

Every Misunderstanding Is a Gift from God

Transmitting and mediating art and culture as risk and chance: an interview with Thomas Krüger, President of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany), on local contexts, European diversity, and the benefits as well as the difficulties of international translation

Upon its founding in 2003, “relations” set itself a clear goal: to initiate aesthetically convincing and socially relevant art and culture projects in eastern European countries and to establish follow-up cooperation with German partners. With the realization of eight projects in eight countries, the first phase of this endeavor has been successfully completed. Now begins the second phase: working together with partner institutions from Germany, new projects are being developed whose aesthetic strategies and questions will enter the local public stage some time in 2005. This raises important questions about foresight and public spheres.

relations: “Going public” is our thematic focal point for 2005. “relations” wants to go fully public. But just how open is the public sphere today?

Thomas Krüger: Whenever I open up the feuilleton section of German papers, I find reports on issues discussed mainly in the Anglo-American world, French debates in part, hardly anything about Italy, practically nothing from Spain, and the odd piece from Poland. And that’s it. A Scandinavian discourse doesn’t take place. If I want to find out about debates in the Balkan countries I have to read Austrian papers. A comparable situation is evident in eastern European countries. And this shows that we are dealing with structural diversities here in Europe. The different cultural spaces allow for only limited information and culture transfer amongst themselves. There are discourses which, quite simply, remain hermetic.

Is this simply because of language or are specific codes at work in the individual cultural spaces?

It has a lot to do with language barriers because whoever doesn’t have a basic command of certain languages remains outside the discourse from the very outset. But that isn’t tragic; on the contrary, it can be liberating as well. For it conversely means that anyone can go their own way and construct their own contexts. The greatest challenge is to forge the links necessary for a shared discourse: to create a European public sphere. What we need is a discourse platform that embraces and goes beyond the individual cultural spaces, that embraces and is prepared to work with the inevitable language barriers. A platform where people are willing to break out of their own contexts and to see every misunderstanding as a gift from God because these misunderstandings are a clear reminder of the situation in which we have to act.

In praise of misunderstandings, of language barriers, and the difficulties of translation?

The problem with every translation is that it can open up several meanings. Determined by language and different cultural codes, this is what makes forming European concepts so difficult. Of course, one could turn around and say, look, let’s concentrate on one lingua franca, on English. Then we would have a form of European public sphere, but a truncated one. For Europe is the sum of what each one of us is in our own context. Therefore, we have to allow for multiple translations and ambiguities. I believe in any case that we cannot get to the heart of the idea of Europe by pursuing some abstract definition: an abstract definition kills the idea and destroys any possibility these diversities may have to inscribe themselves on the tabula rasa Europe.

Given the countless instances of the “non-contemporary” in Europe, one has the

feeling that the obsessive search for common ground is actually producing even more barriers.

Absolutely. What matters is being able to endure as well as keep differences. Nevertheless, even with all this variability there is a European consensus on values. One example of this is the idea of tolerance, which has been debated since the 17th century in Europe. We have, so to say, been through something like the innermost circles of hell, the wars in Europe, and this experience has inscribed itself within European cultures. The discourse on freedom is another example and the praxis of using the law to solve conflicts. For instance, interlinking secular and church law has managed to put an end to clan vendettas in Europe.

Isn’t talk of a community based on shared values part of the currently popular trend to turn the political into a debate about culture? A kind of discourse that conceals the political?

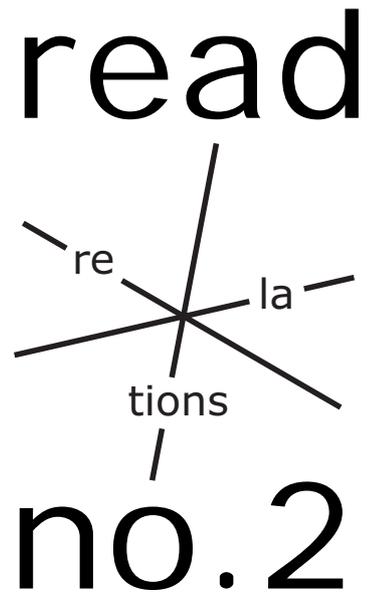
What do you mean exactly?

The dividing line between upper and lower no longer runs vertically between West and East in Europe, but horizontally through all societies. And so the decisive thing is to analyze who is or which groups are permitted to have access to the discourse forming the consensus on values.

The breaking lines of distinction do indeed run crosswise through the handed-down traditions. But the process leading to a community of shared values has been going on for several hundred years in Europe. And the final step in this connection, namely the discussion on the EU constitution, shows that this community is not an absurdity. Even if the discussions make it clear that the values are, so to say, wobbling somewhat on the margins.

Perhaps we shouldn’t only speak of a wobbling of values on the margin. Maybe inner-European issues are argued and negotiated in conflict situations, such as in the former Yugoslavia, where they are delegated to the margins.

That is exactly what I mean. Let’s take the example of how rightwing extremism is gaining in strength in Germany. One cannot point to



**Colloquium
“re-arranging”**

In Halle an der Saale, all of the “relations” project partners met for the first time to discuss, beyond the old East-West rhetoric, their work, trains of thought, and objectives. What has remained? Six participants look back. Page 5

Background

“relations” speaks with the sociologist Marek Krajewski (Poznań) and the dramaturge Eda Čufer (Ljubljana) on the politics of self-presentation and the tricky topic of searching for identity. Page 10

**going public
“Lost and Found”**

Six young directors from six countries have made a film on the theme of “generation,” discovering in the process that they have more things in common than differences. The end result was presented at the Berlin Film Festival. Page 14

**going public
“ALTE ARTE”**

Power failures, a broken steering wheel, a new program manager every three months – while the circumstances were adverse, the will and vision were enormous. In Moldova, the first TV arts magazine went on air. Page 18

**Essay
“Opinions-in-progress”**

What does one see when flying to Bosnia unprepared? The models presented by our television images, a need for normality, and, above all, one’s own ignorance. Notes from a journey. Page 20

Overview

A short description of the “relations” projects. Page 22

Agenda

“relations” locally. Page 24

Kosovo and say that the question of values is not yet solved there because what is being played out murderously in Kosovo – summarized under the term “ethnic racism” – can be observed latently in many western European countries as well. The conflict does not lie on the periphery, but is inscribed in virtually every European culture. For a European public sphere, this means that we have to make the conflicts our own, whether it's what's happening in Kosovo or what's being discussed in Denmark.

What kind of translation activities have to be performed for this?

Translation does not just mean transferring something into your own language and cultural context, and thus, if one wants to put it this way, the blurring of differences. On the contrary, it presupposes curiosity about the difference, about what is to be translated. Translations open up other cultures. In this way they are reliant on creative people and their projects, people who narrate, depict, and visualize – that is, precisely on artists and those transmitting and presenting their work.

“relations” is attempting such a transmission when we present projects from eastern Europe in Germany and build collaborations. The question is: what is the climate of German society, what is the state of the public sphere the discourses will encounter here? Does the fact that Germany has its “very own East” lead to an enhanced sensibility or to a defense mechanism in the public sphere?

I observe both: growing curiosity and a tendency to shield oneself off, extending even to xenophobia. That Germany has “its own East” could be seen as an advantage at first. But I believe that eastern Germany has long begun to change. Sensibility for central and eastern Europe should not be expected from eastern Germany alone, but is to be found rather wherever, on reflection, transformation processes have been successful. Many agencies and associations in the cultural sector possess such competence. Projects like “relations” invest in a very exclusive way in the aforementioned curiosity faction. To back art and the artists in this undertaking is courageous, almost daring.

Do you see the non-contemporaneity of specific processes in Europe, as is observable in the field of politics, for example, in the area of culture as well?

Let me say at the outset that the idea that central and eastern European countries need to catch up on a revolution – to use Habermas' dictum – in order to grow into Europe, is widespread in Germany, but it is a major error. Autonomy, freedom, and a market economy have not just been reflected on in the back of people's minds for the last 15 years in central and eastern Europe, but been put into active practice. It is, therefore, important that when we speak of Europe, we not only focus on the non-contemporaneous, but should pick up the contemporaneity of autonomy, freedom, and creativity. In addition, I have experienced an enormous dynamic of argumentation in discussions with central and eastern Europeans from the creative or philosophical areas. Also a dynamic, so to say, to inscribe or imprint themselves in Europe, to gain the power of the word. Let me express it in an image: unlike Habermas would like to believe, you see Slovaks, Hungarians, and Bulgarians streaming past you on the fast lane to Europe. In Germany, we are more tightly caught up in conventions, and this is the case with cultural production and debates as well.

The image of eastern European societies on the fast lane collides strikingly with the widely-held assessment of their own situation: that they belong to the losers of the

“new” Europe. Instead of an economic miracle, the reality is an increase in poverty. Do we not have to differentiate here and make perfectly clear who or which groups of the population are overtaking whom?

Yes, I wasn't speaking about “the” Bulgarians or “the” Slovaks, but about the creative actors. The fast lane is precisely the other side of the coin of this hard reality. These creative actors have no other choice but to take the fast lane. They realize that they have to do a lot more to join in the European project because of the marginalization that still exists.

That would mean, however, neo-liberalization as the precondition for a release of creativity. Let the standards of living fall, and then the people are forced to come up with something. But the question is: what kind of experiences join forces with the worsening of the living conditions to generate a counter-movement and preserve the free space needed for creative energies to unfold?

I don't want the image of the fast lane to be understood as a political model. In terms of social policy, the exact opposite is the key issue: to find out how civil society works in central and eastern Europe. Because the civil – the form of civitas that forms discursive but also economic networks – is indeed somewhat less developed or has been ruined by the Communist era. Take eastern Germany for example: you come across this phenomenon there as well, despite the enormous financial transfers. Communism knew nothing about the civil because of its polarized ideological structure: there was the party, the “righteous,” and the class-enemies. In democracy however, this kind of rigid polarization is dissolved because both sides of the political divide have to become and engage with one another as citizens. Of course there are small groups in central and eastern Europe who are already active today in this direction, but they are mostly without political influence. The European consensus on values is forced to fend for itself there and must be realized without any social connection or any form of discourse.

We wouldn't use the concept of a “European consensus on values” in this connection – but the “relations” projects do fight for a democratic public sphere, one that goes beyond national borders.

Our task in Germany is to recognize and distill from these projects why their debates are so interesting for the German context. In the meantime, I would go so far as to say that an open encounter is the most important thing and the transfer of knowledge secondary. This could become a Damascus moment for the Germans: not only to visit their own galleries and museums for contemporary art, but to look at what the “contemporary” genuinely means in an enlarged Europe.

Do you notice a change in the economy of attention the Germans display for themes, artistic work, and perspectives from eastern Europe?

Yes, that has a lot to do with the mega-discussion about EU enlargement, with increased individual mobility, and, naturally, with economic interests. The Federal Agency for Civic Education is no exception, and there is considerably more public demand for relevant publications or events. Although this increased interest has yet to lead to a political shift or to a genuinely altered public sphere, the initial signs of an opening up are there. And to pick up, extend, deepen and question them – that is what is crucial.

The interview was conducted by Katrin Klingan, Ines Kappert, and Peter Wellach.

Dear readers!

“Going public” is the motto for the second edition of “read relations.” In the first edition we presented the “relations” projects in seven cities of eastern Europe, their goals and lines of inquiry, and those taking part. Almost one year later, cooperation with German institutions is in full swing. Beginning in the fall, joint discussions and collaborative work are to be presented in various German cities with exhibitions, workshops, and symposiums. The question now is: what is the social climate and which public spheres will the project collaborations encounter in Germany? How is an understanding being made possible?

The second important question that we continually pose anew and have to answer in the course of our work is: how do we deal productively with outsider perspectives? How can we avoid falling into communication traps, such as continuing to use a strict East-West dichotomy?

Thus in the first part of our newspaper we would like to revisit our colloquium, where participants from all the eastern European projects met the partner institutions and initiatives from Germany for the first time in November 2004. Six colloquium participants give their impressions about the unique communication situation, the initial steps towards joint projects, and the difficulties encountered in trying to transfer the outsider perspectives into their respective context.

The second part presents two projects developed within the framework of “relations” which “went public” in February. The film “Lost and Found” opened the International Forum of New Cinema at this year's Berlin Film Festival. In this film, six directors from six countries tell six stories on the theme of generation – and they triggered a great deal of discussion. In the Republic of Moldova the TV arts magazine “ALTE ARTE” went on air for the first time after a year of preparation work. The artist Igor Scerbina speaks about his visions and tells us about the first reactions to the program.

The journalist Florian Malzacher provides the finale to this edition with an account of his journey to Bosnia, an account that makes clear how far removed eastern European realities are from the German public at present, and thus illustrates the difficulty of “translation.”

We would like to thank the authors and discussion partners of this edition for their committed revelation of valiant subjective trains of thought!

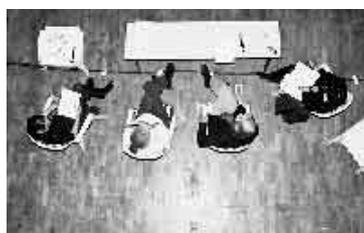
Once again we would like to also thank Maria Ziegelböck for accompanying the colloquium with her camera and her skillful hand in laying out the photos for this edition.

And as always we would like to warmly welcome you to take part in our discussions!

Katrin Klingan, Artistic Director
Samo Darian, Project Manager

Farewell Eastern Europe, or Working on a Dialogue beyond Old Patterns

“re-arranging.” The “relations” colloquium



Between November 5 and 7, 2004, “relations” invited all members of the art and culture projects from eastern Europe and their German cooperation partners to an initial meeting. For three days in Halle an der Saale, objectives, concepts, and perspectives were discussed critically. Many things were shifted around and given a new place. Re-arranging trains of thought – six looks back.

The event we soberly called a colloquium, internally we even used the term “working colloquium,” was an experiment. An experiment in building a platform for encounters and in unscrewing discourse from its fixture in the pattern, “me East, you West.” We wanted to make those differences and commonalities perceptible ungraspable with grand concepts like Europe, transformation, or East and West. We wanted to open them up, to discuss and negotiate them. The diverse imaginations and realities, for which the projects stand and stand by, were to be given tone, color, and form through dialogue and contending claims. The event’s motto was movement – the movement of re-grouping, new groupings, and changes in perspective. Its title was programmatic: “re-arranging.”

Over a weekend the protagonists of the eight “relations” projects presented themselves and their work. They dispensed, however, with presenting solely the work the projects have accomplished up until now, and this was very important for us: there was to be no legitimizing rhetoric, no namedropping, and no representation. The aim was a different one: to explain and discuss why it is important at this current point in time to pose certain questions in a specific place, such as questions about the official politics of remembrance (Sarajevo) or about the changes occurring in the urban space after the introduction of a market economy (Sofia). What does it mean to open an alternative and firmly anti-nationalist art academy and the first non-commercial gallery for contemporary art in Kosovo, and what does it mean to edge a first TV arts magazine into the program schedule of the strictly regulated state television station in Moldova? (See pages 22 and 23 for an overview of the “relations” projects.) Why is it that intellectuals and artists have launched precisely these initiatives in the current social situation?

Corresponding to this line of questioning, the protagonists’ individual, frequently artistic colloquium contributions introduced certain trains of thought, objectives, and contentious concepts of political issues which form the basis of each project. As is always the case with “relations,” at issue was the confrontation between inner and outer perspectives, as well as the question of where the formulated concerns, attitudes, and positions stem. We consider the contextualization of standpoints to be one of the fundamental prerequisites which can set off an understanding of other viewpoints and expectations and show a way out of the East-West antagonism.

The basic idea of “relations” is to initiate cultural exchange between Germany and societies of eastern Europe – on the condition that the local situation of the project partners is analyzed and discussed. Accordingly, the German cooperation partners, who are developing art and culture projects with the teams from the eastern European countries for Germany this year, took part in the discussions and formulated their “outsider” perspectives. These partners include the art academy Städelschule and the Portikus im Leinwandhaus in Frankfurt/Main, the University of Leipzig, the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, the Kunsthau Dresden and the Bauhaus Kolleg Dessau (more on these projects will be presented in “read relations” no. 5).

To present these collaborations and create a basis for a discussion going beyond the East-West dichotomy were the primary concerns of the colloquium in Halle. But “relations” itself, too, as a “branched” project with many local links, was to become graspable in its mode of working and thinking. The framework for this was set by the panel discussion, “How much internationality can one take?” Artists, curators, and politicians debated on how far and where the claim of being international, seemingly unquestioned in the world of culture, takes us to, and when does it turn into an end in itself and consequently lead to hopeless expectations and overtaxing demands. The ability to speak English has become an entrance ticket for playing a role in the international scene, but is not to be equated with a genuine polyphony, and so internationality in its best sense, was perhaps the only point where one might find a consensus. This weekend was not devoted, however, to reaching an agreement. Instead, it was one way of finding our way, an experience and discussion of dividing trenches, bridges, and common platforms – and of ascertaining ways of speaking.

Last but not least, the colloquium in Halle was an attempt to relate the wide-ranging discussions about the positions and situations of art and culture in the societies of eastern Europe to what is happening in Germany. We wanted to convey at least a rudimentary impression of how the legacy of the former GDR is being handled in Germany as well as the acute problems facing cities like Halle, which have to combat a horrendously high rate of unemployment and a massive population decline.

Thus far the considerations of the organizers and impressions of how the participants experienced the colloquium are given in the statements presented on the following pages. The editors asked the authors to formulate a few lines explaining where, in their opinion, questions and sources of tension lay and what has remained with them of this weekend after this weekend.

Katrin Klingan and Ines Kappert

Where are you coming from?

by Christiane Mennicke, director of the Kunsthaus Dresden and cooperation partner of the "Visual Seminar" (Sofia)



Who hasn't experienced it? Climbing the stairs, your heart sinks, dragged down by ebbing circulation, or because it becomes clear to you in this moment as the body sends a signal, just what you've let yourself in for again: an encounter, an experience – a theater visit or a work discussion – or, as in this case, a mix of both. A colloquium, and thus, another weekend that, in spite of all the positive expectations, is devoted to absorbing information and initiating projects. What generally distinguishes imposing your own convictions from supporting culture, and what separates state assistance programs from a passionate commitment to culture, would simply be inevitable at such a colloquium, no matter how different dealings with "relations" had been up until now: representation, stressing authority, and problematic generalizations. This is what I was thinking as I climbed the stairs to the auditorium of the Volkspark in Halle on a Saturday morning.

But it all turned out very differently – I should have known after my preliminary talks with Katrin Klingan and my experience with "relations." On the evening before, I had already entered a space of careful articulation with my first step into the LUX cinema: a discursive space, one where results were not presented like trophies (about which one could have quite justifiably bragged), but instead enabled the process of coming closer to be experienced. Have we not learnt that authority excludes discursive processes? The film evening, during which the directors of the "Lost and Found" project were introduced and examples of their earlier work shown, had already surprised us: through its concentration on single works, in each of which an independent narrative form and aesthetic allowed everyday life and questions of our present to shimmer through and with an almost non-existing framework (elsewhere often patronizing).

Funding culture, like every form of funding, particularly in its exported form, moves across a mined terrain – it wants to do something good in alien territory, assist independent development, but it should also take into consideration the diverse expressed and unexpressed criteria of the patron. The result of such supportive funding often tells us more about the projections of the patron than initiating a process of mutual change. Our Bulgarian partners from the "Visual Seminar" in Sofia had already introduced me to the concept of "Europeanizing," to precisely describe the contemporary form of a friendly, but colonial, support and its frequently astounding side-effects, when, for example, hotels are being built because Bulgaria is defined as a tourist destination, even if there will be no guests for these hotels in the near future.

Projections are a part of every relationship ("relations" again) and are productive in a positive way when they do not exceed a certain dimension. The grand dimension was given nothing on this weekend: there were no definitive descriptions of locations, no national or regional roles were played out, but only chairs and protagonists, which we became ourselves. The stage of the large auditorium in the Volkspark building, which our rows of chairs initially faced, remained surprisingly empty. The audience with its habitual gaze fixed on the stage was quickly weaned of its trusted role. As Katrin Klingan opened the colloquium from a position behind and to the left of the rows of chairs, many of the participants craned their necks at first, but the moving and shifting around of chairs soon began after a few minutes of strained effort. After most of those present had traveled hundreds, if not thousands of kilometers to come to Halle, it became clear that movement was not permitted to cease here. In order to understand, one has to move.

Watchful sensibility and precision

This watchful sensibility may have been due to the organizers' training in the theater world. But the decisive quality of a skepticism directed against one-sided power relations had been manifest long before the colloquium – in the structure of the overall project. A perceptive awareness for local conditions and the search for cultural actors pursuing specific concerns had led, in a careful way, to projects that are precise in how they articulate their respective social conditions. If the "Lost and Found" film project is concerned with producing outstanding works of film, then the project "Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000" is responding precisely to the still open niches of society and strategically extends the civic space of culture before an economic yoking of culture can clutter up the scope for action. "De/construction of Monument" in Bosnia-Herzegovina and "Missing Identity" in Kosovo touch on the open wounds of national and ethnic identity, though with very different strategies and focal points, ranging from the erection of a supranational monument in the figure of Bruce Lee in Mostar to the exhibition and publication activities in Peja, a small town in Kosovo.

Querying simple identity constructs

The comparability and quality of the projects lies precisely in their local cultural and social embedment, their critical querying of simple identity constructs and their bold ventures into unexploited fields of potential. In Germany one would not even dare to dream of a quality professional and, at the same time, disarmingly charming, non-commercial television arts program to be broadcast on a national station. Through "relations," such a dream becomes reality with "ALTE ARTE" in Moldova.

Cultural funding is also geopolitical. Geopolitics is conducted, however, by every individual, and it functions only through movement and does not cease when the support is delivered. In Halle, I entered a space that crystallized how approaching one another, how coming closer – the ultimate concern after all – is a step that each one of us has to take anew every day. Without programmatic clamps, without indulgent didactics, without explanatory commentary on the overall situation of art and culture in eastern Europe in general and in particular. Habit dimmed the horizon of my expectations at the beginning. But then again, how do you get used to something that, in my experience, is unique? From here on out, there is a precedent that determines expectations.

Tallinn – Helsinki 89 km. The airline route from Helsinki to Halle 1,500 km. That is a long way

by Mait Laas, filmmaker from Tallinn and member of the film project “Lost and Found”



I don't know whether it was the goal of the organizers of the “re-arranging” colloquium, but I certainly found the time there to be therapeutic in every respect, something that transported me from the everyday world of the hard musts at home into a semiotic world. The wandering as well as the shifting of one's own standpoint during these days was a real experience

relations ... “relations” as an initiative supports projects, the colloquium and the participants – all in all an indivisible whole, whose key word for me is relations, in both the abstract as well as the direct meaning of the word

“relations” as an institution proceeds as if it were a kind of mood creator, as an atmospheric artist and diplomat, who gives everything for his/her creation called communication.... It is a joy, but it is at the same time strange to have to see that the colloquium also serves the purpose of giving the eastern European neighbors, who sometimes obviously avoid communicating with one another, an opportunity to dwell calmly on their own ideas on neutral ground and to talk with each other, irrespective of whether their projects have a common theme or, viewed from the outside, have no direct contact points

During the basically fluent and polite discussions between artists, art scholars, and critics, between the audience and the contributors, there was one critical and indelible moment as the project “Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000” was being presented. The young intellectuals describing their world – which, because of its text corpus, seemed metaphysical – made a few listeners, used to more colloquial texts, increasingly aggressive. Unexpected by the organizers and unplanned in the agenda, the chairs in the auditorium began to creak and grate. The monotony of this presentation released active energy in the otherwise outwardly passive listeners – through which the colloquium, structured more as forum for presenting reports, fluidly changed into interactive action art ... to which the majority of the audience for some reason reacted negatively (with a lack of understanding) Even less understandable for me was the behavior of those listeners who see

themselves as representatives of a minority and as in need of aid within their own societies. In such moments the initiative “relations” undergoes a metamorphosis into a father-confessor and becomes a pedagogue for eastern Europe, who with patience and devotion assists and maps the processes in the micro-world so as to draw global and universally valid conclusions.... It's possible that there are even models for this It is no secret that the macro-processes have their origin in the micro-world – scientists don't spend their time peering into microscopes for nothing when trying to comprehend the features of DNA structure As trivial as the following thought may be, people are not made up of DNA alone – they also have socio-cultural needs, which, given today's eastern European cowboy capitalism, are threatening to fall into oblivion That's why it's a good thing when there is an institution researching the micro-processes, supporting social initiatives, and pumping a little oxygen into the calcifying blood circulation. Only it is rather embarrassing that eastern Europe, a strong and vital organism, can't find the necessary energy in itself, but relies on the tablets prescribed by the physicians instead But surely the energy is simply exhausted by the tempo of social changes At the same time, precisely this communication, as offered by “relations,” is urgently needed – as one of many mechanisms needed for regaining energy and restoring balance. One need not keep it secret: in the “body” of the welfare state, which Germany is in our eyes, there are organs adversely affected by salt deposits – as the excursion to Halle/Neustadt showed, an industrial city typical of eastern European societies and whose inhabitants cannot simply be crossed off the list of society and forgotten But there is not the usual hospitalization of the ill here, rather the opposite – one begins with the communication, with raising consciousness about a problem, with the search for identity The chairs are moved around so as to discover new horizons Damn, that sounds really naïve and idealistic ... but then again what is the task of the artist if not to indicate the processes being played out on the horizon so that we don't sleep through the dawn. Thus, in Halle only a small, accidental source of electric light sufficed for the pupils narrowed by the tempo of life to open

once again, enabling the observer to notice the hidden magic in the cracks and flaking plaster of the auditorium's walls ... a magic like the one that radiates only from the creased and folded face of a lady experienced in life

Amongst the long-term results achieved by the “relations” initiative could be the new shoots on the experimental field of relations and cultures in the “New Europe,” and their protection from the climatically determined forces prevailing there ... the enabling of new experiments in the hope of attaining a theoretical result under laboratory conditions that allows decisive conclusions to be drawn For the observer, this may happen in the cosmos of philanthropy or botanical experiments ... a game with borders – to find the life task of the artist and art in society ... or as a reality show – which conditions are necessary for a culture implanted on new ground to survive or flourish?

Admittedly, someone who is stuck in his/her own area has a somewhat limited viewpoint of the rest of the world Its vision doesn't include the problems of other areas of art ... There is a lack of synergy Nevertheless, the colloquium enabled a fleeting look over the fence into the garden of the others ... to see what they're doing so as to see and assess what one is doing through the prism of the others Although the spatial distance between Tallinn and Halle is great, just as great as that between Halle and Prishtina, the still unsolved, similarly profiled socio-cultural tasks bring the eastern European societies battered by the storms of transition closer together ... closer than we can imagine Thanks to “relations” for their attention and support, which enabled us to come together and recognize this

Dream worlds so beautiful I could fart

BY THE WAY, from the very first moment I entered the Volkspark auditorium, which has undoubtedly witnessed a lot in its time, I sensed that I'd slipped directly into a scene from a Fellini film. “Fellini” is for me a keyword that I have difficulty describing in words, a word that

captures one with its inexplicable atmosphere, and opens previously undiscovered or hidden doors leading to secret and mysterious worlds – worlds in which you let off a fart out of sheer excitement, and in which you spend hours before you even notice that it would be advisable to adjust the position of your body You can follow yourself against the background of the action of others ... like in a dream ... without understanding and naming everything, but, in the attempt, follow deep currents

Under Different Portents

by Martin Fritz (Ottensheim/Vienna), Director of the Austrian "Festivals of the Regions" and founding member of "relations"



When reporting from a western perspective, how does one navigate a way through the rhetorical hazards of transformational exoticism, of patronizing and of amateur political science, all of which frequently stamp their mark on the discourses about "exchange" and "cooperation praxis" between western Europe and the transformation countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe? Perhaps by turning the tables for once and examining which specialist expertise from these contexts should be productively used for one's own praxis? How could one report about an event of this kind? A report, only partially fictive, on the contributions presented at the conference "Creating Public Spheres," an event that – under different portents – took place at the same time and place as the "relations" colloquium.

There was a lot to learn at Halle an der Saale. The organizers had summoned numerous foreign experts to provide the – largely German-speaking – audience with insights into advanced cultural forms of action, which are exemplary in their striving to create (new) public realms and spaces and establish innovative discourses in society. The event was obviously responding to a latent discontent with the form of "public sphere" that contemporary art and culture is capable of providing in Germany. There was obviously an expectation that similarly successful examples of working with, on, and in the public sphere could be realized in Germany as well, along the lines of what the experts from eastern Europe, invited as transmitters of new impulses, would then present in the following two days.

The courage to learn: the artists and cultural actors from eastern Europe

One can only hope so. There was no lack of stimulating ideas and suggestions. It was repeatedly shown that the possibilities for current cultural practices aiming to activate society lie each time in a specific linking of public (also media) aesthetic action with a real topical issue.

The projects in the public space of Cieszyn (a Polish city on the border to the Czech Republic, ed.) presented by Joanna Mytkowska and Andrzej Przywara are similar in this point to the interventions undertaken by the "Visual Seminar" from Sofia and the sounding out of innovative monument praxis as pursued by the project "De/construction of Monument" based around Dunja Blažević in Sarajevo, from the opening of a historically important artist atelier through the Foksal Gallery Foundation in Warsaw, the running of an off-academy in Prishtina within the framework of the "Missing Identity" project, and on to the coup, greeted with applause, of a culture magazine on national Moldovan television initiated by a group around the artist Pavel Braila – all of the contributors convincingly stood for a praxis that takes culture's potential to strengthen civil society seriously and actively collaborates in the creation of the public spheres required for this....

The intention of the organizers became clearer with each panel discussion: the succinctness of the presented projects shall encourage those present to try something similar in their own contexts, to – let's say in Frankfurt am Main – instigate similar interactions in social space like those obviously achieved by the professional work of exponents in other parts of the world. It is difficult, however, to imagine that all mayoral candidates would assemble before the elections in a German (or Austrian) art museum to answer questions on urban planning and relate their understanding of aesthetics, as took place in Sofia in "Visual Seminar"; or that it could be managed to put out a similarly confusingly precise proposal in the constricting feuilleton-world like that for the "Bruce Lee Monument" in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina (yes, that's right: a bronze monument for the kung fu star!). On the level of cultural policy as well, many administrative bodies could take the innovative yet pragmatic networking praxis of "Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000" as an example.

The key to being explosive: declare yourself to be responsible

The message given unanimously by the experts to the audience was that strengthening social dialogue beyond the narrow confines of expertise appears to be possible when the cultural field, believing in its own competence, declares itself responsible for the public sphere and, on the basis of its needs, takes on the creation of "infrastructures of discourse" (quote from the organizers' paper). Faced with structural deficiencies, this special form of self-empowerment, which also includes working on one's own historical position (as undertaken by the "East Art Map" project of the Slovenian group IRWIN), is the key to the explosiveness of the projects, and is surely also a contributing factor to their fundraising successes. All projects have been enormously successful in enthusing financiers outside their own countries as well. The model character of these approaches apparently enables the financial backers to go beyond the national restrictions usually placed on culture financing in favor of a transnational approach.

Visiting the colloquium was worth it. The perfectly organized event (due to the invited experts) offered the prominent representatives of the local art scene, who themselves were somewhat reticent in presenting their own praxis, the possibility to be inspired by their international colleagues in a variety of ways. The coming years will show whether these impulses will bear fruit here and that these approaches can find imitators, or if this know-how must continue to be imported from abroad.

Eastern Counter-Geographies

by Tomislav Medak, philosopher and member of the project “Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000”



After struggling initially to piece together the puzzle thrown up by the presentations of the projects developed within the “relations” framework in Halle (the puzzle of incommensurable and incompatible plurality of projects taking place throughout “eastern Europe” in contexts as different as Sofia, Prishtina, Ljubljana and Chisinau), I eventually came to understand that these presentations mounted a challenge much more demanding than the present-day cultural policy agenda focusing on, including and mediating “eastern Europe” would like it to be. The Halle project contributions seriously failed to meet the expected assumption that “eastern Europe” might be presented, represented, made palpable and palatable, the assumption that the initiatives we witnessed may convey a substantive “eastern European” experience. These contributions made it evident that the territory of today’s “eastern Europe” does not present a unitary topology of social facts which the inclusion process has to face up to and become responsive to whatever yields to its assimilative thrust. There’s no longer an “eastern Europe” for a “western Europe” to do justice to. Instead, these contributions clearly showed that the diversity of social facts presented and reflected upon is a consequence of something that now needs to be understood as a geo-political gradient, and no longer a polarity. The geography of “eastern Europe” has already yielded, to various degrees, and has thus turned into a different landscape.

While in the early days of post-socialist transition, this landscape might have been laden with an equal potential for access to Europe, we must acknowledge that the geography of access has now been redrawn. The generality of the situation was displaced by the specificity of needs. What was once declared common has now given way to the particular. Some places have greater access to presence and influence while others have been left out. The “eastern Europe” of the past has been transformed and has become unrepresentable. “Eastern Europe” – no longer! And now?

The dividing line between inclusion and exclusion no longer runs along the border between East and West

In a disturbing turn of events, places that shared a common fate as a part of eastern European geography now find themselves at opposite ends of the inclusion and accession divide. The inclusion-exclusion divide no longer runs along the East-West axis. And as these dividing lines are redrawn, the responsibilities, too, are redistributed. When confronting the plurality emerging from “eastern Europe,” we are made all the more aware of the geo-political gradient of access and the workings of exclusion that are now being produced and reinforced from within what was formerly known as “eastern Europe” as well. And it is here that “eastern Europe” attains a new meaning – coming back to haunt, a hollow revenant from the future holding the promise of and calling for a program of new inclusiveness. To be able to participate in the production of inclusion means also being able to protest and transform its logic from within. This is, if there’s ever to be one, a true political injunction of the supposedly common “eastern European” experience.

Mapping “eastern Europe” differently, staking a claim to redefine the processes of defining what is inside and outside, relevant and irrelevant, supported and unsupported in European culture, and to open channels for those definitions and recognition processes coming from the outside, as well as being able to participate in defining the European cultural agenda might be the ultimate virtue of “relations.”

Forming alliances

However, the very plurality and specificity of the “relations” projects, reflecting as they do the new geography of the divide, might ultimately prove to be a deterrent to new alliances. The highly critical focus of individual projects on their specific context could well set them too far apart, hindering them from connecting directly with one another and organizing themselves. It is a fundamental insight of organizational theory that individuals organized in firms or closed entities have less access to available human resources for finding solutions and collaborating because their access is limited solely to those working in the same entity or to services that other such entities provide. Free agents or peers, on the other hand, have a more open access, an access to all other peers, and therefore have a better chance of identifying particular tasks and organizing collaboration. The proviso that they have an accessible information channel at their disposal enables them to tap into what their fellow peers can provide. In a similar vein, for the critical task of forming alliances

aiming to counteract the existing production of the geography of the divide in “eastern Europe,” and concurrently to realize eastern counter-geographies of inclusion, the “eastern” actors will have to mobilize more permanent and open participatory forums of exchange. The Halle meeting of the “relations” partners, although a closed and self-referential meeting, might well have been an initial step in this direction, one that allows us to fathom more clearly what needs to be done.

Ask not what “relations” can do for you, ask what you can do for “relations”!

by Lucezar Boyadjiev (Sofia), artist and member of “Visual Seminar”



I was very proud of myself when I used this wording for a toast at dinner on the second night of the colloquium.... And I wasn't playing up to anybody. I was trying to convey to all the “relations” partnering projects’ operatives, people like myself, what I thought summarized the main aspect of the colloquium in Halle. Regardless of the substance, or the progress and achievements of the projects back home, the point now is to build up discursive partnerships, or a new discourse of partnership if you wish, with the German partners, current and future, starting but not ending with “relations” itself. There is always something that remains after a colloquium like this one and, as a matter of fact, after any colloquium/symposium/conference. The point is not what remains but: what to do with the “stuff” that remains. We produced a lot of meaning and content, analysis, insights, shared information and engaged in a lot of cross-border brainstorming.... However, it is yet unclear what to do with it all: how can we amplify and make it part of the public sphere, how can we construct and use the new methodologies needed to capitalize on the unprecedented format and success (at least from my point of view) of the “relations” project?

Sounding out possibilities

It appears that the scheme of “you have the money, we have the reality (maybe too much reality for our own good), so let's be partners” is not able to provide answers that are valid beyond and outside the “culture of complaint”^{*} so very popular and abused by eastern Europe in the East-West context. And so very much perpetuated by the great variety of patronizing attitudes in western Europe, which are often not even expressed or acknowledged as such, but yet provide a fertile ground for further complaints and conceptually retro-active funding. The “relations” spectrum of interlinked partnering projects and re-activated networks of operatives in the field of art, culture, and politics of the civil society has a unique chance to further the cause and practice of pro-active and reciprocal project work across the dividing lines between political borders, between project fund-

ing and project making, between complaining and patronizing, between this identity and that identity, even between the notions of the same and the other that are neither so heterogeneous nor so protectively untranslatable as we usually presume. For me, what remains is all about new perspectives and a vision of the constellation of new possibilities for applying already committed and existing work and approaches.

Cross-pollination

For instance, the new format of partnerships between projects “there” and in Germany that “relations” is working so hard to implement, seems to furnish a possibility for the transfer of methodologies and project operatives benefiting work done both in and outside of Germany. I would call this process “cross-pollination” of personnel, project species, and social realities that seem to be vastly different at first glance. It would be a process of identifying common issues, metaphors, languages, partnering propositions, and integrative brainstorming. It could be a process of identifying these aspects in already existing or developing works and projects. These should be linked, or “bridged” (to use a bit of computer technology referring to connecting two resource items in a machine for making it far more productive), so that they work together in order to mutually amplify their social and political impact both “at home” and abroad, however these locations happen to be defined. One unexpected result I noticed from the colloquium in Halle is that I realized how the effective range of “relations,” as well as most of the partnering projects, could be far larger and wider as long as one was willing to look around for comparable aspects of reality within Germany itself.

For instance, and I do not want to impose anything, but it seems to me that the city of Halle itself would be a good context for “cross-pollination” with the project “Missing Identity” currently underway in Kosovo. Why? Well, I sensed some kind of sadness in Halle. Or probably something one can call a depression of the mind and psychological resignation. What

I have in mind is the fact that the so-called unification (of Germany, of course, but here I also mean the aspect of European enlargement and unification) happened too fast, almost overnight, or at least it seemed so at the beginning. People from Halle, as well as the rest of the former GDR (East Germany), do not seem to have had the benefit of learning slowly by trial and error, or of gradual adaptation to the changing world/reality as we in eastern Europe had (or rather, we in the “Euro East,” as I prefer to call the countries/societies that are already in or on the way into the EU).

Hidden identity

Unlike people from Halle, for us there was no promise of an imminent miracle waiting to happen in a week or two. We had no guarantees and no lobbies, and least of all we had relatives from across the former border to tell us how things are done in the real world of tomorrow. (Although, we had the intuition, and bolstered with a blind faith in the “historical process,” we trusted that it would inevitably lead us to prosperity). We took the whole process in stages of poverty and despair, of chaos and breakdown of the social fabric, of loss of all values and orientation points in society, and then of slowly regaining self-confidence, of establishing more solid societies, of gathering pace and building-up of new agendas, whatever these are and wherever they might lead us. In the meantime though, our collective identity underwent a slow process of transformation. It was not just discarded overnight as outdated and retrograde, but had a chance to work on itself on its own.

At the end of 1989, we envied the East Germans for getting “there” fast, in one single leap. Now, after Halle, I think we had the better “deal,” although it is not yet clear why we had to take the hardest road to capitalism – via socialism (as the popular joke from the 1990s queried). We did not have to hide our losers’ identity under the mattress; we had a chance to live with it and to change it through learning because we could say “Good Bye, Lenin!” right then and there in 1989.... In Halle, I had the distinct feel-

ing that there is some sort of long-gone identity, which is not appreciated nor respected, which is not hooked-up to current agendas, but which is nonetheless lovingly “hidden” in the closet of the collective psyche, for it no longer has too many venues to go public. In a way, it's this identity from the former GDR times which is missing from the public sphere that I think is the cause for sadness and resignation in a city like Halle. In a way, it is this lingering and invisible GDR identity that is the reason why, unlike in the rest of Europe, the East-West debate is still more pressing in Germany....

Of course, the “missing identity” situation in Kosovo is quite the reverse. Still, the “Missing Identity” project operatives are well-equipped by now to deal with the situation in a positive and constructive way, there or elsewhere. They have already found ways to make the invisible visible.

So, what remains? The beginning of a new partnership discourse?

^{*}A term invented by Geert Lovink and myself during an interview in Manchester in September 1998, referring to the stubborn patterns of behavior and manipulation in eastern European societies after 1989 in order to apply for support from the rest of the world.

Unspoken in Halle

by Eda Čufer (Ljubljana), dramaturge and member of the “relations” advisory board



I. Events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 cleave the fabric of historical continuity. Or the enlargement of European Union in May 2004. Something that cuts our perception of time into “before” and “after.” Something that reminds us of our past even as it signals our future. These events inscribe the reality to which we will refer, believe, or protest against, but with which, in any case, we must live. During the 1980s we who lived in the former socialist East could not envision the end of socialism. Acting against the socialist state and in opposition to the so-called “official” culture, we fought for another missing cultural and political space, for aesthetic and political principles that were missing from the known agendas, for establishing an extended, pluralized, democratic public sphere – for creating a new model of international artistic exchange – and not for the fall of the communist-socialist state. Not for the fall of Yugoslavia.

Lost worlds, stubborn worlds

Suddenly, when the dismantling of both became an irreversible historical fact, it became impossible to speak about the beliefs and desires that had motivated our acts from “before” without feeling how the meanings of the uttered words were changing on their very way to the receiver, how they contradicted themselves, became illegitimate, disobedient. How we had suddenly lost not only our world but also the control over our words and their meanings. Our intentions – what we thought we labored for – suddenly became hostage to a new system under construction – a momentum beyond our will, a work in progress called “after.” Whose “after?”

II. No one looks at the blueprint of a building after the earthquake has toppled it. No one looks at the family who lived there. Only at the ruin and the plan for its replacement.

III. Reorienting the political unconscious

In “Dreamworld and Catastrophe. The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West,” Susan Buck-Morss describes the turbulence of the discursive field that followed the collaborative project of a group of Russian and American philosophers and scholars between 1987 and early 1990. Her story begins during the period of perestroika and glasnost, when it became possible for two previously separate worlds to have a closer look at each other for the first time. A group of American philosophers from Cornell University in New York and a group of Russian philosophers from the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow started a research project with the idea of using the same theoretical tools to analyze the commonalities of the structures of modern power on both sides of the communist-capitalist divide. After working together constructively for three years, relations within the group were under stress after the fall of the Berlin wall. During a two-week conference in Dubrovnik in 1990, concrete organizational matters such as lower accommodation rates and separate hotels for easterners, discretionary spending of per

diems on evening social life, and the use of the English language became the subject of complaints by the easterners about the advantages offered to their western counterparts. It was as if the wall, as a symbol of difference, had created a link and balance which, when removed, exposed a fundamental disparity and defensiveness in everything from currency exchanges to intellectual exchanges. Luminaries of contemporary theory and philosophy (e. g. Fredric Jameson, Slavoj Žižek, Boris Groys, Merab Mamardashvili known for epistemological and hermeneutic sophistication could hardly agree on basic definitions. The westerners were surprised and defensive about the idea of applying the term “postmodernism” to late communist culture, while thinkers who invented notions such as the “political unconscious” and the “discursive vacuum” were subjected to challenges about the accuracy of their terminology. In Buck-Morss’ retrospective, these problems did not signal a breakdown or failure so much as they manifested a necessary stage in the rearrangement of the political unconscious of structurally discrepant sides searching for unity and contact.

IV. Imposed equality, lived difference

The recent “relations” colloquium in Halle, conceived as a micro-theater of emerging “New European” relations at the time of the EU’s latest expansion, was yet another manifestation of the search for new discursive platforms in a time of deep political change. Among the many tensions evident but not fully articulated during the Halle gathering, is the fundamental question of how and along what lines the ideologies of a transnational European culture will be developed. Because the former socialist countries did not have a developed infrastructure for international cultural exchange during the Cold War, the modeling of the new cultural infrastructures necessary to a “new” Europe is assumed to belong quite naturally to the imagination of cultural producers and politicians from the West. This unspoken theme of the discussions in Halle reveals a similar problem as befell dreamers in the former Yugoslavia and philosophers in Dubrovnik: how to make our blueprints correspond to new realities, and how to respect difference while the idea of sameness is being imposed. It is the problem and paradox of democracy.

Communication, Not Consensus

Katrin Klingan, Artistic Director of “relations,” and Ines Kappert, cultural theorist from Berlin, in discussion with the sociologist Marek Krajewski from Poznań and the dramaturge Eda Čufer from Ljubljana about exchange, dissenting views, process-driven identity constructs, and how the East-West schema creates a gridlock but is indispensable

Ines Kappert: That dialogue is plain hard work, even when there is no lack of good will and commitment, was palpable during the “relations” colloquium in Halle an der Saale last fall. What makes it so difficult to communicate with one another and reach a shared understanding, or to enter into a public sphere, even in such a favorably disposed group? Why is it actually so precarious to leave behind the outworn stereotypes of “the East is XYZ” and “the West is XYZ” precisely when everyone agrees, at least theoretically, that this would be a pretty good idea?

Marek Krajewski: I think that it is first of all very important to be clear about what one wants from a “cultural exchange” and what dialogue and public sphere actually mean in this context. Does it mean that we have to create a consensus in and through our dialogue and search for a common denominator? Is exchange to be viewed as successful only when the media reports on it? Have we then created a public sphere?

Katrin Klingan: Let’s stay with the concept of public sphere for the moment. How do you assess this concept?

Marek Krajewski: Okay, let’s take as an example the concept of public sphere articulated by Jürgen Habermas. This concept builds, putting it simply, on the idea of consensus. One can only create a public sphere on the foundation of an understanding that has to be achieved. That is, when everyone “acts in concert.” But there is also another tradition articulated by Claude Lefort, for example, which proposes something very different. Here, reaching agreement is not a precondition for communication and the creation of a public sphere. Rather, a public sphere already exists in a positive sense when we simply enter into discussion with one another, when communication forms are kept open and as many people as possible are integrated into the process and as many heterogeneous positions as possible are taken and exchanged. Here public sphere means: “We come together, we talk, we argue, we often misunderstand one another.” And that really is okay. I think that all this talk of consensus misses the point, particularly in connection with the creation of a public sphere. For it is all too easy to then abuse the idea of a “public sphere” by turning it into an argument discriminating against differences. In the sense that because we are different and probably won’t be able to reach a consensus, we don’t have to talk with one another. Instead we simply represent the fact of our differences, and there is no shared platform. A dangerous attitude and an extremely poor argument.

Ines Kappert: Okay. We can give up consensus as the objective. But it appears to me that the

communication problem is still not solved. For is there no difficulty in clarifying when a genuine misunderstanding or a plain and simple disagreement exists? And it is when one has finally sorted that out and the latter appears to be the case that things get really tricky. Both sides are all too quick to subsume, more or less consciously, differences of opinion or different approaches under the argument, “Okay, you don’t share my opinion because you don’t understand ‘our’ situation, precisely because you’re from the East, or the other way around, because you’re from the West.” And then we have to extract ourselves from this dead-end before we can even begin.

Katrin Klingan: What are you driving at exactly?

Ines Kappert: I believe that it is important to genuinely grasp why it is so difficult in praxis to break out of the ordering patterns of “East” and “West,” so as to thus also extract ourselves from this “East-West” dichotomy. And I ask myself whether this is not connected to how the attitude we bring to bear in discussion is still structured by the ingrained thinking in terms of the East-West blocs. It seemed to me, as a westerner, for example, that during our colloquium in Halle the idea of “eastern Europe” as a group identity was deconstructed. At the same time however, the clichés of the West as wealthy, stable civil societies dealing with problems of luxury remained generally intact. Don’t misunderstand me: the colloquium was a success, especially the work on communication. But in order to take up and further this positive experience of opening up dialogue, it seems to me that it is important to query and analyze the conception of the “West,” and to sharpen our senses here as well for the respective specific situation in the various “western” societies.

Eda Čufer: If you want a more intensive focus on your situation, you should place more emphasis on Germany. Perhaps this has not been pursued sufficiently up until now. But aside from that, I don’t share the opinion that one can simply declare the concepts of “East” and “West,” and thus also their dichotomy, for outdated and “obsolete.” You can’t just turn around and level out the differences in socialization, and thus, past experiences.

Ines Kappert: The leveling of difference is not the issue, but rather how we deal with difference. The question is more like, why do I subsume the experiences of arguing differently, of feeling strange or estranged under concepts of identity like “East” and “West”? Why do I ascribe such experiences and feelings to the dichotomy of “East” versus “West” and believe that this orders my experiences and that I have

hence understood them? Why don’t we connect experiences of difference first of all to other distinctions such as educational background, age, financial status, professional position, and the respective social situation and symbolic order? Of course “East” and “West” don’t vanish as relational and differential dimensions, but we can qualify them, see them in relative terms as one factor amongst many.

Marek Krajewski: In my view we have to see this holding onto these East-West identities and dichotomies in connection with the difficult process of constituting identity. As far as I can see, in so-called eastern Europe we possess a more weakly developed identity at present. This weakness favors, in turn, a certain attitude: “If I don’t know who I am and, as a result, also don’t know how I should (re-)present myself to ‘outsiders,’ there is only one thing that is certain: I am not a westerner.” Given this situation, namely, that I don’t know who I am, it becomes important to draw a demarcation line between others and myself. Therefore, I need a concept of the “West” to construct my identity, although, at the same time, I don’t accept that line of self-description because it again privileges the “West.”

Eda Čufer: Yes. Exactly.

Ines Kappert: That means that the difficulty of transgressing the ordering pattern of East and West is also tied to the search for identity in post-socialist and post-communist societies that is currently being proclaimed everywhere?

Marek Krajewski: That is at least highly possible. The question of self-presentation and presentation abroad is a pressing issue for us.

Katrin Klingan: Here I must intervene. In practical terms, it seems to me that things are somewhat different. During numerous meetings with artists and intellectuals from eastern Europe over the past few years, I rarely or, indeed, almost never had the impression that there was a deficiency in how they presented themselves outwardly. Quite the opposite, in fact. As a “specific outsider,” as you put it, I felt that it was me who was sometimes pushed into a situation where I had to search for the correct formulations.

Ines Kappert: Marek and Eda, both of you stress a very strong sense of “we.” Is this search for identity and weakness to be really seen as independent of educational background and the respective financial situation? Or to put it another way, is this “weak identity,” as you call it, evident to all sectors of the population to the same degree? What about artists and intellectuals? What is their situation? Were there, or are

there, any movements bucking the trend, movements who define themselves beyond national identity? Let me mention an example taken from the West German context: in the 1980s and into the 1990s, defining oneself as a “leftist” allowed one to pull out of the whole discourse on what it means to be a German, etc.

Marek Krajewski: The problem of finding an identity is not a question of education. The intellectuals may well be more aware of the problem. But their identity is no different to that of their compatriots. It appears to me that it is also shaped mainly by weakness. The problem in finding an identity lies rather in the different status their countries enjoy within Europe. And don’t forget: an enormous social transition has taken place here.

Eda Čufer: When approaching this question it is crucial to be aware of the very different situation of intellectuals in the East from those in the West. Our generation, those of us born in the 1960s, was forced to find and collect critical knowledge for itself. We are all autodidacts and we have passed on to one another the alternative knowledge we have accumulated through our private networks. As we all know, the state education system was not geared towards fostering critical competence. While it was possible in the West to be critical and still work within the system, the pressure to conform placed on us was far greater. In the end, this meant either you were part of it or you were excluded completely.

Marek Krajewski: The pressure to form a homogeneous entity was extreme in the former socialist and communist states. Therefore, I don’t believe that, in terms of self-understanding, there is any great difference between intellectuals and, let’s say, doctors or workers.

Eda Čufer: The longer you lived in this system, the more you were exposed to this pressure to conform. Correspondingly, the more difficult it is today to adjust to the new conditions. For the younger generations things are very different. But the “elders” are still holding the positions in institutions and their interest in bringing about change is not very pronounced. Thus we are dealing with a generation gap. There is another crucial factor that also needs to be considered: the instability of social structures and especially the catastrophic state of the culture scene. This results in an uncertainty amongst artists and intellectuals that should not be underestimated. For instance, if the projects developed within the framework of “relations” were to also receive local support or at least had the prospect of receiving it, then the actors involved could present themselves and their projects abroad with a greater degree of self-confidence.

Katrin Klingan: We have to confront this unequal and difficult situation, even if we know that we will not be able to redress the lack of appropriate funding and support structures immediately. You've already mentioned some of the reasons for this. But "relations" was aware of this from the very beginning; we wanted to also support projects in countries where there was little prospect that the government would provide some form of follow-up support. The weakness, as you say, of the infrastructure in the cultural sector was not a criterion for exclusion for us. This is precisely why the thematic approach taken by the individual projects was so important to us, projects that for more than two years had addressed the issues of their societies and undertaken international exchange with diverse artistic and discursive formats. I think this is precisely where the strength of "relations" lies. Namely, in utilizing the manner through which important themes are played out in the public sphere to contest this same public sphere and to open up alternatives in small steps. Take the "Missing Identity" project (see p. 23) in Kosovo for example: there a monthly art and culture supplement to the weekly magazine "Java" is being published; an alternative arts academy has been established where students can take part in semester courses and workshops free of charge; and a gallery for contemporary art was founded in Peja, which is arousing the curiosity of the city's school pupils in particular. The alternative academy has recently entered into a one-year exchange program with the "Städelschule," the international arts academy in Frankfurt/Main. If we are capable of bringing about change, then I believe that it can only occur in this "double movement" – acquiring and fashioning a voice both locally and internationally.

Eda Čufer: I think another point is important. Of course one cannot compare the Soros Foundation, which pumped millions into art, culture, and research in eastern Europe in the 1990s, with a comparatively tiny project like "relations." But because today, ever since Soros has withdrawn from the art scene, the Federal Cultural Foundation, and thus, to a degree "relations," act as one of the few current supporters in the cultural sector, one can't help but draw a comparison. What I am driving at is the following: whereas Soros was not striving to generate some payback value for his own country with his massive funding, "relations" is expecting some kind of added value from the projects for the German public.

Katrin Klingan: It's not a matter of added value. What is at issue is an exchange of knowledge, experience, and artistic approaches. To find a sensible and viable structure for this exchange is the goal of "relations." And this

structure resides in building up cooperative relationships, collaborations where the actors can work together on equal terms because they are both anchored in their respective societies. Of course there are enormous differences between Germany and the countries of eastern Europe due to the very distinct ways the cultural scene operates and how the funding channels are set up. This is how the idea came about to launch and support the projects in the cooperation countries first, and, hence, create a starting platform there. One and a half years later, in 2005, we begin cooperating with the German institutions. The form this cooperation could take in detail is something we consciously left open at the beginning. Formulating somewhat vague criteria may well represent a problem for the communication between the participants. But for me it also has its strong points. Namely, it enables us to keep on listening intently and to respond accordingly by reformulating the criteria and goals or by allowing new developments to unfold.

Ines Kappert: That the Federal Cultural Foundation has broken ranks with the general European trend of reflecting on and supporting national concerns and values explains why Hortensia Völckers repeatedly formulates the wish that the "relations" projects reach a public in Germany.

Marek Krajewski: Then maybe you should engage a good PR agency.

(Laughter.)

Marek Krajewski: I'm not joking. I'm serious. Find someone who knows how to market you professionally. You can't delegate this task to the individual projects.

Ines Kappert: I don't think that "relations" is expecting the individual projects to perform PR work in Germany. Instead, we want to convey why one should be aware about the context "relations" is acting in and the expectations brought to bear on "relations" by the German side.

Katrin Klingan: That's right, and I believe furthermore that the issues under discussion here cannot be solved with marketing concepts. In terms of content as well, "relations" has always pursued the goal of realizing exchange. De facto this entails communication and cooperation that goes beyond national boundaries. It means creating possibilities so that artists and curators can build up thematically specific projects and initiate discourses that live from outside input, and avoids just engaging in monologue. Instead, [they] can connect with others, translate their own ideas into other contexts, and through

this continually develop new perspectives. That is, they are forced to permanently reframe their own work and thereby query and shift their basic assumptions. And this agility demanded of all participants naturally makes the whole undertaking more difficult at times.

Marek Krajewski: Pioneers always have arrows in their back. I mean this as a compliment, since I really appreciate "relations" as a project.

Katrin Klingan: What have we got in our backs?

Marek Krajewski: Arrows.

Katrin Klingan: (laughing) Ah, okay. Well, there you are then. But I'd rather leave the arrows out of it.

Edited by Ines Kappert

*Eda Čufer:
Dramaturge and cultural theorist, co-founder and member of NSK (New Slovenian Art) and the theatre groups "Gledališče Sester Scipion Nasice" (1983-1986) and "Kozmokinetično Gledališče Rdeči Pilot" (1986-1989). In the 1990s, she worked with the artist group IRWIN. Co-curator of the exhibitions "In Search of Balkania" in Graz, Austria (2000), and "Call me ISTANBUL ist mein Name" at the ZKM, Karlsruhe (2004). Eda Čufer is a member of the "relations" advisory board.

*Ines Kappert:
Cultural theorist and literature expert from Berlin, Germany. Co-editor of the "relations" publication "Thematic Landscapes in 7 Cities of Eastern Europe" (working title/ to be published in 2006) as well as a volume of essays on suicide, "Ein Denken, das zum Sterben führt, Selbsttötung – ein Tabu und seine Brüche" (2004). She works as an academic and journalist in the areas of culture, contemporary literature, and film.

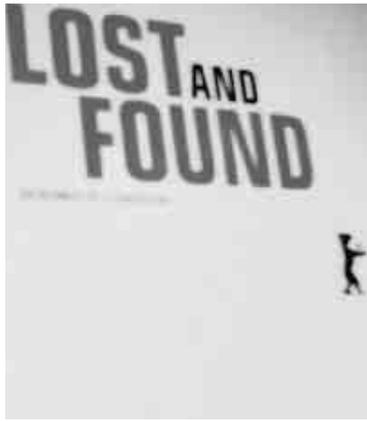
*Katrin Klingan:
Studied comparative literature and Spanish literature at the universities of Vienna and Madrid. Research fellow at the Fundación Ortega y Gasset in Madrid. Conception and organization of various cultural events in Vienna. From 1995 to 1997, assistant to the arts councilor in Vienna. From 1998 to 2001, dramaturge for the "Wiener Festwochen." During 2001 and 2002, cultural affairs consultant at the Erste Bank Group responsible for Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Croatia. Artistic Director of "relations" since 2005.

*Marek Krajewski:
Lecturer at the institute for sociology at the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, focusing on the sociology of art, cultural studies, and popular and consumer culture. Since 1998, director, initiator and curator of the Zewnetrzna Galeria AMS. He has published numerous articles as well as the volume "Kultury kultury popularnej" ("Popular Cultures," 2005). He is currently researching the sociology of the visual. Marek Krajewski is a member of the "relations" advisory board.





Photo: Maria Ziegelböck



going public “Lost and Found”

“relations” presented itself to the German public for the first time with the premiere of the film “Lost and Found” with great success: the omnibus film (by six directors) was selected to open the International Forum of New Cinema at this year’s Berlin Film Festival. Impressions of the film, the premiere, and interviews with the directors

“You can’t do anything about it. Everything changes.” by Christiane Kühl

What is the determining factor giving an identity to young Europeans? National borders, cultural traditions, or the feeling of belonging to a generation that has grown up during the transformation of eastern and central Europe? A new self-awareness was discussed at the presentation of “Lost and Found” at the Berlin Film Festival.

At the end, they sat on the stage as if a class reunion were taking place, a little excited, but obviously on close terms with one another. The excitement was understandable as their joint film, “Lost and Found,” had just been shown, selected to open the International Forum of New Cinema at the 55th Berlin Film Festival, one of the most important film festivals in the world. In the packed cinema, the Delphi Filmpalast, 750 pairs of eyes were glued on the five artists, waiting to find out more about the project in the discussion about to begin. The closeness of the artists is amazing: when they took up the invitation from “relations” and began work on “Lost and Found” a year ago, the directors (altogether six from six different eastern and central European countries) were strangers to one another. In the magnificent Delphi, a cinema rich in tradition that was built in 1949 and certainly one of Berlin’s most splendid with its red fabric

wall-hangings, lime-green seats, and overhanging gallery, there was no sign of strangeness amongst them. This may well stem from how those involved in the project were welded together from the very outset by working on the improbable. “When we told Dieter Kosslick in 2003 that we were planning an omnibus film, he replied: ‘Omnibus film?! Keep away!’” recalled Hortensia Völckers the first meeting with the boss of the Berlin Film Festival in her opening address. The warning made no impression on the artistic director of the Federal Cultural Foundation, which supported the “relations” concept from the start. On the contrary, “For us that was a reason to do it.”

The format of an omnibus film – a film whose individual episodes are independent works by different artists which together form an interlocking whole – as the first project “relations” presented in Germany seemed only natural, for both the format and its production reflect a microcosm of the many strategies and trains of thought that make up “relations” as a whole. “relations” is concerned not only with concentrated work on a local level, but also with open, transnational discussions, with personal encounters between artists and internationality as well as shifts in places, perspectives, and re-contextualizing positions. Indeed, “Lost and Found” realizes what “relations” under its artistic director Katrin Klingan is striving to make possible in exemplary fashion. That is, “relations” induces artists and the public alike to examine the ideas and images they have of themselves and others.

In February 2004, during the Berlin Film Festival’s Talent Campus, the young filmmakers met for the first time. Four workshops followed in Sofia, Wiesbaden, and Cologne. Katrin Klingan had invited Nikolaj Nikitin, editor of the Cologne film magazine “SCHNITT,” to select promising directors for the project. Nikitin was long familiar with the work of the six through his activities as a delegate of the Berlin Film Festival. The young directors were chosen not only on the basis of their previous outstanding short and full-length films but also because of their willingness to collaborate and actively engage with the other filmmakers in a working process. The starting point was the thesis that, after 1989, a sense of a common bond and identity in eastern and central European countries is now being forged less by national borders or traditions than by a self-awareness belonging to a certain generation – and, thereby, transgressing cultural and national boundaries. “Generation”

was the film project’s working title, and each episode was fashioned around this theme. As the episodes began to take shape, Nikitin observed that they shared a basic tenor, namely, a sense of loss and a new beginning – consequently, the title “Lost and Found” was discovered.

The questions of common bonds and solidarity, of “East/West” or of “European” films, characterized the discussion round held after the film showing as well. Together, Stefan Arsenijević (Serbia-Montenegro), Nadejda Koseva (Bulgaria), Mait Laas (Estonia), Kornél Mundruczó (Hungary), Cristian Mungiu (Romania) as well as Nikolaj Nikitin and Christoph Terhechte, director of the International Forum (Jasmila Žbanić from Bosnia-Herzegovina was unable to attend the premiere due to her shooting schedule) sat on the Delphi stage. Someone in the audience wanted to know what the future holds for cinema: if there will continue to be different film languages in eastern and western Europe or if we are approaching the concept of something like a “European” film? Cristian Mungiu felt compelled to first address the context of filmmaking: “The fact is that hardly any longer films are being produced in our countries. And those few films that are being produced are not shown. Ninety per cent of all films shown in cinemas are American productions. That’s what the people are seeing. We have no idea what kind of films our neighboring countries are producing.” But even in terms of one’s own work, it has become difficult to draw distinctions. Stefan Arsenijević referred to the experience of the project: “The idea of ‘Lost and Found’ was to make a film that breathed the spirit of the East. But in the East everyone is drinking Fanta. You can’t do anything about it. Everything changes.” Nevertheless, Nadejda Koseva put forward that “every artist should preserve a nearness to their origins.” Kornél Mundruczó agreed with her: “You can’t flee your own roots, and I don’t think one should try to.” Later, at the premiere party held in a former bank on Potsdamer Strasse, Cristian Mungiu expressed the hope that film takes a path similar to that of music after 1989. Though bands from the West dominated the Romanian scene throughout the 1990s, local bands are increasingly finding an audience in recent years. “Local artists are simply closer to life,” he said, and they are indispensable in the long term.

The directors realized each “Lost and Found” episode with the help of producers in their home countries, while post-production took

place in Germany. In this way, the project strengthened local infrastructures and international ties – with the hope that the contacts would lead to new collaborations as well. During the discussion in the Delphi theater, the question arose whether the directors ever discussed critically amongst themselves the growing economic influence exerted by Germans on cultural production in eastern Europe. “Yes,” grinned Cristian Mungiu, who obviously found any critique of ideology misplaced at this point in time, “and as far as we are concerned, we would like even greater German influence to be honest.” The rest of the discussion covered a wide array of issues. The filmmakers – all of whom were born between 1968 and 1977 and experienced the transformation of Europe as they were growing up – gave further details in response, in part similar, in part controversial, and came to a surprising conclusion: “While we talked quite a lot about all these things over a beer, it was never really conceptual – tonight is the first evening where we actually have the feeling that we represent a ‘generation!’”

The premiere party came to an end at around four in the morning, but the journey “Lost and Found” has embarked upon has just begun. The film was shown subsequently at the Belgrade International Film Festival in Serbia, the International Film Festival Sofia in Bulgaria, the Skopje International Film Festival in Macedonia, and the Crossing Europe Film Festival Linz in Austria; in June it will be shown at the Lubuskie Lato Filmowe Łagów in Poland.

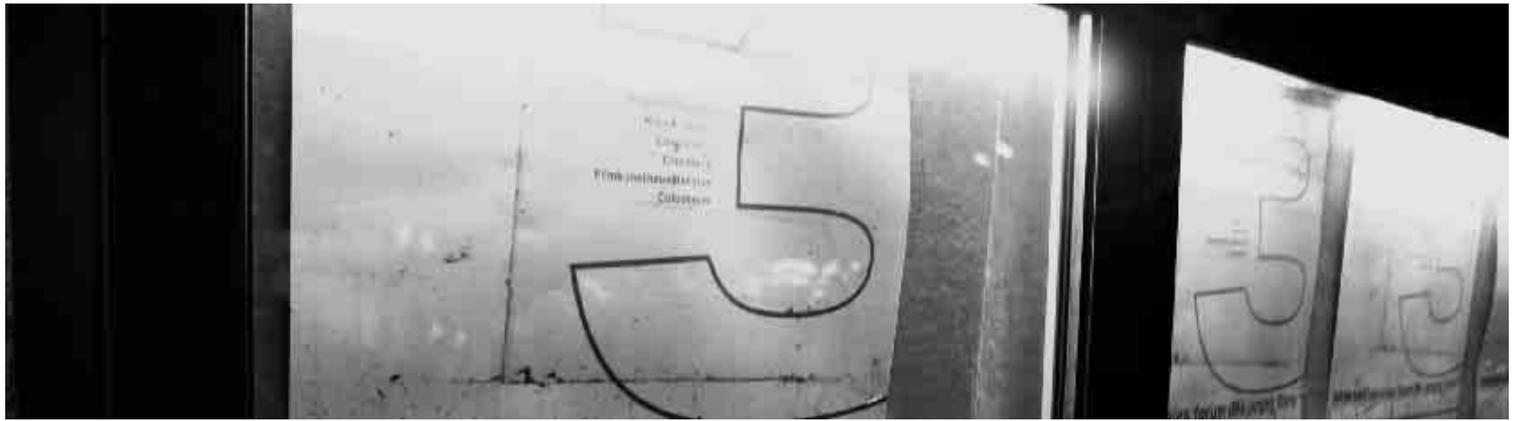
“Christiane Kühl works as a freelance radio and print journalist and lives in Berlin.



Stefan Arsenijević, director



The group of directors at the film discussion: (from left to right) Nadejda Koseva, Kornél Mundruczó, Cristian Mungiu, Stefan Arsenijević, Mait Laas, Nikolaj Nikitin (artistic director of the film project), and Christoph Terhechte (director of the International Forum of New Cinema)



Six Young Directors from Eastern Europe Shoot a Joint Film on the Theme “Generation” by Ralf Schenk

The first scene leads us into an architect's office. Located in the center of the room is a model of a glass swimming pool, which in turn is fixed to a glass rack. A young architect carefully lets water-drops fall into the pool. But at some stage one drop is a drop too many, and the experimental apparatus bursts. The water gushes out over the table and across the floor. The situation is hopeless: nothing can be saved.

This overture, filmed by its Estonian director Mait Laas in stop-motion technique, could be interpreted banally as the start of a fantastic odyssey in which perhaps the water will be harnessed once more and new life generated. But “Gene + Ratio” can also be interpreted as a metaphor for social developments, not the least because its director comes from an eastern European country: the collapse is followed by the attempt to gain a new orientation, a journey to unknown worlds; the hero is in danger of drowning on more than one occasion, and “rescue” ensues from the most intimate act of life. “Gene + Ratio,” shot with various animation techniques, from classical cartoon form to 5-D animation, not only connects and frames the five other episodes of “Lost and Found” formally, but also contributes to their internal cohesion as well. Most of the other stories oscillate between fatigue and confidence, crisis and new chances, ends and beginnings. “Lost and Found” is a film that instills one with courage to deal with everyday life.

Fairytales and animals

What catches the eye is how the films repeatedly take up fantastic motifs associated with fairytales, as if the young directors were uncertain about whether reality could, in fact, provide a happy ending. In the Romanian episode, “Turkey Girl” by Cristian Mungiu, for instance, the turkey – a present for the doctor treating her mother which the young Tatjana believes to have long been slaughtered – reappears suddenly. Contrary to the “fatherly” opinion that turkeys can't fly, it glides into the center of Bucharest at night and even manages to do the trick that Tatjana had tried to teach it: the turkey has the unique ability of distinguishing between a square and a circle. Cristian Mungiu

montages the animal's resurrection with the joyous powerlessness of the girl and the terminally ill mother opening her eyes in hospital. Night gives birth to its own miracles after everything had seemed so futile during the day.

Both literally and figuratively the “darkest” contribution to the film is the episode set at night by the Hungarian Kornél Mundruczó. In “Short-lasting Silence,” a young psychiatrist, a specialist in suicide prevention, returns to the house of his deceased mother. Mundruczó confronts the lively city person who plumbs the depths of other people's psyches, but avoids investigating his own with the wounds of the past. His journey to the family home takes him far from asphalted roads and eventually leads him through thick undergrowth, as if in a nightmare. His sister, whom he finally meets in the house, turns out to mirror his own loneliness, anxiety, and guilt. Mundruczó insists that the past is not really past; instead, what has been strenuously repressed and passed over in silence continues to weigh heavily on one's shoulders. At the end, the camera catches a glimpse of two owls; one flies away, the other stays. Nevertheless, both are nocturnal birds.

The power of symbols

Eastern European films have always impressed themselves upon the viewer through the symbolic power of their visual language. This is inspired as much by the literary traditions of the respective countries as it used to be a means of evading censorship. Explicit and critical scripts were easy prey for the augurs of cultural policy, whereas metaphorical images were more difficult to eliminate. This visual language, however, was lost partially during the final decade of state socialism. Due to a lack of critical journalism, important eastern European films developed in the direction of radical reportages – like the Polish “cinema of moral discontent” – or adopted an “anything goes” approach copied from Hollywood. The Serbian contribution, “Fabulous Vera,” testifies to how young directors are once again turning to the power of symbols and proving themselves to be extremely adept in their use.

Stefan Arsenijević employs the motifs of a streetcar, tracks, and switch-points to create a tragi-comic burlesque. The conductor Vera finds her job tedious. Despite the odd droll passenger, the route always leads along the same tracks. Although getting on years, Vera is overwhelmed by a need to break out of this monotony. Worried about her daughter who wants to get married in Cuba, Vera's patience finally snaps when she realizes that she will not be able to pick up the washing in time because the stupid driver is so slow. When a switch-point jams, Vera fantasizes that this is her chance to let the streetcar, seemingly “glued” forever on the tracks, take-off for once and “fly”.... Film and real time are identical in “Fabulous Vera,” although Arsenijević repeatedly cuts the action between two locations in the film: the streetcar, now in Vera's hands, careering through the suburbs of Belgrade, and a parked police car. That the officer sitting inside, a widower, and Vera, who has now dropped out of all her social roles, come together in the end, places this film on the verge of fairytale as well.

Close although apart, apart although close

Many narrative threads and motifs in the individual episodes correspond to one another, not least those in the Bulgarian film “The Ritual” by Nadejda Koseva and the Bosnian documentary “Birthday” by Jasmila Žbanić. “The Ritual” tells of the preparations for a wedding celebration in a village. But as the celebration begins, the bride and groom at the center of the story are in fact getting married far, far away, at Niagara Falls, and the moment is shared with their relatives in the village via cell-phone. This sympathetic parable, blending tradition and modernity, tells the story of a love overcoming divergent time zones and inconceivable space and of being close although apart.

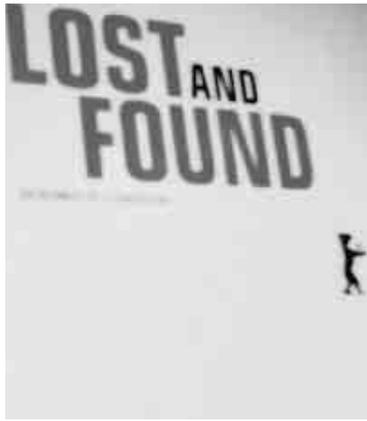
Conversely, “Birthday” seeks to bridge the sense of being apart although close – and quite literally so. The director looked for children born on November 9, 1995, in both parts of divided Mostar, the day the centuries-old bridge was destroyed. She found two girls and asked them questions about their lives as well as what they know about the war, the respective other half of

the city, and the people who live there. It would seem that the two city halves are still worlds apart. Only at the very end, as the director montages a question-and-answer game between the two girls, are they brought together, even if the moment occurs only in the film.

Eluding the expectations the West has of an “eastern European” film, “Lost and Found” dispenses completely with the oppressive realistic images, fashionable since 1990, which represented eastern Europe as a place of misery. Here, these young directors are unified by the principle of hope.

*Ralf Schenk is a film expert and journalist. He lives as a freelance author in Berlin.





Generation in Focus.

The directors of "Lost and Found" answer questions



Birth, death, milk and honey ... your film is full of symbols. How did you develop them? When you're working on a project, you're thinking on so many different levels that it's difficult to put it all into words afterwards – especially because an image can give much more information than words. What interests me is the kind of energy the next generation has, what is the core?



Nadejda Koseva, Bulgaria, "The Ritual"

The story of your film is more or less told through the cutting of sequences. How did you develop this idea? I thought a lot about how to break through time and space constraints. I believe that there is a strong union between people who can leap over distances and time. Tackling the problem of time has been one of the key concerns for film from the outset. But the problem of distance has not been sounded out to the same extent. Personally, I start brooding over the fact that my friends in New York are sleeping when I'm not, or that while I'm at home, somebody somewhere else is doing something completely different. That is what I wanted to underline. For instance, when the young couple step out of the bathroom and in that moment, the mother opens her arms. Unconsciously, you are given to believe that she's opening her arms for them. The montage is planned, down to the last detail.

Your "Ritual" is a traditional Bulgarian wedding. However, the core element of the tradition is missing: the bride and groom. They celebrate their wedding at Niagara Falls. It was impossible to leave Bulgaria definitively during communist rule, and perhaps one family member would travel to a capitalist country once in their life. Things are different today. Travel is the norm for young people. That is the good side of the coin. The other side is that there is hardly anyone left from my generation

in Bulgaria. This is what I wanted to portray. There were 25 kids in my class at school, and only ten have stayed in Bulgaria. I understand why the others have left, but it is still sad.

The film project "Lost and Found" was coordinated from Germany. Did this have an effect on your work? Our countries are at a very different stage of development than Germany. It's like different radio stations: they transmit their programs on different wavelengths. Seen in this way, the influence was not that great. Nonetheless, it was a fantastic opportunity to observe how people in Germany work, to learn, and above all to recharge my batteries. And the same can be said of the collaboration with the other filmmakers: to know that there are other filmmakers in other countries who are on the same level, that there is a kind of connection between us, gives you a sense of security.



Jasmila Žbanić, Bosnia-Herzegovina, "Birthday"

"Birthday" tells the stories of two young girls of the same age, one from eastern and the other from western Mostar. What inspired you to undertake this documentary? Whenever I walked through Mostar, I was overwhelmed emotionally. Was that because the bridge was being rebuilt? Or was it because the two halves of the city were yet to be reunited? I wanted to get to know people who knew nothing about life in the city with the bridge. I wanted to meet the generation born after the old bridge had been destroyed. I did some research and found out that Ines and Dunja were the only children born on the day that the bridge was destroyed.

The film shows just how little the parents have told their children about the war. Did that surprise you? Totally. In 1996, I made a documentary on first-

graders. They knew everything about the war and talked about it a lot in their own way. They were still very much caught up in the war. But the generation of Ines and Dunja is completely "excluded" in a way. My impression is that they know something about it on a subconscious level, but this shadowy knowledge never manifests itself concretely. On the one hand, it's good that children don't grow up with these terrible events, on the other, it's dangerous to forget.

The rebuilt bridge appears in your film only as a child's drawing. Why? We shot the film in May, and construction work on the bridge wasn't finished yet, so we planned to do an extra shoot in July for the re-opening ceremony. But this ceremonial act, all the diplomats... it all seemed so fake. And nothing had changed anyway in Mostar. I then thought that it was more appropriate to show a child's image of the bridge than the bridge itself.

Were you ever afraid that specific images in the film could be construed as taking sides? Yes, quite often. The greatest problem for me was that the Croats had destroyed the bridge, had driven the Moslems out of the western part of the city and had put them in camps. I wanted to address this, but it would have placed too great a burden on Ines. So I decided against it. Ultimately, I wanted to make a film about children, not about responsibility and guilt.



Mait Laas, Estonia, "Gene + Ratio"

Your animation film connects the five other films like a hinge. Did you know from the outset that "Gene + Ratio" had to operate in parts? I wrote the story without thinking about the film, inspired solely by the theme of "generation." Not knowing the other films actually made my work easier, although I have to say that I did expect that my film would be broken up and set between the others.

How you combine different techniques like cartoon, time-lapse, and 3-D animation is astonishing. The idea was to intersperse these techniques in the film because they stand for different generations – different generations of animation techniques. On the other hand, which animation technique you use is not that important. What counts is what you want to say. Six different people are involved in "Lost and Found," and so I employed completely different techniques as a way of representing the project's quintessence: different styles but only one story. To be able to use all these techniques in the working process was incredibly exciting. After all, animation means to breathe spirit into something. What I love about animation is how it's possible to bring the inanimate to life.

How large was the production team? We worked with about 20 people. The team involved in the stop-motion sequences was comparable to that of a feature film. We had a camera man, a lighting technician, the studio team, etc. The whole production was like a train journey. The train stops and a few people get on, invest their energy in the project, get off again two stations down the line, and new travelers get on. The background and personalities of the people involved varied greatly. The whole project was like a rainbow, and isn't it always a joy to look at a rainbow?



On this level the films vary greatly; each film has developed its own visual language. But the feel is the same, which is probably due to the shared theme of “generation.” Besides, the films reflect social and historical conditions, and we are all caught up pretty much in the same situation. Some stories are more tragic, while others are more comical. But all have the same trajectory, and that it is for me the sense of despair, the struggle of taking our lives in our own hands, of dealing with the situation we are in.

Stefan Arsenijević, Serbia-Montenegro, “Fabulous Vera”

Your film revolves around a streetcar in which three generations come together. In the streetcar we see Vera, whose daughter wants to immigrate to Cuba. At the same time, she has an uncle who’s a bit of a burden. I wanted to make the middle generation the focal point of my film because they have had to go through so much. As the former Yugoslavia collapsed, they were too old to change their lives fundamentally. It’s much easier for the younger generation to find their way.

The streetcar seems to be a microcosm of society. That was the basic idea. And streetcars move along tracks. Their route is set out in advance. That was the general feeling in an eastern European country like mine: there were always tracks along which one had to move. It seems as if there is no other choice, and yet there comes a “switch-point.” This is what my film is about. There is always a decision to be made, even if there are only two possibilities.

Is it noticeable that the film “Lost and Found” was made by directors from six different eastern European countries? Of course, the film would have had a different look and feel if we had all come from the same country. But what was so stimulating and interesting for me was precisely the knowledge that a few fantastic connections revealed that things are very much the same in our respective countries. It is absolutely unbelievable that some of the countries involved in the project are neighbors and that we knew nothing about one another until now. Ultimately, this is a problem of film policy: we are watching the same American films. And yet we know next to nothing about one another’s work.

Are there common features evident in the visual language used in the films?



Cristian Mungiu, Romania, “Turkey Girl”

A turkey is the star of some unforgettable scenes in your film. How did you manage to shoot such scenes? It was one of the greatest challenges of the film, because there were no suitable animal trainers in Bucharest. Eventually, I discovered someone in Romania. At first, I wanted three turkeys, just in case, but that didn’t work because the turkeys didn’t get on. So we had to risk working with just one turkey. Luckily, it turned out to be a very loyal and good actor.

Was it in the script that the turkey doesn’t do any of the tricks the girl tries to teach him? Yes. The relationship between the girl and the turkey was not to depend upon a specific visible result. She loves the turkey because it is her friend. The turkey doesn’t have to do anything special. We’re always projecting good qualities onto friends which we want to see them as having.

What was it like to work with your colleagues on the joint project “Lost and Found”? We discovered that although we come from different countries, we share the same fundamental ideas about cinematography, cooperation, and artistic freedom. It was really interesting to see how many things we had in common, and, by the way, those things we regarded as typical

for our own country. This wasn’t so obvious in the scripts, but it really comes out in the films. If you don’t speak the language, you can’t tell if the Bulgarian film was shot in Bulgaria or Romania. The languages are different, but the habits and customs are fairly similar.

How do you manage to survive as a director in Romania?

You can’t survive solely from cinema films. Many directors work for television as well. I’m active mainly in advertising. Three members of my team do advertising work to make ends meet and make films because it is their passion. In Romania you can only get funding for film projects by submitting a script to the annual competition run by the National Center of Cinematography, and they decide if the film is worth funding. If you don’t succeed, you have to wait another year.



Kornél Mundruczó, Hungary, “Shortlasting Silence”

The style and content of your film are somber and morbid. How did you create this atmosphere?

While we were developing the story, we began to give the figures a past that does not feature in the film. And this past is the secret of the film: the love between a brother and sister. He leaves, she tries to commit suicide. One day their mother dies. This is the point where the film takes up the story. For me, the ambiguities are of great interest: something has gone astray in the past, in Hungary’s history, the “mother” dies, and we begin to talk about this situation....

This second level is realized through some wonderful images. It all begins with the protagonist leaving his office in Budapest, driving off in his car, and then arriving at a fairytale-like forest.

Exactly. It conveys an impression of the unreal. The family home in the forest holds no

force whatsoever, and that’s what I was aiming for as I imagined and planned the scenery. You only get a feeling of reality in the scenes taking place in the city. Then we leave reality. I love stylizations. That comes from my background in theater and it’s probably in my blood. I don’t like films that are absolutely realistic, for such realism is simply not true.

Music, lighting, and camera work turn the film into a thriller in places.

We didn’t conceive it as a horror film. The figures do nothing; they just talk with one another. But another story is being played out between them. We employed the music and the camera work to convey the ambiguity. Seething below the surface, there are lots of problems between the figures, but they practically do nothing at all, just eat and talk. And for precisely this reason I wanted to work with long takes, using almost exclusively a steady-cam and this orange light. Only the first part is very bright, with white sets.

How long did the shoot take?

Four days. Three in the country and one in Budapest. I work relatively quickly. The team is important: I always work with the same people, people who really want to make this kind of film, and who aren’t sending SMS messages during the shoot.

Oliver Baumgarten, editor-in-chief of the film magazine “SCHNITT,” asked the questions.



going public “ALTE ARTE”

Moldova has a population of 4.2 million, 22 private television channels, and a single public station, TV Moldova, which broadcasts six hours of programs daily. With an annual average per capita income of 450 euros, fixed bread prices, and a generally unstable infrastructure, there was no place for contemporary art. Things are different today: as of January 29, 2005, the art and culture magazine “ALTE ARTE,” developed independently by artists, goes on air fortnightly on TV Moldova. The artist and “ALTE ARTE” reporter Igor Scerbina tell about the ideals and the visions, the difficulties encountered in everyday production, and the first public reaction.

The magical light

Observing our artistic home, the “alma mater” of our contemporary art, with a stern gaze, we recognized the necessity that we finally take the stage. This necessity had, in fact, ripened a long time ago – one had seen enough of others. We have even achieved a few things already, but have hardly ever shown ourselves, or only from a distance...and abracadabra, a few individuals came up with an idea: use a potent “magical” device to transform the separately observed subject into a concrete figure of modern Moldavian art. Television was the solution to the problem! Here we can show ourselves in all our beauty and tell about our wondrous lives. We can teach whoever uses this device and elevate ourselves above the earthly vale of tears, fly up to the clouds, and glide there like birds and planes. Television in general and every television set

in particular correspond to the classification of a “magical” device when the instructions are observed. On a cold winter evening, our dear compatriots let their dwellings shine in the bluish magical light of the television set and for a moment they are all equal – old man Ion in his lopsided mud hut on the outskirts of Telenesht and farm-owner Domnul from Anenii Noi. And all this only because they absolutely want to see what we, the artists, are going to show them. We show them who we are, our imperishable works, and we are the bearers of ideas about modern art and every form of postmodernism. Stop! As our Moldavian custom would have it, now is the right time for a little drink. In this case, too, we view the carafe of Moldavian wine as a vessel with the magical content bringing our artistic nature to the fore. Our compatriots



“Violente imaginii,” ALTE ARTE, program broadcast on 2. 26. 2005

Authors: Dorina Bohantov, Tatiana Fiodorova; camera: Vadim Hinciu; montage: Denis Bartenev

drink. The cold cabernet penetrates them like a December snowstorm, but then it warms them instantly like a woolen sock. To the television set, quick! There we are again – “artists from Moldova.” After viewing our television program, the subject under observation here begins, more or less, to dispute that reality exists, or it ceases to distinguish dream from reality. If this subject were to become a regular viewer, he/she would fall back into childhood, finally and definitively. Such miracles do happen....

For every artist a video camera

In any case, our fantasies have become reality. For the first time in Moldova there is a televi-

sion program about modern art. Fluctuations abound between enthusiasm and disappointment, but this did not worry stubborn artists like us (we who have attacked the Moldavian television ether so doggedly). As was to be expected, the country was not yet ready to adopt its heroes. It had all fallen into place too quickly. The television bureaucrats were seething with rage inwardly, but didn't show it outwardly: they took a deep breath and puffed out their cheeks. After all, we had lived in a “television-free” country before!

A phenomenon became visible: after many a post-communist year, artifacts of video art now started to emerge from the “video vacuum.” Experiments conducted by enthusiasts who had picked up the information flow from the West were the precursors to this revelation. Over the last few years, noteworthy examples of video art and “independent cinema” have been amassed in the piggybank of national modern art. These works served as a “moral” foundation for realizing the television project “ALTE ARTE.” Pavel Braila emerged as an outstanding video artist. He forged a professional standard and, consequently, his work and his country became the topic of conversation internationally. And what's more, it was Pavel Braila who was at the right place at the right time and came up with the methods to realize our television project on modern art. “ALTE ARTE,” a project of the Chisinau Center for Contemporary Art, got going thanks to the financial, moral, and professional support provided by “relations,” the ifa Institute, and the Soros Foundation, Moldova. A series of workshops were held especially for us (run by Martin Fritz, Razvan Georgescu, Hans Zimmermann, Thorsten Essig, Martin Pieper, Gregor A. Heussen, Viktor Misiano, the Blue Noses Group, and Anna Tretter). Little by little, the world of television opened up. We were really able to slip into the television set like a jinni and do devil knows what in it! And basically that is exactly what we did. The everyday production routine varied greatly. Sometimes a few of us succumbed to our lethargy, while others were generating dozens of ideas, and a third group simply had no idea what we were supposed to be doing. It was in this phase that Lilia



“Chisinau – oras calator,” ALTE ARTE, program broadcast on 1. 29. 2005. Author: Ksenia Gazibar; camera: Veaceslav Cebotari; montage: Denis Bartenev



"Arta contemporana in Moldova," ALTE ARTE, program broadcast on 1. 29. 2005. Author: Igor Scerbina; camera: Vadim Hincu; montage: Denis Bartenev

Dragneva, the director of the Chisinau Center for Contemporary Art, came to our aid. Energetic and always firm in her principles, she was objectively and genuinely interested in seeing our project succeed. Eventually, we managed to get a couple of programs ready to broadcast. Artists spoke about themselves, about their work, about the art of their friends. The contributions were imposing, dynamic, compact. We are devoting our time and effort to an honorable cause – we're bringing art to the masses. Just how many hurdles have we encountered, are encountering, will encounter on our way? Once we were in a taxi bringing an urgently needed cassette to the studio when the steering wheel broke off. Once a dump truck crashed into the transformer, causing a blackout – and, as you know, it is simply impossible to discuss shoots in the dark. Once the television director was off sick and nobody turned up for work.... Finally we came up with the following idea: give every artist a video camera and let them tell something about themselves in their own words! It seemed only logical that artists who use the language and visuals of modern art should report on modern art.

Joy for the people

I nodded off at the word "art" and had the following vision: "ALTE ARTE" went on air on Moldavian television and I couldn't resist finding out the opinion of my compatriots. On the evening after the first program, I dropped by a wine tavern in the center of Chisinau so that I could down a glass of schnapps. As usual, the tavern was filled to the rafters. I discovered a friend amongst the guests, an artist. I sat down next to him. "Scerbina, were you on television last night? Are you a television announcer now? What did you tell everyone about us? How has it all run so smoothly that we've suddenly all become postmodernists?" began my friend. He continued, "Listen, I don't think that an artist should look into the whole nonsense on television. And I can't stand journalists anyway. I don't know, but it seems to me that the normal person couldn't care less about modern art;

they don't understand it! And by the way, I liked that report on the museum in Bucharest. That was really lively. What, artists did that one as well? Really? Women artists? Listen, that wasn't bad, not too bad at all...." The next morning an old friend called me up and suggested we drive out to the country. It turned out that he had also seen our program and so he told me what he thought of it. "Let me put it this way: the whole endeavor is worthwhile. As we all know, Moldavian television is pure lunacy. Besides, there is nothing at the national station you could work with. Even I know that everything there was stolen ten years ago. That makes your program a vitamin injection for them. Although, on the other hand, why the hell are you showing it all on a Moldavian channel? There's not a soul who watches that channel, except perhaps in the country, where they can't receive any other signals. In urban areas we see the world through cable television. On the other hand: I had terrific fun watching. Imagine all those people who would be otherwise watching TRM* and suddenly they come across your program! Some old grandma Manja in Gloden. First, Pascha (Pavel Braila) runs around like crazy, and then Marik (Mark Verlan), our most famous artist, drivels on about the correct way to ladle his borsch! Just watch out that the masses don't get blown away! And who'd harvest the grapes then? Marik?" Over a meal my friend told his parents that I was now "appearing on television." They looked at me full of admiration, clicked their tongues, and the father filled up our glasses with wine, saying, "We think that's fantastic." They hadn't seen the program. After the meal we talked about the farm and the imminent cold, and then bitched about the government. I'd already guessed that no one in this village had seen our program, but then they remembered that a village intellectual lived close-by, once the accountant for the kolkhoz [a collective farm]. He might have been watching television that night. We called him up to come and join us. "I didn't understand much to be honest. It was all about avant-garde art, wasn't it? It's probably a good thing that we have this kind of art in Moldova, but some pretty weird scenes were shown.

Of course, you can see all manner of strange things on television today.... My children liked it though. They even said that they'd never seen such things before and had no idea that this kind of thing was possible in our country." After he'd taken another sip, our guest ended his little speech. "You know, I think that we Moldavians are a kindly people, we only want the best for everyone, and they will like it. And anyway, every kind of art is a good thing and brings joy to the people...."

The emptiness and me

It was a sweet dream, radiant with an astounding real feel. Everything seemed so believable, and only one small detail was spoiling it all – the absolute certainty (and corresponding to the irrefutable truth) that we were yet to go on air. I remembered distinctly how someone had said that we wouldn't go on air before January, and that the tiny marker on the calendar was set on a date at the end of December.... I'd only nodded off at the word "art".... It remains to be seen whether... January began. The station director was replaced again (though we'd lost count, it was probably the fourth). Elections were looming – we weren't allowed to come up with anything that even remotely hinted at political bias of some "for" or "against": no red, no orange, or no tricolor! Nothing bilingual! Not even a video work showing Mongolians singing Russian songs about apple blossoms and the "brown damsel from Moldova" were accepted. The reportage on the opening of the Bucharest Museum for Modern Art in the former Ceausescu Palace had to be postponed as well. The reportage on the Siberian group "The Blue Noses" accidentally filmed a disrobed woman in the background, and although the Russian artists greeted the viewers in Romanian, a voice resonating with decision-making power remarked: "They should go back to Siberia to drink their vodka".... The program was cut again and again, and it seemed as if everything would continue like this forever....

January 29, Saturday, 10:10 pm!
The day has finally come!
Our program "ALTE ARTE" is being broadcast, with the logo of Moldova Channel 1!
THE WHOLE COUNTRY is watching us!

The next day I took a tape recorder onto the streets and hunted down viewers' impressions to compare my December dream with reality.... I talked to real people, to those who'd switched to Moldova 1 at 10:10 pm and stayed for half an hour.

What the viewers had to say

>> My name is Vera Munteanu, I'm 40 years old and a historian. I never expected that the Moldavian national station would ever be capable of broadcasting such a courageous and stunningly excellent program.

>> I live in the south, in the village of Jargara. I didn't think that the program was anything special.... I mean, it's not as if I didn't think that it was impressive, I just didn't understand it. But apart from that, I really liked the bit about the piano. I'll remember that part.

>> I'm from Tiraspol. The program opened up a new world for many of us. I've always been interested in what Moldavian artists are doing.

>> I'm from Chisinau, a doctor and 67 years old. I didn't understand a thing.... What kind of art is that? Where's the art in what was shown? And what was up with the guy who was running around like crazy and tearing up sheets?

>> I'm a library director and 50 years old. That's supposed to be modern art? I had expected something completely different, something unusual, something crazy!

>> My name is Kirill. I'm 18 and live in Chisinau. My set's got really poor reception. The images were cool, entertaining, I was glued to the screen, but the sound... doesn't matter, the program took an independent line and it's very good.

>> I'm a pensioner. I had a feeling that interesting things were being shown, but we don't understand them. How can we know what modern art is about?

>> My name is Viktor and I'm an artist. I think that the program succeeded in capturing the spirit of contemporary art. It is REALLY different from what's usually dished up. Everybody's entitled to their own opinion, but that the program is DIFFERENT is UNDENIABLE.

*TRM stands for Teleradiokompanija Moldavija, Moldovan Television and Radio.

Opinions-in-Progress. Travel Notes from Bosnia

by Florian Malzacher

10. 19. 04

>>> Flight from Frankfurt to Sarajevo. Somewhat unprepared. Yesterday evening, shortly before the bookstore closed, I managed to buy all the books they had on Kosovo and Bosnia. Packed during the night: backpack or suitcase? Well, let's see, it's a press trip, organized by "relations" together with the Federal Agency for Civic Education, with around twenty more or less clueless journalists, and not an adventure trip. So a suitcase. But I'll take a flashlight. Maybe a compass could prove practical?

>>> Arrival in Sarajevo. Emblazoned across an old bus in front of the airport: Donated by Germany. First glimpses out the window during the journey to the hotel: just like one imagined. The walls of prefabricated residential buildings pocked with bullet holes, one after the other. But first views of a city are often deceptive. Along the roadside stand giant mosques between buildings awaiting demolition. Financed by money from Saudi Arabia apparently. Status symbols, propaganda? Missionary fervor? There are also brand-new churches - who has paid for them? In the meantime, the first war stories, based on anecdotes, are circulating through the bus. Here is where the war began. There exploded this and that. Here was where Karadžić had his headquarters. What did Germany look like ten years after the war?

>>> First introduction to the situation of the country, of which we have yet to see anything except for the odd glimpses from the bus and this hotel conference room. Jakob Finčič, leader of the Jewish community, is a chatty, charming elderly gentleman dressed in a gray suit, one of the most influential figures in the city. His reading of the situation, his brief survey of the complex twists and turns of centuries of history

are suspiciously plausible. Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, Tito (wait a minute, did he really skip the German occupation?), the collapse of Yugoslavia that began with Tito's death in 1980. "The Berlin Wall fell on the heads of Bosnians." Dayton, war criminals, the EU He touches on all of the themes of the coming days.

>>> Leafing through the documents given to us. In 1991, Sarajevo had a population of 527,049. In 2003, the number is approximately 350,000. But the decrease alone doesn't tell the full story. Apparently, over 60 per cent of youths would leave the country if they had the chance.

>>> We finally leave the hotel and head for the city center. It's dark. At least buildings pocked with bullet holes are not all we see. Reception in the National Gallery. Strolling through the empty rooms at night, I'm overcome with a strange feeling: the art that hangs here lacks an independent profile, it's imitative, right through the centuries. The collection's curator doesn't try to talk her way around the observation: yes, she says, it's generally thought that everything was painted 20, 30 years too late. She explains this as a result of the historical situation, of the distance and closeness to Europe, of the convergence of European and Islamic culture. And she points out her paradoxical task - to curate the Bosnian National Gallery (in a country where nobody knows what the Bosnian nation is culturally).

>>> The bus travels back to the hotel. A group of five decides that they cannot simply go to bed without at least having walked through the streets of Sarajevo. Local beers in bars strikingly Western in style and furnishings. First attempts at reviewing the situation. Opinions-in-progress.

10. 20. 04

>>> We visit Ambassador Werner Wnendt, the German Senior Deputy to the UNO's High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. An overheated conference room in the style of a military briefing under the UNO flag. Wnendt characterizes his work in the main as a kind of motivational training: a change in mentality is needed, especially in the administrative bodies. Otherwise, the political situation is stable; at any rate, reconciliation cannot be set as a precondition for cooperation. Reconciliation takes time, but cooperation has to begin immediately.

>>> It is imperative that the Serbs finally cooperate with the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Karadžić must be arrested (a sentence we will hear countless times in a variety of forms during the trip). Despite everything: "This is the most successful peace mission the international community has ever undertaken."

>>> Outside the sun is shining and we are facing the blasted concrete skeleton of a former government high-rise building. Another one of those symbols. Should I photograph it? Just how self-evidently one takes every deserted, destroyed or dilapidated building here as *pars pro toto*,* or as for whatever, and photographs it to document, to assert, to prove something. But

what? What do the signs mean? What did Germany look like in 1954?

>>> Bus tour with explanations of the shifts in the war's frontline. I can say that I've been there. Even when there's nothing more to see. Jovan Divjak, "the General," as our guides reverently call him, is standing ready for us in front of the bus. We'd stolen away for a half-hour lunch break, *čevapčići* in the old town - at once the city is charming and has a sympathetic feel. The General does not like to wait, and our guides have repeatedly requested that we be punctual. Indeed, Jovan Divjak is a hero adored in Sarajevo: a high-ranking Serb officer in the Yugoslav People's Army, he deserted to the Bosnian Army during the siege of Sarajevo and defended the city as deputy commander. In the Serbian part of Bosnia he is regarded as a traitor. He looks friendly, standing upright in a trench coat.

>>> The next official appointment. Under the photo of the Federal President in the newly built German embassy the official repeatedly asks why Karadžić has yet to be arrested. It's interesting how all international representatives speak about the incumbent Bosnian politicians with barely concealed contempt. Disappointed parents.



10. 21. 04

>>> Finally some peace and quiet. Walked from the hotel to the old town. Unusually warm and sunny for this time of year. Along snipers' alley, made famous through the television coverage of the war, from where the Serb snipers nailed many of their victims. Past the Holiday Inn, where the international journalists were holed up. And finally past the market, where in 1995 the shell hit which finally triggered a NATO response. The muezzin sings; it sounds peaceful, and why shouldn't it be? Just like everything else here, so conspicuously calm and peaceful (still the tourist searching for bullet holes and stories drenched with the fate of war). There's a lot of begging and selling of cheap things. The streets are full of people strolling around, on a weekday, during the day. Not surprising given that hardly anyone has a job. Lots of Western bars and boutiques. An almost offensive need for normality, to be out on the street, to show oneself. Ignoring the mosques for a moment, one would hardly notice that the city is mostly Muslim – given our limited sense of what is Islamic. Encircled by the mountains, always in sight, even from here in the old town, sitting in a café. The fountain on the square, a wooden construction with a small cupola that strikes me as being decidedly Ottoman in style, is lit up at night like a Christmas tree, fully decked out with fairy lights. And then it occurs to me: it's Ramadan. The muezzin sings on.

>>> In the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA): Dunja Blažević, the center's director, speaks about the project, "De/construction of Monument," being realized in cooperation with "relations." The project reveals the interweaving of past and present in a city in which from almost every corner you can see the hill where just a few years ago snipers and mortars were encamped. Here, the question of monuments has little in common with our questions about art in public space. The pedestals of the monuments in the parks and on the squares were bare after the war. A grotesque sight, marble or granite steles with two, four rusty bolts or holes, perhaps underneath remained the name of a writer. Kurt & Plasto, two of the city's young artists, placed busts of themselves on the empty monuments in 2001 and, in this way, forced a discussion about where the old ones actually were. At some time it must have appeared to the authorities that it was less complicated to bring back the busts without comment than engage in public discussion – one day they were suddenly there again. Art rarely enjoys such tangible success, but the curator Dunja Blažević and the artists associ-

ated with the SCCA are determined to intervene directly in the discourses on politics and history.

>>> In the east, below the old town, stands the National Library. Or what's left of it. Images of it in flames went around the world in the summer of 1992. It is believed that the library was intentionally selected as a shelling target at the beginning of the siege because it was the National Library of a nation that was to cease to exist (and because the starving of the population was not to be limited to just cutting off food supplies). Perhaps also because it – as the architect and former mayor of Belgrade, Bogdan Bogdanović, suspected early on – was a war of the country against the city. The rural against the urban. Almost twenty years before, Radovan Karadžić had written a poem about his wish to destroy the cities and to kill "the bastards" who lived there. And quite literally, the inhabitants of the cities, and very specifically Sarajevo, were indeed "mongrels": so-called mixed marriages were the rule, not the exception. A tradition of living together. Intermingled or at least next to one another, Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs. They lived this out, and they will continue to do so.

>>> We visit the organizers of the Sarajevo Film Festival, one of most remarkable and famous projects from the time of the siege, a success story right up to today. "It may seem somewhat heroic now, but it was important that we continued to be a normal cosmopolitan city. It was the same if you were risking your life to find some bread, fetch water, or see a film." The cost of admission to a film during the siege: a cigarette.

>>> Films by Jasmila Žbanić, a young documentary filmmaker. For her, the war is not over yet, quite obviously: "I still have the feeling that I have to talk about it. I still can't talk about anything else." Has she ever considered making a film about the perpetrators? "I have to be able to love my characters in some way. At the moment I'm not ready to love those people." She insists (finally, some clear words) that not everyone bears the same measure of responsibility for what happened. For an elderly journalist colleague this general statement is not enough: what is her personal background? Jasmila Žbanić had just shot a documentary about a girl who lost an arm during artillery fire. A French photographer snapped three full rolls of film of the girl lying in the puddle of her own blood. Without helping her. His photo won a World Press Award.

10. 23. 04

>>> Journey to Mostar, for the first time a view of the land beyond Sarajevo. Great weather, narrow crevasses and gorges, incredibly beautiful, while I'm reading about unimaginably sadistic war crimes. It just doesn't come together. There is always a missing link. The massacre in Srebrenica. Before the eyes of the public. Before the eyes of the UN troops. It's all well-known. It's all well-known. What does the cultural theorist Boris Buden say? "The hard facts of the war crimes are not what is really puzzling ... rather the political conditions which made these crimes possible." Correct. But such crimes are still and will continue to be incomprehensibly puzzling, no matter where they are committed. Presumably because the answer goes much closer to the bone than we want to realize.

>>> Mostar's center has been renovated as a tourist old town, all very pretty, like a Bosnian Heidelberg. Hundreds of thousands of tourists are visiting the city again apparently. How come? From the rebuilt bridge that connects east and west, a young man dives into the deep waters for money. You can buy artillery shells revamped into vases and pens made of cartridges as souvenirs. A colleague is wearing a t-shirt she bought in Sarajevo. Across her chest in large letters: Don't panic, I'm Islamic. As we come across the first giant, completely shattered building, located on the former frontline. Someone murmurs appreciatively: now that's something. (I just took a picture.)

>>> In the framework of "De/construction of Monument" a discussion is taking place on

erecting a Bruce Lee monument. For Nino Raspudić, the speaker of the artist initiative "Urban Movement," Mostar, who, it must be said, is ironic in a good postmodernist manner by being seriously free of irony. Bruce Lee stands for all that is good in the world, the embodiment of what everybody can identify with, irrespective of religion or nationality. Bruce Lee as an empty space with positive energy, as a new beginning. And that Lee is quite unambiguously a man? The next step Raspudić indicates is even more utopian: the monument is to stand merely in a corner of the centrally located square, not in the middle. This would allow lots of space for several other monuments, viewpoints, histories. And everyone could claim what they want – except sole authority.

>>> At dinner I chat with a colleague who worked as a ZDF correspondent in Sarajevo during the siege. Questions about morality, about intervening and observing, about what to show and what not. The strange feeling of a state of emergency when he simply flew out of the horror and landed in Vienna caught up in pre-Christmas mood. At the same time as he tells me this, an evening in a stylish restaurant with a fantastic view over an illuminated Sarajevo, a handful of Bosnian musicians are making a considerable racket. They're playing everything. Serbian folksongs as well. Tomorrow we're heading for Kosovo.

*Florian Malzacher is a freelance journalist living in Frankfurt/Main.

* Part (taken) for the whole



“relations”

A project initiated by the German Federal Cultural Foundation

Operating within the framework of the Federal Cultural Foundation's "Central and Eastern Europe program," "relations" develops art and culture projects in collaboration with curators, social researchers, and artists from eastern European countries and Germany.

In terms of content, the goal is to formulate overarching transnational questions and lines of inquiry out of the respective local contexts which connect art, everyday life, social research, politics, and history. These questions and lines of inquiry strive to counter nationalist attitudes and stances with a differentiated perspective, create and foster dialogue, and focus on the processes of social transition. Through their critical engagement with the dominant mechanisms of fixing identity, visions of the future, constructs of historical memory, and how the past is come to terms with, these conceptual and working approaches address an international public as well.

"relations" wants to be able to respond to local contexts flexibly and individually, and has therefore refrained from setting any rigid prescriptions. Exhibitions and publication projects receive the same support as archival projects or fellowship programs for artists and theorists. "relations" supports its partners in establishing legally secure, stable organizational structures and facilitates the exchange of ideas, initiatives, and information through an extensive website and regular meetings of the involved participants.

At the same time, "relations" makes the overall project in its diverse facets accessible to the German and international public through colloquia, publications, and targeted public relations work. In this way, "relations" is performing pioneer work in establishing long-term and sustainable transnational collaborations

"Thematic Landscapes in 7 Cities of Eastern Europe" (working title)

The publication project of "relations" follows the projects in Chisinau, Ljubljana, Prishtina, Sarajevo, Sofia, Warsaw, and Zagreb. The book will provide initial insights into the respective social situations. The key questions to be posed include: why are discussions being initiated today in these places on the current politics of remembrance? What are the rapid changes to the cityscape and its urban signs? And what is the refusal of a clearly-defined national identity? What kinds of argumentation are being employed? What exactly are these initiatives trying to achieve? And what "kind" of public is being reached? Why are these debates being started and carried forward mainly by artists and intellectuals?

Team Katrin Klingan, Ines Kappert with Marius Babias, Mathias Greffrath, Georg Schöllhammer, in cooperation with the individual project teams

"Lost and Found" – a film project

A co-production of ICON FILM and "relations"

Six filmmakers from six countries tell six stories about new forms of self-understanding in one film. The starting point of the project was the thesis that a sense of a common bond, based on the idea of "generation" and thereby transgressing national boundaries, is opening up new perspectives on traditions, history, and experience. The young directors were invited to each make a short film dealing with the theme of "generation." The project was developed and discussed in a series of five workshops. "Lost and Found" premiered as the opening contribution to the International Forum for New Cinema at this year's Berlin Film Festival.

A film by Stefan Arsenijević (Serbia-Montenegro), Nadejda Koseva (Bulgaria), Mait Laas (Estonia), Kornél Mundruczó (Hungary), Cristian Mungiu (Romania), Jasmila Žbanić (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

Format Cinema film, 90 minutes, 55 mm, Dolby Digital
Artistic direction Nikolaj Nikitin

Producer ICON FILM (Herbert Schwing, Christine Kiauk), www.icon-film.de

Initiator and co-producer "relations" – a project initiated by the Federal Cultural Foundation

In co-production with ART FEST (Stefan Kitanov, Bulgaria), Art & Popcorns (Miroslav Mogorović, Serbia-Montenegro), Deblokada (Damir Ibrahimović, Bosnia-Herzegovina), MOBRA Films (Hanno Hoefler, Romania), Nukufilm (Arvo Nuut, Estonia), proton + cinema (Viktória Petrányi, Hungary)

Advisory board Gabriele Brunnenmeyer (artistic advisor to MOONSTONE and Connecting Cottbus, Berlin), Didi Danquart (scriptwriter, director and producer, Freiburg), Sibylle Kurz (dramaturge, script consultant, advisor to EAVE and pitch expert, Erbach)

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Visual Seminar, Sofia

A project of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Sofia, in cooperation with the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, Bulgaria

The "Visual Seminar" devotes its attention to the culture of the visual in so-called transformation societies. The changes made to the surfaces of urban space since the introduction of a capitalist economic system, the dominance of new visual codes and its concomitant altered patterns of perception are analyzed – using Sofia as an example – and their political dimension revealed. Art actions in public space and discussion forums offer the broader public strategies for dealing with and deciphering the images.

Formats discussion rounds, Forum "Visual Culture," Resident Fellows Program, Guest Program "Visual Statement," exhibitions, art in public space, publications
Project leadership Iara Boubnova, <http://ica.cult.bg>

Responsible for the fellowship program Ass. Prof. Alexander Kiossev, Ph.D., www.cas.bg

Team Maria Vassileva, Iskra Zaharieva

Advisory board Luchezar Boyadjiev (artist, Sofia), Prof. Dr. Ivaylo Dichev (cultural anthropologist, Sofia), Ass. Prof. Irina Genova, Ph. D. (art historian, Sofia), Boyan Manchev, Ph. D. (literature theorist, Sofia), Ass. Prof. Miglena Nikolchina, Ph. D. (philosopher, Sofia), Diana Popova (art critic, Sofia), Kiril Prashkov (artist, Sofia), Nedko Solakov (artist, Sofia), Orlin Spassov, Ph. D. (expert in print and visual media, Sofia)

Fellows Luchezar Boyadjiev, Milla Mineva, X-TENDO, Krassimir Terziev, Boris Missirkov/ Georgi Bogdanov, Georgi Gospodinov, Svetla Kazalarska, Ivan Moudov, Yavor Gardev

Guests/ artists Gelatin, Olaf Nicolai, Sean Snyder, Birgit Brenner, Christine de la Garenne, Ulrike Kuschel, Via Lewandovsky

WILD CAPITAL/WILDES KAPITAL, Dresden/Sofia

A project of the Kunsthaus Dresden in cooperation with the "Visual Seminar" project, Sofia

Capitalism has emerged victorious. But how do things stand with capitalism in Dresden in comparison to Sofia? In Germany civilized and in Bulgaria uncontrollable? Christiane Mennicke (curator and director of the Kunsthaus Dresden) and the "Visual Seminar" will explore the images and manifestations of capitalism in both cities through workshops and an exhibition showing works by invited artists. The results and the art projects themselves will be presented in Dresden in December 2005.

Formats workshop, presentation of results, installations in public space, exhibition

Project leadership/curator Christiane Mennicke, curator and director of the Kunsthaus Dresden, www.kunsthausdresden.de

Re:form, Poland

A project of the Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

"Re:form" undertakes the attempt to re-read Polish (art) history from the perspective of the present. This process of re-signification and re-contextualization also involves the development of new models for presenting art publicly, which are aiming to find international recognition and do justice to the changed economic and social conditions now prevailing in Poland. The project digitalizes private artist archives from the 1950s onwards, curates exhibitions held during the International Film Festival "Era New Horizons" in Cieszyn, fosters and supports art projects in public spaces, and publishes artist monographs.

Formats digitalized artist and art archives, the "Local Modernism" research project, international art exhibitions, art in public space, cooperation with the gallery RASTER, fellowship program, publications

Project leadership Joanna Mytkowska, Andrzej Przywara, www.fg.com.pl

Archive project leadership Piotr Rypson, www.baza.art.pl

Team Joanna Diem

Fellows Cezary Bodzianowski; Michał Budny, Sebastian Cichoński; Agata Jakubowska; Wojtek Kucharczyk; Robert Kuśmirowski; Dorota Monkiewicz; Artur Żmijewski; Jakub Ziółkowski; Magdalena Ziółkowska

PartnerInnen Galeria RASTER, Warsaw; Filmfestival Era New Horizons, Cieszyn

Re:form/Europe, Bremen/Warsaw

A project of the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, and the Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw, in cooperation with the Eastern Europe Research Center, Bremen; International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana; Museo Serralves, Porto; Centre national eprimeur, cneai, Chatou; Artpool Research Center, Budapest

"Re:form/Europe" (working title) serves the networking of seven eastern and western European archives and collections of artist publications and aims at establishing a long-term cooperation focused on concrete aspects of archival work. Beyond this, the indexing and publication of holdings is to be undertaken, with special attention given to internet access. An international conference devoted to archives and artist publication is planned for summer 2005. The results will be presented in a subsequent publication

Formats active networking of participating archives and collections, setting up of a joint website on the project, formulation of standards for a harmonized registration of archive holdings, further development of the online archive "Baza Sztuki – Art Base on the Net," an international conference on the theme of archives and artist publications, subsequent publication of the conference results, an exhibition, securing long-term collaboration
Project leadership Anne Thurmman-Jajes, director of the study center for artist publications/ASPC at the Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, www.nmwb.de; Piotr Rypson, director of the archive project "Baza Sztuki – Art Base on the Net," Warsaw, www.baza.art.pl

Team Cordelia Marten

Cooperation partners Eastern European Research Center, Bremen; International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana; Museo Serralves, Porto; Centre national de l'estampe et de l'art imprimé, cneai, Chatou; Artpool Art Research Center, Budapest

East Art Map. A (Re-)construction of the History of Contemporary Art in Eastern Europe

A project by IRWIN (Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Borut Vogelnik), Ljubljana

The art project “East Art Map” is seeking to plot and make accessible previously unknown areas of postwar art in eastern Europe. The goal is to create an “orientation aid” that plots connections extending beyond national borders and enables comparative analysis. After “EAM I” invited curators, critics, and artists to present important art projects from their respective countries, since November 2004, “EAM II,” a map of these artistic activities, is accessible on the internet. The visitors to the site are able to contribute to the map by changing its topography.

Formats interactive website, research, cooperation with universities, exhibition, publication
Project leadership IRWIN: Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Borut Vogelnik
Team Livia Pálfi (copy editor and co-editor of the EAM publication), Inke Arns (head of the EAM website), Marina Gržinić (head of the EAM university network), Darko Pokorn
International jury Ekaterina Bobrinskaia (art historian, Moscow), Ješa Denegri (art historian, Belgrade), Lia Perjovschi (artist, Bucharest), Georg Schöllhammer (editor of the culture magazine “springerin,” Vienna), Christoph Tannert (director of the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin)
Other supporters European Union’s Culture 2000 program and the Slovenian Ministry of Culture
The exhibition will be organized as a co-production with the Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, Hagen; the website is supported by Rendspace Pristop Interactive; the book will be published in cooperation with Afterall Publishing; the first phase of the “East Art Map” was produced by the New Moment Ideas Company
Website www.eastartmap.org

East Art Map – University Network

A project by Marina Gržinić and the Institute for Drama Studies at the University of Leipzig (Günther Heeg, Veronika Darian), in cooperation with the “East Art Map” project, Ljubljana

Under the leadership of Marina Gržinić, Günther Heeg, and Veronika Darian, an international group of academics and young theoreticians from eastern and western Europe are elaborating ideas of exchange and communication for an “East Art Map,” an art map of eastern Europe. The network emerging from this collaborative effort will focus on the cultural, political and social background of artistic praxis and identify the interventional character of theoretical approaches. The reflections and observations of the young theoreticians are to be presented for discussion in October 2005 at an international symposium in Leipzig.

Formats seminars, exchange between the participating university partners, publication of research, symposium
Project leadership and coordination Prof. Dr. Marina Gržinić, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna; Prof. Dr. Günther Heeg, Dr. Veronika Darian, Institute for Drama Studies, University of Leipzig
Participating academics and institutions Dr. Michael Fehr, Karin Schad (Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum, Hagen), Prof. Dr. Werner Fenz (Karl Franzens University, Graz), Prof. Dr. Miško Šuvaković (University of Belgrade), Prof. Dr. Ekaterina Degot (Proarte Institute and European University, St. Petersburg), Prof. Dr. Grzegorz Dziamski (Academy of Fine Arts, Poznań), Beatrice von Bismarck (Academy of Visual Arts, Leipzig)

Missing Identity, Kosovo

A project of the Contemporary Art Institute EXIT in cooperation with the Laboratory for Visual Arts and the Centre for Humanistic Studies Gani Bobi, Prishtina/Peja

“Missing Identity” queries the efforts to establish a uniform national identity and propagates the protection of difference. The project attempts to create an artistic reality of what is experienced as missing in Kosovo: cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity. Through art projects, educational work and the production of the art supplement ARTA for the weekly newspaper JAVA, the project is striving to create an alternative public sphere, actively campaigning for an open society.

Formats seminars (without fees) given by artists for students, workshops, international artist program, exhibitions, publications
Project leadership Sokol Beqiri
Leadership of the art projects Erzen Shkololli
Leadership of the education projects Mehmet Behluli
Team Shkëlzen Maliqi, Valbona Shujaku
Advisory board Ilir Bajri (composer, Prishtina), Wolfgang Klotz (director of the Central and Eastern European Online Library, Frankfurt/Main, www.ceool.com), Astrit Salihi (philosopher, Prishtina), Jeta Xhara (dramaturge, Prishtina), Linda Gusia (sociologist, Prishtina)

Städelschule, Frankfurt/Main, meets Missing Identity, Prishtina

Encounter, Education, Exchange

A project of the Städelschule Frankfurt/Main in cooperation with the “Missing Identity” project, Prishtina/Peja

Nikola Dietrich (Portikus, Frankfurt/Main) and Dirk Fleischmann (Städelschule, Frankfurt/Main) have worked together with the “Missing Identity” team to formulate a program for supporting exchange between young artists of both locations. The program will be phased in over a year. Picking up on the themes addressed in “Missing Identity,” the program will ask to what extent artistic production can reflect the mechanisms employed to form identity, a recurring element of the cooperation. Students from the “Missing Identity” alternative art academy, the Contemporary Art Institute EXIT in Prishtina, and the Frankfurt Städelschule are to come together to develop individual art projects, which will be then realized in Prishtina and Frankfurt. Joint theory workshops will accompany these activities. The project will be presented in the “Missing Identity” gallery EXIT in Peja and in Frankfurt/Main in fall 2005.

Formats artist projects, theory workshops, exhibition tours, excursions, exhibitions, website
Project leadership Nikola Dietrich, Dirk Fleischmann, www.portikus.de, www.staedelschule.de; Mehmet Behluli
Team Stefan Unterburger, Valbona Shujaku

De/construction of Monument, Bosnia-Herzegovina

A project of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art

After the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, new national elites have begun to rewrite the history of their countries. Memories are being extinguished, places renamed, books altered, and at the same time new hymns, icons, and symbols established. Particularly the erection and dismantling of monuments is proof of a newly gained empowerment over history. “De/construction of Monument” counters this manipulation with deconstruction. Artistic actions in public space, public discussions, workshops, and diverse publications all pursue the goal of defusing the ideology implanted into historical understanding and of changing the currently existing cultural model.

Formats artistic interventions within public spaces in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar; discussion forums, artist presentations, exhibitions, art and media productions, publications
Project leadership Dunja Blažević, www.scca.ba
Team Amra Bakšić Čamo, Larisa Hasanbegović, Sanela Bojadžić, Enes Huseinčehajić
Advisory board Marina Gržinić (artist, curator and art historian, Ljubljana), Jakob Finci (president of the Interrelations Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo), Želimir Košević (director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb), Shkëlzen Maliqi (philosopher and director of the Center for Humanistic Studies Gani Bobi, Prishtina), Borka Pavičević (director of the Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade)
Partners Urban Movement, Mostar; Center for Informative Decontamination, Banja Luka; The Children’s Movement for Creative Education, New York
Other supporters Open Society Fund Bosnia-Herzegovina

displaced, Berlin

A project of the Neuer Berliner Kunstverein in cooperation with the project “De/construction of Monument,” Bosnia-Herzegovina

The “De/construction of Monument” team is working together with the NBK (Neuer Berliner Kunstverein) in Germany. Inspired by “De/construction of Monument,” Kathrin Becker (curator, NBK) has developed the project “displaced” for Berlin.

“displaced” translates the themes addressed in “De/construction of Monument” into the local German context and queries how culture is being exploited ideologically in the young capital of the reunited Germany. International artists have been asked to investigate the dialectic between collective remembrance and forgetting in its diverse expressions in public space and to bring it to the attention of a German audience through artistic “interventions.” The art projects will be realized in a ten-day period in Berlin in the fall of 2005.

Formats artist projects in public space in Berlin, symposium
Project leadership/curator Kathrin Becker, www.nbk.org
Team Maryam Nuschin Mameghanian-Prenzlau

Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000, Zagreb

A project of the Center for Drama Art (CDU), the Multimedia Institute (mi2), the Platforma 9,81 and What, How and for Whom (WHW), Croatia

“Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000” is seeking to strengthen collaboration between independent initiatives who understand cultural engagement as social action and social activities as critical culture. In the face of increasing privatization, centralization, and the logic of official representation in the area of culture, the joint platform presents new working forms and collective strategies of cultural production with the aim of enhancing the presence of independent Croatian culture.

Formats political platform, lectures, debates, symposia, interdisciplinary cooperation, performances, international curatorial collaboration, website, publications
Project leadership Damir Blažević (Platforma 9,81); Tomislav Medak (mi2); Goran Sergej Pristaš (CDU), Sabina Sabolović (WHW); Boris Bakal (Bacaci sjenki), Vesna Vuković (BLOK); Olga Majcen (Kontejner); Aleksandar Batista Ilić (Community Art)
Team Ivana Ivković (project coordinator); Platforma 9,81: Dinko Peračić, Marko Sančanin, Ana Šilović, Miranda Veljačić, Josipa Krizanović; mi2: Željko Blaće, Teodor Celakoski, Ružica Gajić-Guljašević, Petar Milat, Nenad Romić, Emina Višnić; CDU: Una Bauer, Ivana Ivković, Goran Sergej Pristaš; WHW: Ivet Čurlin, Ana Dević, Nataša Ilić, Sabina Sabolović; BLOK: Dea Vidović, Sonja Borić, Miroslav Jerković; Bacaci sjenki: Katarina Pejović, Sonja Leboš, Mirko Bogosavac; Community Art: Ivana Keser, Karmen Ratković, Tanja Vrlić; Kontejner: Olga Majcen, Sunčica Ostoić
Other partners “Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000” is being conducted within the framework of “relations” in cooperation with “Kontakt,” the Arts and Civil Society Program of Erste Bank Group in Central Europe
Other supporters City of Zagreb; Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia
Website www.culturalkapital.org

ALTE ARTE, Moldova

A project of the Center for Contemporary Art Chisinau (ksa:k)

Artist Pavel Braila, working together with a homegrown team and “relations,” has developed the TV art and culture magazine “ALTE ARTE.” Launched in January 2005, the program is broadcast fortnightly on the national station TV Moldova. Besides reporting on artists and current cultural events (regional and international), the program also features artistic works specially produced for the program. The goal of “ALTE ARTE” is to stimulate discussion on contemporary art forms across a broad cross-section of society.

Format TV art and culture magazine (30 min)
Project leadership Pavel Braila
Team Lilia Braila (production coordinator), Veaceslav Cebotari (technical director), Liliia Dragneva (project curator)
Contributors/editorial staff/reporters Ruben Agadjeanean, Larisa Barsa, Denis Bartenev, Igor Bodeanu, Dorina Bohantov, Victor Diaconu (design & web support), Tatiana Fiodorova, Alexandru Fulea, Ksenia Gazibar, Vadim Hancu, Ion Nita, Iulian Robu, Stefan Rusu, Igor Seerbina, Serghei Turcanu, Marin Turea, Ana-Maria Vasiliache, Kirill Zaremna
Advisors Thorsten Essig (picture editor, Berlin); Martin Fritz (director of the “Festival of the Regions,” Ottensheim/Vienna); Razvan Georgescu (freelance television journalist); Martin Pieper (chief editor for culture at ZDF/Arte, Mainz); Hans Zimmermann (cameraman, Frankfurt/Main)
Other supporters Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Soros Foundation Moldova
Website www.altearte.md

Agenda



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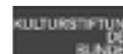
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Visual Seminar, Sofia

April – May 2005

“Red Riviera Revisited”: exhibition, Center for Culture and Debate, The Red House, Sofia
Bulgaria’s Black Sea coast, jokingly known as the “Red Riviera,” was once the dream destination of millions of holidaymakers from the former “eastern bloc states” and the “West.” As part of “Red Riviera Revisited,” artists return to where they once spent their holidays to analyze the visual changes. The works inspired by this reflection will be shown in an exhibition in Sofia to be curated by Luchezar Boyadjev and Lara Boubnova. Artists from Germany taking part include: Via Lewandowsky, Christian Jankowski, Christine de la Garenne, Birgit Brenner, Ulrike Kuschel, Olaf Nicolai, and Sean Snyder.

WILD CAPITAL/WILDES KAPITAL, Dresden/Sofia

A project of the Kunsthau Dresden in cooperation with the “Visual Seminar” project, Sofia

August 2005

Workshops, Dresden
Developed by the Kunsthau Dresden (Christiane Menicke, artistic director) in collaboration with “Visual Seminar” in Sofia (Lara Boubnova, artistic director; Maria Vassileva, project coordinator), the project “WILD CAPITAL/WILDES KAPITAL” examines the different visual manifestations of capitalism in Dresden and Sofia from the perspective of contemporary art. Workshops with international artists and other guests will focus on the “rules” capitalism dictates for urban space as well as the potential of artistic interventions and informal economies. The workshops form the first phase of the project.

Re:form/Europe (working title), Bremen/Warsaw

A project of the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, in cooperation with the “Re:form” project, Warsaw

August 2005

International conference

In Bremen, experts and an interested public will discuss the various possibilities for networking archives – the problems involved, the necessity and limits of standardization, and old and new forms of artist networks. Starting with fundamental questions like the importance and function of archives today, the conference will also focus on models for presenting collections in the internet and the prerequisites for ensuring that artist publications attain a greater public profile. Artist archives as well as archives and collections holding artist publications are the chief work categories.

Lost and Found – a film project

February – July 2005

“Lost and Found on Tour”: screenings at different festivals across Europe
After its premiere at the Berlin Film Festival, “Lost and Found” is going on tour:
Belgrade International Film Festival: 2. 10. – 2. 20. 05
Sofia International Film Festival: 5. 4. – 5. 15. 05
Skopje International Film Festival: 5. 15. – 5. 21. 05
5th “goEast” Festival of Central and Eastern European Film, Wiesbaden: 4. 6. – 4. 12. 05
Crossing Europe Film Festival, Linz (opening film): 4. 26. – 5. 1. 05
Lubuskie Lato Filmowe Łagów: 6. 26. – 7. 5. 05

Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000, Croatia

December 2004 – February 2005

“Normalization”: exhibition, Gallery Nova, Zagreb, curated by What, How and for Whom (WHW)
The exhibition conceived by the curators’ collective WHW from Zagreb concentrates on the different processes of “normalization” in eastern and western Europe. The term “normalization” is employed to not only unveil the ideological interests propelling these developments forward, but by drawing attention to the ways the concept itself is formed, the exhibition is seeking to provoke critical rethinking and creative resistance against the everyday expressions and manifestations of this very “normalization.”
Following artists have been invited: Johanna Billing, Phil Collins, Goran Dević, Gruppo Parole e imagini, David Maljković, Dan Perjovschi, Platforma 9,81, Marjetica Potrc, Jasmila Žbanić.

February – December 2005

“Zagreb CulturePlex”: urban festival, Zagreb, curated by Platforma 9,81 and Local Base for Cultural Refreshment BLOK
The urban festival “CulturePlex” experiments with innovative cultural programs and their spatial realization. Through the “temporary colonization” of unused industrial buildings the festival wants to raise awareness on new uses of industrial architecture in Zagreb.

Missing Identity, Kosovo

April 2005

“Slowly”: exhibition of work by Adrian Paci, Gallery EXIT, Peja, curated by Erzen Shkololli
Gallery EXIT showcases work by the Albanian artist Paci for the first time. The main work on show is “Slowly,” a video addressing the absence of communication between generations.

May 2005

“Think Pink”: International group exhibition, Gallery EXIT, curated by Edi Muka, Tirana
Named after a work by the Kosovar artist Sokol Beqiri, the exhibition brings together positions taken by international artists on theme of “war machine.” The works on show are reflections on the iconography and symbolic of war. Works by: Juan Pedro Fabra, Sokol Beqiri, Ermelinda Agalliu, Shona Illingworth, Henrik Andersson, Alban Hajdinaj, Jutta Benzenberg-Klosi, Mohammad Hamid, Christoph Buechel.

June 2005

International group exhibition, Gallery EXIT, Peja, curated by < rotor >, Margarethe Markovec and Anton Lederer, Graz

July 2005

Danica Dakić (Düsseldorf): solo exhibition, Gallery EXIT, Peja
Danica Dakić, born in Sarajevo, lives and works in Düsseldorf. Her most recently exhibited work, “MS Berlin,” was presented in the exhibition “Die Regierung. Paradiesische Handlungsräume” in the Secession, Vienna, in February 2005, curated by Roger M. Buerger and Ruth Noack.

De/construction of Monument, Bosnia-Herzegovina

May 2004

“Overcoming Past”: exhibition, panel discussion, presentations, National Gallery, Sarajevo
The project “Overcoming Past” deals with the different forms of art and culture as indicators and correctives of historical attempts to create a political consciousness. The exhibition presents artistic positions which critically query identification with collective symbols and create their own repertoire of symbols taken from a parallel, virtual reality. The panel discussions “Working Out the Past” and “Art as Social Corrective” extends the themes addressed in the exhibition. Furthermore, artists present concepts for new or already realized “monuments,” including Sokol Beqiri (Peja, Kosovo) with his project “Skenderbeg and Mother Theresa Monuments” and the group “Urban Movement” (Bosnia-Herzegovina) with their plans to erect a Bruce Lee monument in Mostar.

ALTE ARTE, Moldova

January – June 2005

“ALTE ARTE”: culture on TV, Moldova
Since January 29, 2005, at 10:10 p.m., the TV art and culture magazine “ALTE ARTE” has been going on air fortnightly. For thirty minutes the program shows unique reportages on art and culture from Moldova, the region, and the rest of Europe. Broadcasting times:
Romanian: 4. 9 and 4. 25. 05, 5. 14 and 5. 28. 05
Russian: 6. 11. 05

Further information available at:
www.projekt-relations.de