between reality and fantasy lies. Yet obviously it is not the same thing. Even in art.

In *Telling the Baltic*, the register extended right from Pole Anna Zaradny's baroque myth about a civilisation of fishermen said to have colonised the Moon – talk about sailor's yarns! – to Russian Anton Zabrodin's factual photos of abandoned sites along the coast of the Kaliningrad enclave. The "crow biters" of Irma Stanaitytė and Jurgita Remeikytė, and Oleg Blyablyas' water injections were somewhere in between, in a borderland of subjective interpretations, unprovable urban legends and poetic factoids, which with the right of art could be given an existential and universal meaning.

But what meaning? What were all these stories and tall tales really about? What was the shape of the big story that hid beneath the surface of all the small ones? Was there even a big story at all?

Or perhaps that was just the point; that there wasn't one?

How, for example, did Patrycja Orzechowska's powerful collage of pictures of fish skeletons and shipwrecks relate to Iwona Zając's large canvases of embroidered quotes by shipyard workers in Gdańsk, full of hurt professional pride and concern for the future? What links Johan Thurfjell's fine image-based account of a man who settles on a deserted island with the photo reportage by Alexander Ljubin and Vassily Kolesnik from the old naval base in Baltijsk?

And is Astrid Göransson's style study of an idle lifeguard connected with ... all of it?

For me, *Telling the Baltic* became not primarily an exhibition about the Baltic Sea and its people, but more an opportunity to reflect on just how art can assert its authority as a narrative medium, rather than as a documentary, "anthropological" practice. In other words, the exhibition showed how, perhaps better than any other language, art is able to bridge the gaps, not only between countries, but between now and then, between fact and fiction, between image and world. And perhaps it is in this very uncertainty that a new awareness can be achieved of what is essentially fictitious in such distinctions.

Does that sound romantic? Perhaps it does. But the best works in the exhibition contained just that enigmatic interface between truth and symbols, realism and poetry. Like in Henrik Lund Jørgensen's film *The Reenactors*, in which the Swedish "extradition of the Balts" formed the basis of a philosophical reflection on refugeeism. But what lingered in the memory was the metaphorical digression into fantastic facts; for example, how aquatic organisms are transported around the world in the ballast tanks of ocean-going vessels – with unpredictable consequences when the water is released in a foreign environment.

Or Konstantin Traschenkov, who recounted a conversation with his childhood friend Nikita Kokhan, now a military diver, against a backdrop of stylised sunset pictures. As the sun sank slowly towards the horizon, he described in a lingering and thoughtful manner working in the muddy waters of the Baltic as being like descending into a dream.

The body becoming lighter, the movements becoming heavier.

A world that follows its own laws.

Dan Jönsson is a Swedish art critic and writer.

An interview with Elena Tsvetaeva and Yulia Bardun (Kaliningrad), curators of the Telling the Baltic project

by Evgyenya Romanova

Elena Tsvetaeva – about the complete incorporation into the space of a traditional museum, about the curator's responsibility and about a creative relationship with young artists from Kaliningrad.

ER: In organising the *Telling the Baltic* project exhibition, you decided from the beginning that it would be incorporated into a traditional museum – the World Ocean Museum, to be precise.

ET: Yes, because the World Ocean Museum exposition is also dedicated to the Baltic Sea as a part of the World Ocean. For us as curators, it was a difficult, but doable task. In Karlskrona and in Gdańsk, the exhibitions of the project were situated in clean, sterile, specially prepared halls. In Kaliningrad, the possibility of working in the context of the World Ocean Museum really interested us. The museum is unique; there are many exhibits, and several buildings. We practically blended into the most sacred part of the museum, which the employees and public really enjoy, with exhibits that have been carefully and cautiously gathered and preserved.

ER: Did you find the solutions for the exhibition intuitively?

ET: The preparations for the project took more than a year and, of course, we knew all the artworks of the artists, not only from Kaliningrad, but also from Sweden, Poland, Lithuania and Germany. At the beginning our main goal, as concerns Kaliningrad exhibition, was to present the artists from Kaliningrad and Lithuania - this is what for we received the support from the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. But we complicated the task. The artworks of our colleagues from Poland, Germany and Sweden were so good that we decided to exhibit them as well in the World Ocean Museum. We had seen all the works at the exhibition in Gdańsk. We prepared a specific context for each one of them. On the one hand, every work should fit organically into the exhibition and should be linked with it thematically; but, on the other hand, it should stand out from the rest of the exposition as something different. For example, there was the video by Astrid Göransson: the chest of a swimming instructor of Iranian origin who teaches Swedish children to swim. Swedish children – the heirs of the Vikings, the conquerors of the oceans, who could not only swim, but also breathe under water. We showed this artwork inside an exposition called *Aquarium*. Thus, the swimming instructor inscribed himself into the fauna and flora of an underwater universe as a child of nature. It turned out to be a striking exposition. The artist even thanked us, although at the beginning she had asked for an empty showroom for her artwork. But when she came and saw the final effect, she was quite happy. Practically every piece of art found its own, proper place.

This project started with discussions between the artists and people whose jobs are linked somehow to the Baltic Sea, with lifeguards, fishermen, scientists, people working in lighthouses, members of the coastguard, and so on. Contemporary art does not take its ideas from thin air. Artists work with personal histories, uncover narratives. Every artist from Kaliningrad managed to find their own hero, create a piece of art, and bring it to the exhibition. For me, the most interesting projects are those which show not only some reflections, but also a deep and serious study.








ER: How were you judged as curators by the Swedish and Polish artists who came to the opening of the exhibition in the World Ocean Museum?

ET: I have already told you about Astrid Göransson's gratitude. Of course, all artists are easy to hurt and are very sensitive when it comes to their works, and so are we. We have been living and working here for more than a decade. No one knows our museums better than we do. We can work not only in empty showrooms of galleries, we can also accommodate the work of art to the space of traditional museums. We are also experienced when it comes to working in urban space in public art projects or the space of the tower in the *Tower Kronprinz: Second Coming* project. Until the new residence for the National Centre for Contemporary Arts in the Kronprinz barracks was ready, we gathered experiences in different contexts.

ER: To some extent, it's been a forced experience…

ET: Yes, we are constantly being forced to interpret and accommodate works of art to new exhibiting conditions. In the case of *Telling the Baltic*, we had to discuss things through with artists, insist on certain recommendations, and even consider legal aspects – these are areas of the curators' responsibility. The artist created his work of art, but exhibiting is our job. At the beginning, everybody was nervous and emotional. We met for the first time in January 2013. We showed how and where we wanted to exhibit, there were discussions and so on. But when the artists saw the final effect, I think all of them were pleased. They were happy that it wasn't just the sterile space of a gallery, but a museum, full of life and vivid objects: glass-cases, maps, texts, photos, aquariums, ropes, anchors, bathyscaphes, lighthouses, models of ships and even real ships.
For us, the curators, *Telling the Baltic* is also precious because the majority of the artists from Kaliningrad taking part in the project are young, they are a new generation. We helped them to prepare their works, some things had to be accommodated so that they could be exhibited in the World Ocean Museum. In my opinion, we managed to make a really good, professional, common work effort. Soon, in the Klaipeda Cultural Communication Centre a major exhibition will end, entitled *Made in Kaliningrad*, which exhibits the same artists, but with different artworks. I think that *Telling the Baltic* contributed greatly to that. Our young artists have stopped being afraid of famous curators of modern art from Kaliningrad (laughter). And I am really glad that Kostia Traschenkov, Sasha Ljubin, Anton Zabrodin and Katia Cherevko cooperated in the project…

ER: In other words, *Telling the Baltic* led young, semi-underground artists to share an area of interest with such a solid institution as the National Centre for Contemporary Arts?

ET: Of course! The National Centre for Contemporary Arts and ArtMission should take care of young artists. We do so and that's how we differ from other museums in Kaliningrad, except maybe the Amber Museum, which cooperates actively with artists working with amber. All the museums present ready-made projects and think that working with artists – contacting them, educating and finding resources for the high quality professional exhibitions of their works – is not one of a museum's functions. Despite everything, art needs money, often big money; it needs modern equipment, and the development of technology moves as quick as a flash. What an artist cannot afford, an institution often can. And I am really glad that such creative cooperation with artists from Kaliningrad came into being, with both renowned ones, such as Oleg Blyablyas, Alexey Chebykin, and Danil Akimov, and young, lesser known ones. We are ready to work with all of them in the future.

Elena Tsvetaeva Curator, art-manager (MS), artist. Director of the Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts.

Astrid Göransson, *The Instructor*, 2012

Michael Soltau, *Bridges*, 2012

Yulia Bardun – a curator of the *Telling the Baltic* project – talks about some nuances in the curators' work in the project, the potential for communication between contemporary art and visitors to traditional museums, as well as what works of art they wanted to show but were unable to.

ER: Yulia, what was most interesting for you as a curator in the *Telling the Baltic* project?

YB: First of all, the possibility of working in an already existing exposition in the Museum of the World Ocean. It was different from Rostock, Gdańsk and Karlskrona, where the sterile conditions of a gallery were created. The task in Kaliningrad was to enter into a dialogue with an existing exposition and to try to rediscover it with the aid of the commentaries, texts and reflections of modern artists. The resulting cooperation enriched both the exposition and the works of our artists. It was a very interesting task, but also a difficult one. Incorporating the artworks of different artists who had their own expectations, into an already existing scenario involved a long process of negotiation and accommodation. We have to give credit to Elena Tsvetaeva and Evgeny Umanski, who have been working for a long time with traditional museums and galleries. Their experience helped us solve many problems.

ER: There was a mutual enrichment between the exposition and the works of artists. How about communication between modern art and the visitors of the World Ocean Museum?

YB: This is a good question and a real flashpoint. We understand perfectly that the artwork of a contemporary artist is not always pleasing. Not everyone who takes part in the project is equally interested. For example, the motivation of artists and museum keepers can differ a lot. We have been working with these artists for a long time, they interest us. People accustomed to classical models of art may misunderstand our artists' projects and find them unpleasant. Let's take sound installations as an example. "That's enough, I can't listen to it any longer..." -this is what we sometimes hear from museum staff. But we understand that if you force a man to listen to one piece of music over and over again, even a masterpiece will quickly become nauseating. It is also important to take the specificity of the keeper's work into account. The work of art itself is not always the cause of irritation. More often it is the situation itself. The observer's job is really hard – to sit in one place, to listen and watch the same things day by day. We would be truly happy if the exhibition was appreciated by everyone. We understand, however, that here in Kaliningrad some time must pass for some people to start accepting contemporary art as something precious and valuable. Something that has the right to be treated like other exhibits in a traditional museum. Unfortunately, the preparation process for the exhibition was very difficult and – as usual – we didn't have enough time to meet with the employees of the museum, to settle everything. They had to deal on their own with the exhibits. But not without the help of Zina Shershun, who tried to translate each of our exhibitions into an understandable language, to make it more accessible. Zina was a tour guide for the regular participants of the educational programmes of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts and for the visitors to the World Ocean Museum. Although, in my opinion, the exhibition is not that difficult, there are many works talking about comprehensible issues. I like the fact that the works in *Telling the Baltic* remain simple and clear, but don't lose anything of the quality of their form and content. They are not limited to fairground entertainment, but can be perceived as works of art.

Generally, we had to fight to exhibit some of the works. I don't know if the story is worth telling, but we had some problems with exhibiting Astrid Göransson's work *The Instructor 2*. I think that this piece can be interestingly inscribed in the context of an aquarium. A man consciously puts himself above nature or distances himself from it. *The Instructor 2* placed in a common space with fish seemed to be a sort of anti-declaration. Here, a man doesn't observe the fish, doesn't stand on the other side of the glass. Instead, the fish observe how he teaches Swedish children to swim. The employees of the museum were somehow embarrassed by the naked male torso and thought that children shouldn't watch it. Why is this? They can watch it on the beach or in the pool, but not on a video in a traditional museum? We had to discuss and come to an agreement. And, I admit, this was also an interesting process.

ER: A question concerning the Polish, Swedish and German works of art. Were they chosen according to their exposition context or did you have to work with what you were able to bring to Kaliningrad?

YB: It depends. In Gdańsk, there was a very interesting work by the German artist Patrick Schmidt, presenting lighthouses. We wanted to bring it to Kaliningrad, but it was exhibited in Rostock and the exhibition finished only three weeks before our opening. We didn't manage to organise the transport in time. We had to deny ourselves this pleasure. We had a long list of what we could show in Kaliningrad, and we chose from this list the exhibits for the World Ocean Museum. Not everything we could transport was present at the exhibition. We tried of course to present the artists as fully as possible. I think that the main advantages of this project were the wide range of participating countries and the diversity of artistic strategies it showed.

ER: It seems that there have been no such complete immersions of contemporary art into the space of a traditional museum in Kaliningrad before? Am I wrong?

YB: Not in Kaliningrad. In the final days of the 1990s, there was the exhibition *Sardine in oil* – the newest Russian contemporary art – in the World Ocean Museum. But the curators didn't work then with the museum's exposition, they only used the exhibition hall. Artists and curators from Kaliningrad, for example, Evgeny Umansky, are experienced thanks to their participation in the *Contemporary Art in a Traditional Museum* project exhibition in Saint Petersburg. Evgeny Umansky and Irina Chesnokova intervened in the space of a museum in the *Enclave* project, together with Polish curators from the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art.

ER: But these were micro interventions…

YB: Yes, a stuffed German Shepherd in the History and Art Museum and an installation, a diorama of an amber open-pit mine, in the Amber Museum. Of course, the scale of *Telling the Baltic* cannot be compared with those small interventions.

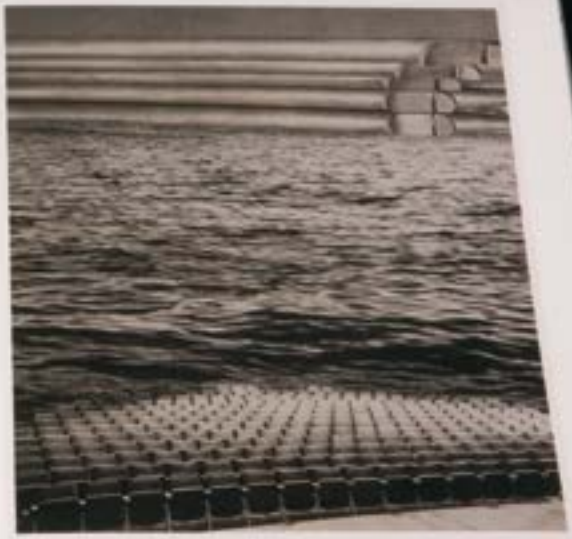
ER: Are you frightened now?

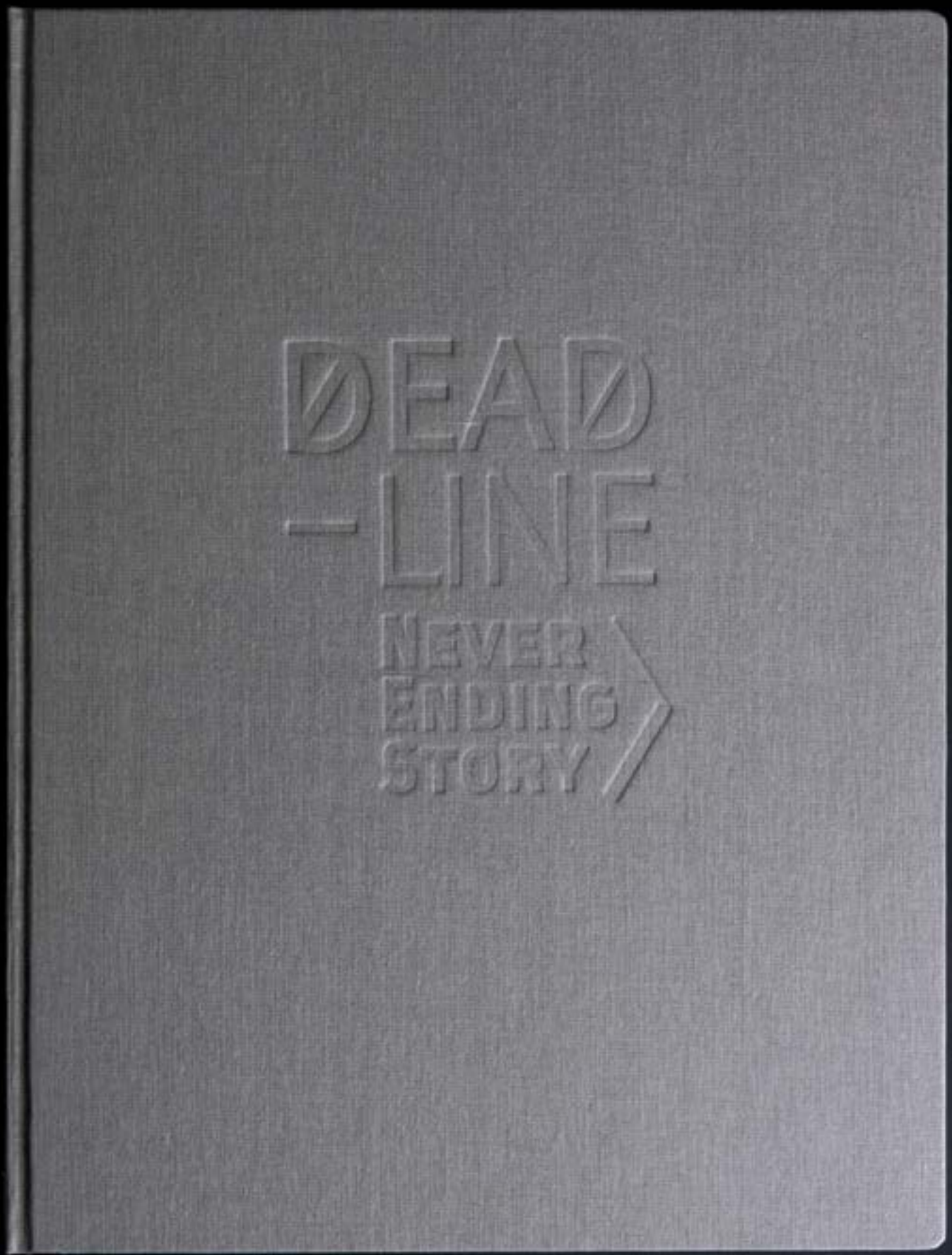
YB: No, but to have one's own space would be great! When you come to somebody else's house with your things, you have to sacrifice a lot of energy to avoid misunderstandings. It's natural – you are a guest and you need to accommodate everything. On the one hand, this is a really valuable experience; on the other hand, you could use this time to create new projects.

ER: When you have your own art space, your own exhibition hall, I'm afraid that you will close yourselves in there, and won't get out for two or three years. Why would you need any traditional museums then?

YB: True, but we get out from time to time and do "public art" (she laughs).

Yulia Bardun Manager, curator. Vice-director of the Baltic Branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts.





Patrycja Orzechowska, *DEADLINE. Never Ending Story, art book*, 2012

An interview with Rasa Antanavičiūtė (Nida), a curator of the Telling the Baltic project

by Evgyenya Romanova

Rasa Antanavičiūtė, curator of the Lithuanian part of the *Telling the Baltic* project, talks about the Lithuanian participants of the project and their work.

ER: Why did participating as a curator in the *Telling the Baltic* project interest you?

RA: I work in the Vilnius Academy of Arts. In Nida, on the Curonian Spit, where I'm the executive director of the so-called Nida Art Colony. The art colony was set up two years ago, and since its inception, we have wanted to cooperate somehow with the local people (there are about 2000 inhabitants in Nida) – fishermen, people from the tourist industry, and so on. We looked for different ways of making contact, we invited people to visit the colony, but as it turned out, this task was not so easy and could not be done quickly. Both ourselves and the locals needed time to get to know each other better. This is why we joined the *Telling the Baltic* project; it gives us the opportunity to find out more information about the inhabitants of the Curonian Spit. The most important task of the project is to gather authentic material, history and thoughts about the people working at the seaside.

ER: Did only artists speak with people and gather their histories, or have you also included journalists and scientists?

RA: It depends. Polish and Swedish artists did not gather the material in person. Instead, they had specialists contact people – historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. We tried to cooperate with anthropologists, but this did not work out well. Intermediaries only complicated the job and made achieving our goals more difficult. This is why the artists decided to do the interviews themselves.

ER: Could you tell us more about the artists taking part in the *Telling the Baltic* project?

RA: We invited five artists to join the project. Gintaras Makarevičius worked separately at first, as he already had an idea about what he wanted to prepare about the sea. The remaining four travelled, looked for people, talked with them, and recorded their histories. From these materials, the ideas about their future artworks were born. Laura Stasiulytė, for example, made a sound installation, *Once upon a time. 15 songs*, based on a survey she conducted with 15 people. At the end of each conversation, the artist asked about their favourite melody. Then she gathered all of them and recorded them sung by a professional singer without any lyrics or musical instruments. The installation can be heard at the entrance to the Maritime Königsberg-Kaliningrad exhibition pavilion. Fortunately, the World Ocean Museum allowed us to access its systems, as we used two of the museum's speakers to run the installation. You can also see the list of people who took part in the survey, as well as the list of their favourite songs. It is really interesting, because the people are different and the songs are very different.

ER: Did I understand you correctly that the five artists taking part in the project are artists from the Nida Art Colony?

RA: Well, artists were invited by the Nida Art Colony. However, they have no formal relationship with our institution.

ER: What people did the artists contact? Were they only the inhabitants of Nida and the Curonian Spit, or people generally connected with the sea but coming from other places?

RA: The artists surveyed 30 people. As a result, we finished and completed 15 stories. They were all recorded, translated into English, and put onto the project's website, where you can also find short biographical notes about these people. Finding the correct people turned out to be difficult. At the beginning, we had some contacts; we talked to the first interlocutors, who put us in contact with their friends, who then recommended others. A small network was created, and the majority of its participants were inhabitants of the Curonian Spit, but some were from Klaipeda and the other side of the lagoon. They included people who are planting a forest on the Spit, who fish, and who study the bottom of the Baltic Sea, the parasites feeding on fish, and the history of naval ships – everybody was different. For example, Zigfridas Kairys, who came to the opening of the *Telling the Baltic* exhibition, is the oldest native of the Curonian Spit. He is one of very few remaining natives. His parents came to the Spit and he was born there in 1957. He worked as a car mechanic, windsurfed and became a professional fisherman in 1995. He has two boats. He can take tourists on a boat trip around the lagoon. He can tell you a lot about Curonians – the native inhabitants of the Spit – how they spoke, what they cooked, he knows their sayings, he even uses them when talking.

ER: Maybe we can continue our review of the works of the Lithuanian artists with the most independent of them, who you said was Gintaras Makarevičius.

RA: Yes, he never took part in any of our meetings (she laughs). Gintaras works as a stage designer in a theatre. He has opening nights all the time. In his video works, Gintaras speaks about the normal working days of representatives of various professions. He is interested in a sort of archaeology of routine. He films them for a very long time. For example, he has an artwork about a shoe maker whom he filmed every day from dawn till dusk for a month. Then, from the materials he gathered, he edited a 45 minute film. He has wanted to make a movie about fishermen for a very long time. He wanted to go out to sea with them for a few days. But it didn't work out, the fishermen refused. Everything on their little ships is precisely measured – the number of berths, the load capacity. And Gintaras also wanted to take his cameraman with him. Then he had another idea. He made a 37-minute film about the ferry that connects Klaipeda with the Curonian Spit. The whole day, the ferry goes through the lagoon there and back again. It meets streams of ships leaving Klaipeda port and going out to the open sea. The film's title is *In Transit,* and you can watch it on the museum-ship *Vitiaz.*

Dainius Dapkevičius prepared a work about the lighthouses. He gathered different light sequences from different lighthouses from the Baltic shores of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden; he changed them into sounds and joined them together into a sound installation. You can listen to how the lighthouses sound using headphones in the tower of the World Ocean Museum.

Two artists who usually work together, Irma Stanaitytė and Jurgita Remeikytė, prepared two works. The first is exhibited at the Maritime Königsberg-Kaliningrad exhibition pavilion of the World Ocean Museum. It is a two-part video entitled *Crow Catching*, and it refers to the Curonian Spit's tradition of catching and eating crows. In the first part, the artists try to stage an old photo presenting two boys holding crows, one of them is biting through the crow's neck. In the second part of the video, the artists walk around Nida and unsuccessfully try to catch crows. It looks pretty comical. In both Lithuanian and Russian, the expression "crow catching" means "to laze about, to waste time".

The second work by Irma and Jurgita, in collaboration with Dainius Dapkevičius, was exhibited in a military unit in Kronprinz barracks (the future exhibition hall of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts) for three days after the opening of the *Telling the Baltic* exhibition and during the nights of museums in May. The video was recorded during the workshops in ropewalk, where long stretches of ropes were manufactured, in a wooden building 300 metres long with no partition walls. It is a pretty complicated artwork, filmed in two different projections, synchronised in the video. When you look at this work, you feel as if you were inside it, it sort of draws you inside.

ER: The *Telling the Baltic* exhibition has already been in Karlskrona, Gdańsk and Rostock. Until the 6th of June it will be in Kaliningrad. What comes next?

RA: In the summer, it will travel by ferry from Gdynia to Karlskrona, and at the end of the year we may exhibit it in Klaipeda.

Rasa Antanavičiūtė, curator of the Lithuanian part of the *Telling the Baltic* project, Executive Director of the Nida Art Colony of the Vilnius Academy of Arts, Nida, Lithuania.

Alexandr Ljubin and Vassily Kolesnik, *Where does the Motherland begin?*, 2012

The Baltic Sea Biennale in Rostock

by Frank Schloesser

By now, the citizens of Rostock are aware that fancy things can come from the East and the North of Europe. For some, exhibitions like *Riga Buzzes* from Latvia or *Falling from Grace* from Sweden are a reason to avoid the Kunsthalle Rostock for a few weeks. For others, these fresh and disturbing installations are a perfect reason to go there. The idea to confront artists with stories collected from around the Baltic Sea made it easy for visitors to identify with the works, even if they are more used to traditional fine arts.

Particularly during the extraordinarily well-attended private viewing, the audience often commented on the "whiff of the Baltic Sea Biennale" that could be smelled on the Kunsthalle grounds. There were thirteen Baltic Sea Biennales in total from 1965 to 1989, in which Baltic Sea countries from both Eastern and Western Europe were involved. Apart from addressing a dire need for artistic dialogue that crossed system-borders, it was especially important for the East German government, which wanted the GDR to be perceived as a cosmopolitan and tolerant country, at least for a few weeks: Rostock's citizens liked having their harbour city called the "Gateway to the world". The Baltic Sea Biennale was the initial reason for building the Kunsthalle, the GDR's first and only newly built museum explicitly established to house contemporary art.

"Today, particularly in *Telling the Baltic*, enormous interest is once again being shown in this kind of artistic dialogue", states Ulrich Ptak, curator of the Kunsthalle Rostock. The Baltic Sea Region has a shared history, which makes it a particularly inspiring region to search for a joint identity. "Given this, there are plenty of reasons why the Baltic Sea Biennale should return", Ptak stresses. "But we are operating in a complicated and sometimes even saturated art scene. Thus, it requires a major effort to carry out an event as huge as the Baltic Sea Biennale".

In spite of this, exhibition architect Marek Zygmunt found the conditions good while working in Rostock. "Although *Telling the Baltic* had been shown in other cities before, the art objects displayed themselves in a new light". This was not only the result of the transparent ceiling that illuminated the high rooms with daylight. "In Rostock, we had the opportunity to use a building explicitly built for contemporary art", says Marek Zygmunt from Gdańsk. "In other places, contemporary art is forced to enter a dialogue with a factory building environment or a historical museum. This is exciting. But in Rostock there was lots of space, even movable walls. Thus, every art object was able to take centre stage – so that the dialogue was definitely focused on the art object and the related story." This was something one could recognize when observing the audience's reactions: many people listened to the stories via the sound station, and then tried to get a feeling for the art object afterwards.

While Marek Zygmunt installed an exhibition on the top floor on about 1000 square meters, the Art Line project used the large hall on the ground floor as a workshop. Strategies were developed for continuing the new flagship project of the South Baltic Sea region. "We cannot risk losing the newly established network again", stressed Uwe Neumann, Head of the Kunsthalle Rostock. "It would be just great if Rostock could contribute even more activities to the follow-up project as a valuable partner".

Frank Schloesser is a German journalist.

Oleg Blyablyas, detail from *Semper Domestica Mare*, 2012

Writing Lines: making (post)cards and sharing space

by Erika Deal and Maria Björkman

The *Writing Lines* project is an extension of a project initiated as part of the *Telling the Baltic* story-collection initiative begun by researchers at BTH to gather material for the artists in the *Telling the Baltic* exhibition. In the original project, postcards were left in a variety of Baltic-related venues and locations asking people to leave their stories, or to tell stories, based on the images on the postcards or on their own experiences. These 20 postcards were then re-purposed for the *Writing Lines* project. The project will be displayed in a joint exhibition in the US and Sweden in late 2013, extending the borders of the Baltic into other international contexts.

This project is an extension of a story-collecting initiative originally created within the *Telling the Baltic* exhibition. Initially, postcards were created and used to collect stories based on the images printed on the postcards. These images represented landscapes, historical figures and sea-based locations all linked within the south Baltic region. They were circulated among visitors to *Telling the Baltic* exhibitions and on the Stena Line ferry, travelling between Sweden and Poland, as well as at other related venues and events. The postcards also encouraged writers to share their own personal stories about the Baltic, and beyond. To extend and repurpose this project with further reflection on the postcard itself as an inspirational and complex medium, particularly under pressure in the digital age, we developed *Writing Lines* as an exploration of storytelling, documentation, and traveling among mediating locations.

Writing Lines explores the communication of personal experience and place in the Baltic region: in other words, it explores how we tell ourselves and others stories about where we have been and where we are going. The postcard, a hybrid text/image communication medium, stands at the center of this exploration. It is both shorthand used to communicate our experiences of a place to people who are not with us, and, at the same time, a stimulant for the imagination, always shortchanging the story beyond the image and between the lines. Viewed as a representation both of a real and an imagined place in space and time, the postcard captures and tracks the movement of its sender, thus symbolizing the where and when of one and many subjects. Furthermore, the postcard negotiates the present, i.e. it marks the sender/writer as being in a specific time and place, as well as breaks or extends that present by including and anticipating the concept of the future by evoking the intended recipient as it is being written. Our project explores the tension between traditional print-based postcards that traverse past/present, here/there, sender/receiver boundaries, and digital media forms that collapse and further fuse and complicate notions of time and space into more hypermediated experiences. Shared and viewed via social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, text and image hybrids create complex grids and networks of exchange, drawing and sustaining many lines of "open" communication.

Traditionally, a postcard is almost always one-directional, communicating out but not inviting a response. Using digital media, we transform postcards into portals, creating access points for our explorations of place, personal meaning, and the communication of stories through different media. By extending the concept of the portal into discussions of digitally produced and shared postcards that allow for participation on social networks, we investigate the importance of the screen and screened/mediated experiences to explore the relationship between shared space and place. Crucial to understanding the production and consumption of virtual places and shared experiences in social and digital media is the complex and recursive communication channels operating between physical and material forms and media and virtual ones. Although currently digital media and social networks for exchange are ubiquitous, this does not mean virtual forms completely override material forms.

With postcards for example, it is possible to utilize applications that document and render experiences and locations in digital forms and circulate them via social media, but that also allow one to customize and print postcards, drawing on more traditional means of communication (in Sweden the Riktiga Vykort application developed by Posten includes these dual features). In *Writing Lines* we work to integrate emergent methods and modes inspired and enabled by digital media, but also draw on more nostalgic forms of writing and storytelling grounded in the physical and material aspects of the postcard and the practices connected with writing and sending it. In effect, the embodied experience of being-in-a-place connected to the materiality/media specificity of the postcard further complicates the distinction between real and digital, material and virtual.

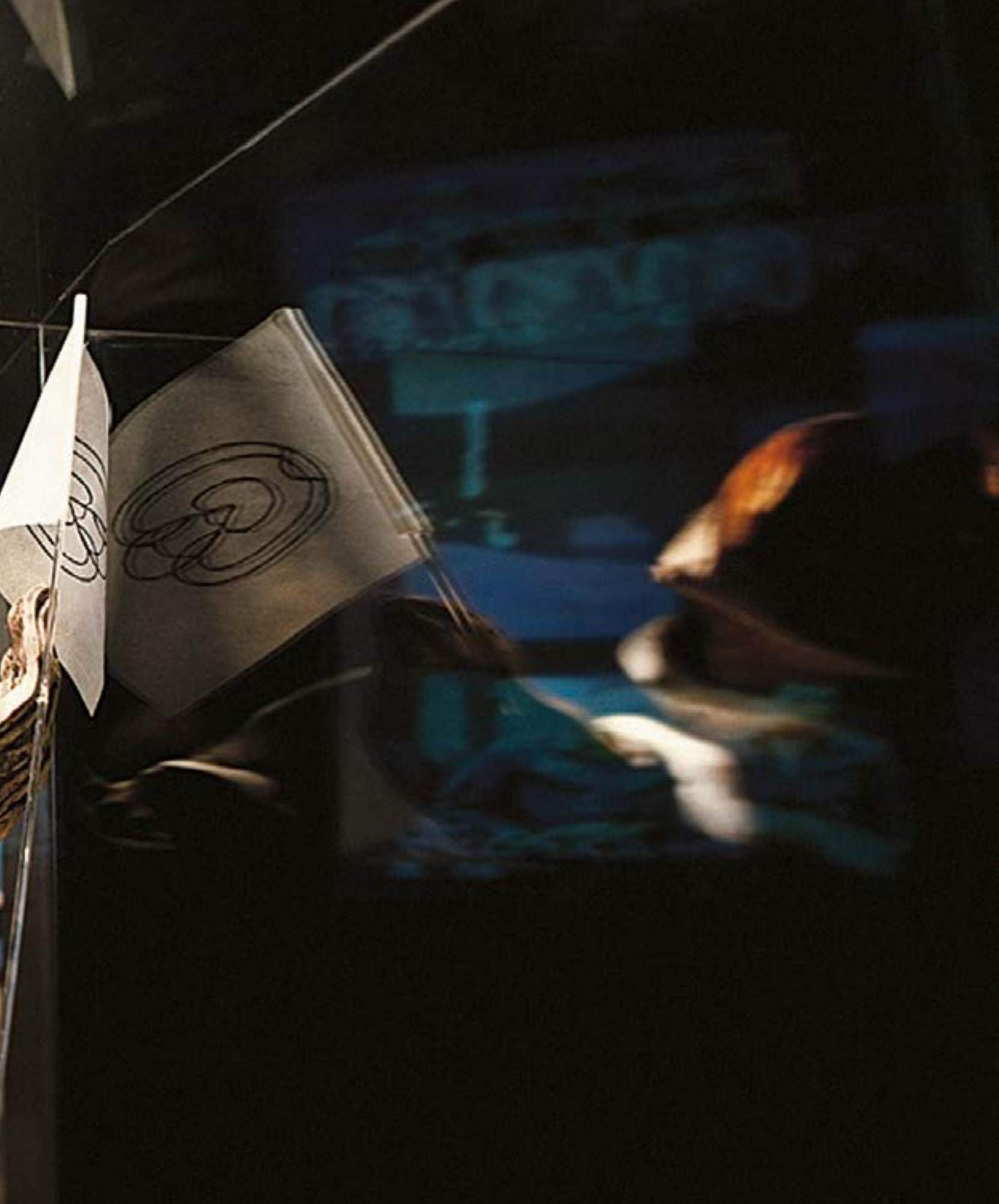
Using text, video, and images, we construct our own archaeology of identity: layers of meaning, layers of specificity, layers of experience that have no linear relationship to each other. We attempt to move beyond the postcard, beyond the simplicity of point-to-point communication of a single thought or place; we do this by inviting response, telling our own story based on the stories of the original postcards and soliciting other stories based on our own.

Erika Deal
University of Washington: Seattle, Washington USA

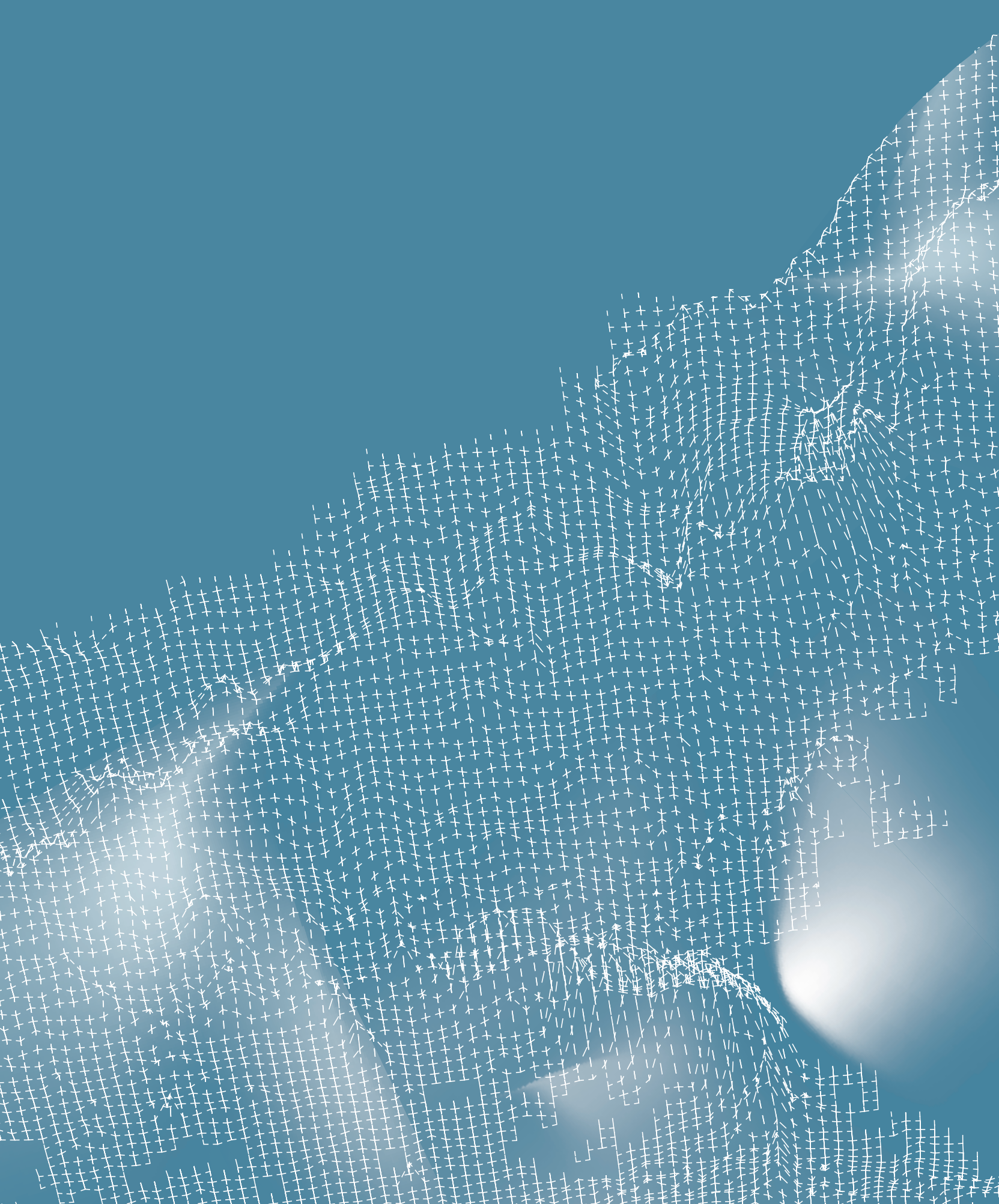
Maria Björkman
Vanderbilt University; Nashville, Tennessee USA

Henrik Lund Jørgensen, *The Reenactors*, 2012

Anna Zaradny, *Cosmos of the Fish (Fish in the Outer Space)*, 2012



THE CULTURE TOURISTS



THE CULTURE TOURISTS

Type of project: exhibitions onboard and art tours

Where: the ferries Stena Vision and Stena Spirit

What: exhibitions onboard the ferries,
sound installations in ferry cabins and on aft deck.

When: during summers of 2012 and 2013

Organizer of exhibition onboard: Blekinge museum,
Karlskrona, Sweden; Stena Line

What: tailor made art tours

When: during spring and autumn

Organizers of art tours: Art Line management
together with partners; Stena Line


ВИТЯЗЬ

Turning the tide in the South Baltic

by Lisbeth Weihe-Lindeborg

Exciting encounters with floating art

"Dexerto, desabitato pel freddo" – a wasteland, uninhabited because of the cold. That is how the Venetian map maker Giovanni Leardo described the Baltic Sea area in 1448. The depiction is a manifest example of the lack of interest and knowledge among south European geographers during the Renaissance. They were still using documents made by the ancient writer Ptolemy (150 A.D.) as their main source of information when describing northern Europe.

The Baltic reality at the time, however, was anything but dexerto, desabitato or freddo. After the Vikings (700-1000) had fared its waters, the southern part of the Baltic Sea was taken over by the Hanseatic League for some 400 years. Paving way for geo-economic and geo-cultural connections between the cities around its shores, it made the Baltic space a vital economic area. One example was the trade in herring from the Danish fishing towns of Skanör and Falsterbo in the 13th century. (At that time, the southernmost part of Sweden, the province Skåne, was Danish). Thanks to the merchants in the leading Hanse-city of Lübeck and their relations with salt traders from Lüneburg, the herring could be preserved and transported in wooden barrels all over Europe. The herring trade grew to be one of the most important economic factors in the South Baltic during the Middle Ages.

According to the French historian Fernand Braudel, "the solidity of the Hanse came (...) from the need to play the same economic game, from the common civilisation created by trading in one of the most frequented maritime areas of Europe (...) and lastly from a common language which made no small contribution to the unity of the Hanse. (...) All these links made for coherence, solidarity, habits in common and a shared pride".[1]

The common language was Low German and the main purpose of the Hanse was, in fact, to control German interests in the Baltic. Thus, the German historian Thomas Hill has confirmed that the Hanse soon became part of the German national mythology.[2] From a Scandinavian perspective, on the other hand, it was argued that the German dominance of the Hanse cut off the other Nordic states from fruitful encounters with the rest of Europe, and when a "new Hanse" was envisioned by leading German politicians after 1989, this idea was met with scepticism in Scandinavia.[3]

For the Scandinavians around the South Baltic, other historical realities were more important, like the earlier Viking period and the many wars fought between the Nordic states and against foreign intruders over the centuries, and the long period of Swedish dominance over the Baltic (1561–1721). But the South Baltic was not only a battlefield; it was also ravaged by storms and unruly waves. Under its surface, the bottom of the Baltic Sea is covered with ship wrecks. From the Middle Ages until today, there are some 40,000 ship wrecks solely in Danish waters. Only half of them have been located. Ships older than 100 years are seen as the property of the nearest state.

With such a busy and conflictious history, and with so many political, military and climatic upheavals, the South Baltic existence was anything but peaceful. The question is if this marked diversity also allowed a kind of unity, a kind of common Baltic identity, between the regions, cities and states along its shores. And if so – how far could you vitalize a South Baltic identity of the past in order to make the present South Baltic attractive for its inhabitants and for visitors?

The answer would be that there was always a common bond between the peoples living along its shores, who shared the benefits and drawbacks which their location implied. The Polish historian Franciszek Bujak has noted that there was a northern sea culture similar to that of the Mediterranean.[4] Another common bond was the growth of powerful and wealthy cities during the Hanse; there was a city belt cultural identity – even a northern cosmo-

politism. In most cities, several languages were spoken; in Viborg, for example, you had to speak Swedish, German, Russian and Finnish. Likewise, most of the South Baltic area went through the Reformation. The exceptions were Poland and Lithuania with their Catholicism and Russia with the Greek Orthodox Church.

The common bonds did not, however, exclude certain tensions between the East and West of the Baltic, between the Slavic and west European peoples, and this divergence became a barrier during the 20th century. This was further emphasized during the two world wars. After centuries of both growing together and growing apart, the east-west confrontation after WWII constituted another common bond – this time of a traumatic nature.

These are but some small glimpses of the diversified and challenging background in the South Baltic region. For the developers of this area the matter in question is what to do with it – how to proceed. In order to present the South Baltic as a unity, you have to know what you are presenting. It is important to find out how far the idea of the Baltic outside the area fits the idea that the Baltic peoples have of themselves. When it comes to having an identity and changing it, which may just mean changing priorities, you are actually talking about mental maps.[5] Making a mental map of a place and making it more attractive does not, however, mean taking away the unpleasant parts of an already existing identity. There are lots of studies from different parts of Europe, where an old and often awkward identity is being kept as a part of a new identity. And there is no doubt about it: a strong cultural identity has a market value.[6]

The very first undertaking when creating, changing, modernising or strengthening a regional/urban identity is to start the communication within the territory in question in order to find common platforms. As we know, identity can be based on common geographic, historical, economical, and political experiences. Of particular significance are cultural identities – often as a kind of soft factor, in order to pave the way for further identity-making measures. For the people living in the South Baltic macro-region it was important to start to approach each other after the Wall came down.[7] And they did so with different culture- and art-based initiatives, such as *The Association of Castles and Museums around the Baltic sea*, which is mainly centred on the South Baltic area.[8] Since then many other initiatives and projects have followed.

Today almost 25 years after the opening up of the Iron Curtain, people around the South Baltic are not only satisfied with living in this area; they also want to show it to the world. And with cultural tourism as an economic factor of particular importance today they want to attract visitors. Studies from all parts of Europe show the growth of cultural tourism as a trade which is really booming.[9] Europeans have started to discover their continent outside the most well-known tourist places. Of great attraction are short holidays, for example, over a long weekend. In that context, the South Baltic has many advantages. A crossing over the sea between different parts of the South Baltic no doubt makes a thrilling trip. In this way, you can see how close these places are culturally. In his booklet *Castles around the Baltic Sea*, Thorkild Kjaergaard has summed this up: "Probably nowhere is the paradox of a common culture amid bitter, centuries-long hostilities more clearly reflected than in the castles that stand along the border of the Baltic Sea. The castles bear witness through their architectural similarities to the cultural and artistic unity of our region".[10]

What is particularly attractive from a cultural tourism point of view are the remnants of the old architecture with similarities like the red brick building materials used for Gothic churches, medieval castles, cloisters and city halls, and the warehouses and merchants offices along the streets in the South Baltic cities. Another attraction is sculptural art using wood as material. Thus, Lübeck was seen as a centre of medieval sculpture, with Bernt Notke as its most famous proponent. From his workshop in Lübeck, he also delivered wooden sculptures to Stockholm, Aarhus, Danzig and Reval (Tallinn). And walking around in the South Baltic big cities – in Poland, in the Baltic states, (in Riga and Dorpat), in southern Sweden, in Denmark and in northern Germany, (in Stralsund), you see monuments in honour of the Swedish king Gustav II Adolf on the top of military and political power just before the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). The discovery of the South Baltic with its many advantages as a new cultural region on the fictious cultural map of Europe is a thrilling endeavour.[11] With Central Europe still considered to be the centre of the continent, the South Baltic is being seen as a periphery. But within the framework of the Europeanization and regionalization processes in Europe, the peripheries and nation-state border areas

are being upgraded with a growing amount of important cross border cooperation.[12] In this context, the words of the great Polish-American author Czesław Miłosz (born in Lithuania 1911 and recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature 1980) should be remembered. "The vital tasks have to be taken over by the peripheries, by the less illustrious nations, because the others have grown slack".[13]
Another specific undertaking is to develop cultural infrastructures in the South Baltic region, e.g. not only the cultural historical heritage, but current cultural activities of all kinds and in many places – theatres, music groups, museums, concert halls, libraries, archives, choirs, art workshops and galleries, universities, media, etc. In this context, it should not be forgotten that very vital parts of cultural infrastructures are the artists themselves or rather individuals with creative professions. Thus, when planning for cultural infrastructures, politicians should be keen on trying to attract creative people to come and live in the region.

In this context, an initiative like Art Line, joining 14 partners (cities, institutions and regions) in five countries is a perfect example of how culture and the arts can attract visitors. Since its founding in 2010, it has highlighted the relation between the historical heritage of this region and artistic work today. In *Telling the Baltic*, stories from the South Baltic, as told or inherited by fishermen, dockers, skippers, etc. inspire artists to create works of art based on the past. In this way, old stories come to life with the help of modern means and technology. Thus, using modern ferries as important and unusual stages, we can talk about floating art. With all the secrets hidden under the water surface this is a way of digging them up and showing them around – in and to the world.

So far even after 1989, the view of this part of Europe has been quite one-sided. Even if the perception of the region has not been quite as barren as Leardo described, the image of the South of Baltic has been rather dull. It was not a place that attracted many tourists. This is now changing. There is a turning-the-tide-process going on in the South Baltic, which is a most satisfying development, as this area has a lot to offer for cultural tourists. It is a most thrilling discovery.

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12.05-10.06.2012

The accidental and the dedicated art visitor. Art Tours and Art Onboard

by Torun Ekstrand

Time and place for art on ferries

A ferry is a place where passengers normally don't meet contemporary art and where the spaces for interaction and exhibitions are limited. There are intimate private cabins or common areas where most spaces are earmarked for consumption. A ferry tour between Sweden and Poland is more than ten hours long and travelers are gathered in a confined space and time, and time is exactly what is necessary in order to embrace art.

Art Line produced exhibitions onboard Stena Vision and Stena Spirit during the summertime when the two ferries which traffic Gdynia-Karlskrona were bustling with people, whereas spring and autumn were a fine time to arrange tailor-made art tours.

To create a stage for the arts dedicated to the accidental visitor onboard a ferry is challenging and exciting for a curator. The passengers don't expect art in the same way as when they are destined to go to an art museum and can decide to take part in the exhibitions, or to ignore them. Sooner or later some passengers will get curious to watch a video that they have passed by and caught a glimpse of many times during the trip. The installations provided opportunities for surprising and inspiring encounters between the art and the passengers. The semi-public space of a ferry is a fine place to show art installations outside the traditional rooms of a museum or a gallery.

Infrastructure for culture

The Baltic is not what separates us, but what connects us, professor Zenon Ciesielski[1] said when presenting the joint cultural history of our Baltic countries during an early Art Line workshop. The ferries are a connecting point geographically, symbolically and mentally. The infrastructure for culture and art rely on the physical connections and the geographical closeness makes joint actions and productions easier. To have a shipping company as an associated partner in art collaboration is unorthodox and unusual and makes it possible for the art institutions, museums and the shipping company to reach new groups of people.

Floating museums and art galleries on the move

Showing art in an unexpected place can be the antithesis to presenting an exhibition in a monumental architectural landmark museum. The ferries offer a more secretive facade for the art. Symbolically the ferries reflect the idea of art; they are in constant movement on the sea without any borders. It can be the "museum as a locus of crossings of art and life, the museum on the move, the museum as a risk-taking pioneer: to act and not to wait! The museum as a laboratory and the elastic museum, which means: both elastic display and elastic building".[2]

The idea of new and different platforms for artistic exchange has been emphasized by many artists and curators for decades.

> In the 21st Century the art institution will no longer be relevant in its present form. Its status as a sanctuary will be challenged and its function as a 'container' of precious artworks will become subordinate to more urgent needs. It will become a social factor and assume a critical function as a cultural agent and protagonist within its local context. A platform for a discourse that exceeds the habitual and is qualified and informed by artistic practice. A hybrid meeting point where artists and the public merge, look, sense, think, talk, eat, date, party. A place for and with another life.[3]

A ferry can be one of many possible new platforms for art and social interaction. The initiative institutions can be the reference point for research, interactions and more questions.

The curator Hou Hanru spoke about refusing the white cube in an interview regarding his work as Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs and Chair of the Master's Program for Exhibition and Museum Studies at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI).


TELLING
THE BALTIC
..... on tour
Deck 9

> And that brings me to the question of how to deconstruct the paradigm of museums. This is why, from the day that we started, we refused the white cube. It was a gesture, and maybe it sounds quite naïve and straightforward, but I think that when you do it, it's actually challenging. It forces you and the artist to think, operate, and imagine a totally different context. After so many years of having white cubes as the standard, suddenly artists are in the place where they lose their point of reference.[4]

The exhibitions move outside the walls of the actual art galleries and also in some sense depart from the art world.

The culture tourist

We can read in reports from the World Tourism Organization that cultural tourism is increasing. The cultural tourism in the South Baltic area is overwhelmingly related to history and historical sites. Art Line employed contemporary art for a renewal of the idea of tourism in the South Baltic areas and to discuss contemporary societal questions.

The Art Line project deals with culture as a driving force for regional development, both for increased attractiveness in the South Baltic Region and to promote cultural tourism. Reports on regional development show that the level of attractiveness for people choosing to live in a specific area is closely connected to the cultural environment. A deepened understanding and tolerance between citizens living in the South Baltic Region is the overall goal.

Sound art in the cabins

During the first *Art Onboard* project we invited the passengers to a private listening on channel one on the radios of all the cabins. Łukasz Szałankiewicz created a meditative sound piece with the title *Baltic Telling Stories* as a satellite to the art project and touring exhibition *Telling the Baltic*. He quoted the title of the historic novel, *Quo vadis?* written by Henryk Sienkiewicz.[5] By the horizon, the Latin sentence "where are you going?" seems like a relevant question to ask. "Music is like the sea, you can see the shore you are standing on but not the other side".

The sound piece, *Once upon a time* took its inspiration from the fifteen Lithuanian storytellers interviewed in T*elling the Baltic*. Laura Stasiulyte asked these people living and working by the sea about their favorite songs. The songs were transformed and transcribed into humming. During the second summer of *Art Onboard* the humming was played in the cabins, a fine way of going to sleep or waking up.

Music researchers have established that already in the fetal stage, an unborn child can sense sound, rhythm and movement. It is a bodily experience. A child feels safe when you sing, hum and cradle it rhythmically and music and singing creates a good mood in many situations. As we get older, music can help us recall things from the past.[6]

Neuroscientists have come to the same conclusions:

> More than a decade ago, our research team used brain imaging to show that music that people described as highly emotional engaged the reward system deep in their brains — activating subcortical nuclei known to be important in reward, motivation and emotion. Subsequently we found that listening to what might be called "peak emotional moments" in music — that moment when you feel a "chill" of pleasure to a musical passage — causes the release of the neurotransmitter dopamine, an essential signaling molecule in the brain. When pleasurable music is heard, dopamine is released in the striatum — an ancient part of the brain found in other vertebrates as well — which is known to respond to naturally rewarding stimuli like food and sex and which is artificially targeted by drugs like cocaine and amphetamine.[7]

The songs chosen ranged from Lithuanian folk songs about their homeland, to pop and rock like, *The place is empty* by the Rolling Stones and Sinatra's signature melody, *My Way*. There are lyrics about emigration, about the adventure of going to sea and about being homesick and longing for your loved ones. One could listen to romantic songs, to one well-known sailor shanty, *Drunken sailor* and to Rachmaninov! Let's quote the lyrics of one of the hummed songs stemming from Keith Richards and Mick Jagger: "Walk right in, sit on down, and make yourself at home".

Sound art on the aft deck

As a passenger you could listen to a sound installation while you were on the aft deck with the horizon as your companion. *Baltic Sounds Good* was a sound art project in which artists gathered sounds from around, on, over and below the surface of the Baltic Sea. The participants visited the Hel Marine Station, which is part of the Institute of Oceanography in Poland, where they recorded sounds from the aquarium and seals. They visited the ports of Hel and Gdynia and boarded the ferry Stena Vision where the captain allowed the artists access to restricted areas.

Back at the art hall they composed a joint electro-acoustic concert and an overview plan of the ferry served as the musical score. Krzysztof Topolski, electroacoustic improviser

and curator, led the workshop together with the art hall Galeria EL in Elbląg. These sounds were later presented onboard on the aft deck.

Invading the ferries

Art Line invaded the ferries for workshops, lectures and seminars and while going to joint meetings on different sides of the Baltic Sea. When creating installations onboard we used the conference rooms, the lounge areas, the corridors, the loudspeaker system and places in between. During the first summer, passengers could interact with the exhibitions and contribute their own stories about the Baltic Sea in special mailboxes or by creating films online, in cooperation with the Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH) and the Blekinge museum. The researchers at BTH conducted interviews with the staff onboard for the storytelling archive. The special exhibition displays for videos and photos from *Telling the Baltic* were in signal-orange, which related to the color of the lifeboats and the idea of getting a cultural first-aid kit onboard. The staff onboard the ferries were like a part of the Art Line staff and took a special interest in the floating exhibitions. One can't just drive to the store to get what you need when working out at sea.

Tailor-made art tours to Poland from Sweden

Arranging the intensive Art Tour days in the Tri-city area of Poland was amazing. A group of dedicated art tourists interested in devouring art and reflecting upon the ongoing art exhibitions provided an opportunity to spread the knowledge of the vibrant art scene in the Gdańsk area to people in Sweden.

" – Is the art tour too crammed with exhibitions, public art works, meetings with curators and artists and art events?" I asked. "No, no!" A person taking part in the art tour answered. "This is what I came here for", she continued. "I will have time to think about it during all the dark winter months when I get back to Sweden, and there are lots of dark winter months! I can rest later".

Realizing the Art Tours

The first idea was to create a number of concepts for art tours to the Tri-city area of Poland with Gdańsk as the base, and Gdynia and Sopot as tour stops. The tours were especially designed for art associations in Sweden. In Sweden many volunteers engage in arts education and 400,000 people are members of the art associations, making it the second largest voluntary organization nationwide, after choir organizations.[8]

After meetings with art associations we decided to not only stay with the concepts, but to realize some tours. We wanted to try them out. Each art tour was created with the ongoing programs of the partner institutions and of other art institutions in mind, and connected to programs in Art Line. The art travelers visited the Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art (Laznia CCA) in both the Lower District and in the New Port district of Gdańsk. Both buildings are former bathhouses and have been transformed into art halls with extensive programs inside and outside the buildings. The growing Gdansk City Gallery (GGM), had no gallery space at all when we began planning for Art Line, and now GGM has three galleries in the old city center, which the groups visited. The groups also made visits to the Baltic Sea Cultural Centre in the town hall and depending upon the program also to exhibitions and their astounding location at St, John's church.

The visits to the old Cistercian monastery in Oliwa where the peace treaty between Sweden and Poland was signed in 1660, provided many historical insights. One was reminded of the Swedish invasions and the Battle of Oliwa in the 1620s. The department of Modern Art of the Polish National Museum in Gdańsk is located in the Abbot's Palace in Oliwa. There are temporary exhibitions and the permanent collection served as a background to the contemporary art scene. The collection includes works by artists like Piotr Uklański, Tadeusz Kantor, Leon Tarasewicz, Stanisław Wyspiański, Jacek Malczewski and Olga Boznańska.

The travelers got a chance to wander along the largest wooden pier in Europe, while visiting the historic resort and spa town of Sopot along with a visit to the National Art Hall located in the newly renovated Spa House. The modernistic architecture of Gdynia is worth a guided tour which included a special guide who could share historic, social, cultural and economic insights.

The tours took place during recurrent programs in the Tri-city, the International Night of Museums in May and the *Narrations Festival* in November when thousands of people walk the streets to meet art and people in backyards. The *Narrations Festival* revitalizes new areas of the city for each edition and shows video art, interactive art or light art outdoors.

Art in semi-public space and art in residential areas

Art in the public space is a major topic for Art Line and visits to art projects in public spaces were also on the agenda during the art tours. Gdańsk is said to be the Polish capital of murals, because of all the monumental wall paintings in

the city area and the constant creation of new ones. The residential area of Zaspa hosts a gallery of large-scale paintings on the facades of its apartment buildings. The concrete apartment blocks are located on a former airfield and the modernistic ideas are visible on the blocks of flats inherited from the socialist era. There are over thirty murals so far and new ones are being painted during the annual Monumental Art Festival. There are local guides who meet up with the art tour groups and tell the story of the murals from their perspectives. In Sweden, most cities have a zero-tolerance policy for graffiti and employ the argument that if they were to arrange free walls for murals and graffiti, there would be spillover effects of graffiti all over the cities.
Laznia CCA's *Outdoor Gallery of the city of Gdańsk* creates a series of permanent artworks in urban spaces along with temporary workshops and programs for the young and old. The purpose is to revitalize and transform the neglected district of the Lower Town where Lazna CCA is situated. The art tour groups visited some of the public artworks realized through international competitions together with artists, planning engineers, architects and politicians.

Murals and the shipyard

The art tour group visited the Wyspa Institute of Art located in the heart of the shipyard. Wyspa produces exhibitions and programs where some reflect upon the site-specific area, upon politics, society and history. The shipyard of Gdańsk is an iconic place, which is now undergoing a large change in terms of city planning and reconstruction of the area. The visible story of the shipyard, the well known outline of the industrial landscape with cranes and large-scale architecture, is disappearing together with the symbol of the civil resistance movement contributing to the Walls coming down in Europe. The first art tour group had a chance to see the wall and the 250-meter-long mural by Iwona Zając that contained stories from the shipyard workers.

Slot machines, superstition and museums casting off

The works onboard the Stena Line ferries have all been connected to the sea. As a shipping company, Stena Line stood bravely at the forefront when they dared to say yes to a complex artproject without any safe promises of what was to be shown onboard. All of the art works that were possible (for security reasons) to be shown onboard became part of the onboard exhibition. One performance was rejected by one of the ferry captains. It was a performance by the artist Anna Brag who had gathered superstitions from Baltic storytellers about things you should not do at sea, for example: you mustn't whistle on the boat since you'll bring on the wind. You mustn't take any cheese with you; if you do there will be no fish. You should not bring women onboard. For the last presentation of *Telling the Baltic* onboard the ferries, Anna Brag wanted to gather the staff in the bow of the ferry to whistle *Who can sail without wind*, a folk song about being separated from a loved one. This superstition about not whistling onboard is alive among people at sea and the captain decided that we could not transgress this border out of respect. Brag's animation of the superstitions, where she depicts women on boats who are whistling and in the possession of cheese, was however shown onboard.
Another performance which we could not present onboard was, *The Unrelenting Beauty of Disaster* by Anna Steller, where she performed a mixture of the sinking catastrophe of the ship Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic Sea where over 9,000 people died, and a personal, almost drowning experience in a breathtaking dance performance. As a performance it was decided that it would be would be too intimate for passengers already onboard. However, a video of her live performance, was shown.
When examining the possible spaces for exhibitions onboard I made this proposal to Stena Line: "Let us bring your slot machines to the museums and art galleries, and take the collections from the museums to the ferry! It could help improve the poor budgets of the cultural institutions and improve the innovation for a shipping company". The idea could not be realized now, but maybe in the future…
How often does a ferry turn into an art hall or museum, and how often do the museums cast off and leave their comfort zones?
Ship Ahoy!

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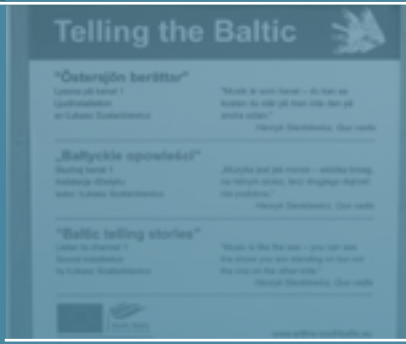
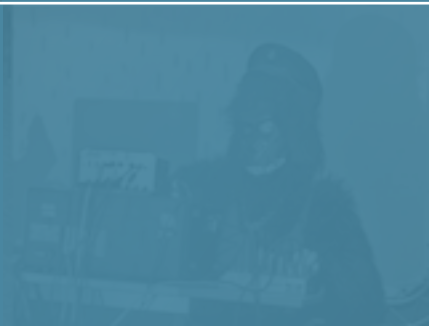
Astrid Göransson, *Life jacket*, poster, 2012

THE END OR THE BEGINNIN





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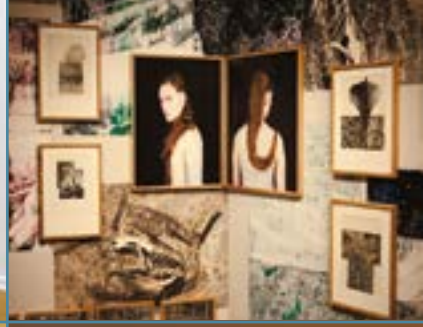














Telling the Baltic
"Östersjön berättar"
„Bałtyckie opowieści"
"Baltic telling stories"






YOU ARE GREAT!

A new priority area in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

by Larry Okey Ugwu

Culture is a new priority area in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. This is the outcome of an initiative by the Governments of the Republic of Poland and the Schleswig-Holstein Land, with the support of Ars Baltica and the Nordic Council of Ministers. This EU gesture will definitely not be a financial boom for Culture, but it has a clear significance in signalling the strengthened role of arts and culture in building the future of the Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic Sea Cultural Centre (BSCC) is proud to be part of this process. For six years, we had the pleasure and honour to host the Ars Baltica Secretariat, and assist the Ars Baltica Committee in shaping and boosting cultural co-operation in the region. In June 2009, when the Strategy was announced, the role of culture was marginalized. In November of that year, the BSCC was the venue for the Ars Baltica conference: *Cultural Policies for the Baltic Sea Region*. We asked then: "How did it happen that despite the engagement of many people, culture and the Baltic Sea identity were not included in the Strategy as an essential and indispensable factor for the Baltic Sea becoming 'an accessible and attractive place'?"

Today, I am happy to say that the positive energy and engagement in the field of culture generated around the Baltic at that time was not in vain. I would like to thank, most of all, my colleagues from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Government of the Schleswig-Holstein Land, together with the Ars Baltica Initiative for Cultural Cooperation and the Nordic Council of Ministers for their efforts to assure culture a significant place in the Strategy.
I am writing this text not only as the director of the BSCC, but also as a representative of the cultural sector of the Pomeranian region and its government, as well as a board member of Culture Action Europe.

The questions I'd like to address are: "What could we, authorities, professional cultural operators and citizens, do to make culture a trigger for the BSR's further growth? How do we permanently secure its place in the European and regional development policies and financial programmes?"

In recent years, the Baltic has indisputably been a European success story. A region once viewed very much as the periphery of Europe has become the heart of the continent thanks to transnational collaboration and policy-making. A good example of such effort comes from the Pomeranian Regional Government in Poland, which in 1992, at the milk stage of its democracy, established an autonomous cultural institution dedicated to accelerating cultural collaborations within the Baltic Sea Region. They believed then – and that belief is still very strong – that investing in culture and education not only generates prosperity, it is essential to fostering both freedom of expression and creative thinking, which leads to sustainable prosperity. Moreover, cultural exchange brings hope and fosters civic engagement, thereby contributing to a repairing of the torn social fabric. Culture therefore means practicing democracy and giving content to citizenship.[1]

The idea of the Baltic project is by no means new. Already at the beginning of the 13th century, the Hanseatic League demonstrated an unprecedented level of economic transnational co-operation. The cultural values developed by the Hanseatic League towns survived the disintegration of the League itself. The artistic achievements of the period, especially in culture and art, spread far beyond the Baltic area, and are still appreciated to this day. Our duty today is to push cultural collaboration even further and guard against its disintegration, to avoid ending up like the League, whose break up was caused by the individual ambitions of its partner states.

We can be proud of the region's rich cultural heritage. There have been many projects implemented to preserve this heritage and to make it available to the public in an attractive way. The Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States has been very successful in networking various initiatives.

Still, more efforts should be made to create attractive packages for cultural tourism. This has great potential in terms of its geographical set-up, taking into consideration the

short distance between countries. However, due to the fact that the cultural assets of the Baltic Sea Region cannot be restricted to its past alone, we must not forget about the importance of contemporary arts in all their aspects. NGOs need to be highly motivated in order to create as many partnership Baltic arts projects as possible. The current Art Line project is a good example of what cultural cooperation and partnership is all about. Culture operators should be encouraged to support joint projects in the arts that would involve artists from different Baltic states and have a diversified audience spread throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

Does the Baltic Sea Region have a shared identity? Strong ties in cooperation and competition, and rivalry in the Baltic region are imprinted in the history of the region. The sea linked people and countries, encouraging them to reach for hegemony over the area. For hundreds of years, it remained a region of intensive commercial activity and trade, as well as frequent, fierce, and long wars for power over the Baltic.[2]

This is why searching for a common Baltic identity in our history may prove a difficult task. Let's not forget that the Baltic Europe of today is a region of increasing cultural diversity. Its residents have their origins all over the world, enriching the meaning of Baltic culture. I suggest therefore that in celebrating our common Baltic heritage, we should remember to cherish the beauty of a modern Baltic Europe. Coming from Gdańsk, the city of Solidarity, I postulate that the idea of solidarity should be interwoven into any discourse on Baltic co-operation. Solidarity against all odds, against any temptation to deviate from utilizing this rare opportunity given by the EU's new Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The idea of solidarity should be realised in an educational programme introduced into school curricula for the younger generation.

Undoubtedly what unites people around the Baltic is the Baltic itself. Culture and art should reflect this. As people of culture, we should turn towards the Baltic for inspiration. Moreover, we should help to protect it. Through art, we can deepen knowledge of the sea among the people living around it and increase their motivation to protect it.

More emphasis should definitely be put on networking and developing partnerships. That is why financial mechanisms should promote the mobility of artists and their works, as well as build residency programmes.

In this context, I'd like to praise the idea of the Seed Money Facility, which is a step towards reaching this goal, as it enables the development of the concept of the Baltic projects. It is also necessary to lobby for more financial opportunities for cultural projects around the Baltic, for example, to include them in the Baltic Sea Programme 2014-2020. Moreover, application procedures and project implementation reports should be made more simple for culture operators. Many creative ideas and initiatives are abandoned today due to bureaucracy. I want to stress that this is a major social and economic obstacle for our society.

Another factor uniting the people of culture around the Baltic is their audiences, the development of which should be embedded in the way cultural operators work, strategically and operationally, with clear goals and target audiences. People nowadays want greater interaction and dialogue in all walks of life, and they are no longer willing to be passive spectators when it comes to the arts. To reach these audiences, cultural institutions or operators must move outside their walls into the community, into public spaces, unconventional venues, creating innovative experiences, and developing partnerships with other sectors, such as tourism, heritage and environmental protection, education, transport, city planning, etc.[3] Engaging the public with European culture is a priority for the European Commission, as well as for most cultural organizations and public authorities in Europe. Audience development is a strategic, dynamic and interactive process of making the arts more widely accessible. It aims at engaging individuals and communities in experiencing, enjoying, participating in and valuing the arts through various means available to cultural operators today, from digital tools to volunteering, from co-creation to partnerships.[4]

Talking about culture without education is like talking about the Baltic Region without the Baltic Sea itself. As a member of the executive committee of Culture Action Europe, I will quote a paper issued by three strong organizations: The European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning, The Access to Culture Project, and Culture Action Europe in Brussels, March 2013. This paper calls the EU to bridge education and culture strategies and policies at EU level to upgrade our people's transversal skills, increase their employability but also and especially make them socially included, fulfilled individuals and active citizens.[5] And I quote; "Integrating cultural activities within a life wide approach to learning enables to realize that the education and culture

sectors have a lot in common in terms of target groups. The most obvious overlapping takes place within formal education through the introduction of culture and the arts at school.[6] This is why the EU action shall incite Member States to revalue culture and the arts in schools to develop a whole set of key competences, from basic to transversal ones. Beyond school, it is also necessary to invest in high quality, initial and continuous education for culture professionals, as recommended by the 2010 UNESCO Seoul Agenda".[7]

From my experience with Ars Baltica, I know that cooperation with Russia is not easy, but that does not mean we should forget the importance of Kaliningrad, especially the highly talented artists from that part of the Baltic. Culture Institutions and operators should therefore be encouraged to include Russia and the East in their new arts projects and programmes, since such a cultural smile and movement can bring significant cultural, social and economic benefits for Europe as a whole. Art Line has, for instance, engaged the National Centre for Contemporary Arts in Kaliningrad as a skilled associated partner.

To sum up, I maintain that the inclusion of culture as a priority area in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region means new tasks and new challenges for our cultural sector. This Strategy at present is an open document, and we cannot relax until it comes out after numerous amendments in its final form. This should be a document that reflects well our goals and aspirations for culture in the Baltic Sea Region.

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Art Centre Gallery EL, Elbląg, Poland
Gdansk City Gallery, Gdańsk, Poland
The Baltic Sea Cultural Centre, Gdańsk, Poland
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