

steirischer herbst 2009

Utopia and Monument I

On the validity of art between privatisation and the public sphere

herbst exhibition for the public space

25/09 - 18/10/2009

Public space

Exhibition pavilion: Platz der
Freiwilligen Schützen (Bad zur
Sonne)

Opening

Fr 25/09, 6 pm, exhibition
pavilion

Curated by

Sabine Breitwieser (A)



David Malkovic, A Monument for Graz, 2009

With

Lara Almarcegui (E/NL), Nairy Baghramian (IR/D), Ayse Erkmen (TR/D), Kooperative für
Darstellungspolitik (Jesko Fezer, Anita Kaspar & Andreas Müller) (D), David Maljkovic (HR/D),
Heather and Ivan Morison (TR/GB), Nils Norman (GB), Andreas Siekmann (D), Michael
Zinganel (A), Dolorez Zinny/Juan Maidagan (AR/D)

Utopias and monuments: both have come up for tough, critical analysis in recent years, challenging or even fighting against their validity. Contemporary artists working in and with the public space have increasingly replaced their works with objects of communication and action, thus developing a kind of public practice that sets out to annul the contradiction between art and the public sphere, at least to some extent.

But that which we call the public space has itself changed drastically over the past twenty years, becoming the plaything of various, above all economic, interests. With the effect that all contradictions that really condition the public sphere and that are negotiated in it (or driven out of it) now need to be reformulated – along with the possibilities of manipulation available to art. So what is the validity of art – is it still a relevant field of social debate at all? Can the public sphere still be recovered as a space for debates of equal validity, for talk, opinions and interests, given that it is above all commercially governed? “Utopia and Monument” – conceived as a two-year project at steirischer herbst – picks up the question of the validity of systems of value, provocatively negotiating two concepts that have largely vanished from the debate on the public sphere: utopia as a space of possibility and the monument as a space of memory. For both are gateways to possible other forms of organisation of the public sphere that allow us to ask, again and again, who really owns the public sphere.

The project is dedicated to the memory of Hartmut Skerbisch (1945 – 2009).

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Sabine Breitwieser

Biography

Sabine Breitwieser is currently working as independent curator based in Vienna. She is the Secretary and Treasurer in the board of CIMAM – The International Committee of ICOM (International Council of Museums) for Museums and Collections of Modern Art. In the past few years she co-organized within this function the annual conferences of CIMAM: 2008 “The Shape of Memory: The Museum and its Collections” at the Asia Society, Museum of Modern Art in New York and upcoming “Fair Trade: Centers and Off-Centers in the New Economy” 2009 at the Museo Rufino Tamayo and Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City. In September besides her project “Utopia and Monument” for the 2009 steirischer herbst festival, the large thematic exhibition “Modernologies” that she is curating for the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) will open, presenting the research of more than 30 artists on modernity and modernism. Under the title “Which Life? Between Job and Mission” she is also curating for the “Curators Project”, at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna (Nov. 2009).

From 1988 until the end of 2007 Sabine Breitwieser was (founding) director and the curator of the Generali Foundation in Vienna for which she has built up a widely acclaimed contemporary art collection of more than 2000 works and an important archive of about 200 international artists. Under her era the museum building of the Generali Foundation was constructed and opened in 1995 (Jabornegg/Pálffy architects). From 2003 through 2004 she was Researcher/Co-Curator of International 04. Liverpool Biennial 2004 and she was active as one of the three moderators of the “Museums Initiative Policy 2007/2008” launched by the federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture in Austria.

Sabine Breitwieser has curated and directed more than 80 exhibitions, has edited numerous publications and is the author of many texts on contemporary art as well as on museum management. She has published about artists such as Isa Genzken, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Andrea Fraser, Mary Kelly, Edward Krasinski, Gordon Matta-Clark, Gustav Metzger, Adrian Piper, Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula. Some of her most important topic related exhibitions are “Designs for the Real World”, “double life”, “RE-PLAY”, “vivencias” or the “White Cube/Black Box”. She is also internationally active as lecturer and in teaching positions. Many of her books are indispensable sources, e.g. “Ausstellungen Generali Foundation Exhibitions 1989-2007”, the first volume of the “Generali Foundation Collection series, Art After Conceptual Art”, edited by Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann (2006).

Among her Recent publications is “Modernologies” for the eponymous catalogue (Actar Barcelona, 2009) and an interview conducted by André Rottmann on “Artists Artists” in *Texte zur Kunst* (Berlin, 2008). Her essay “Two Times Four: Isa Genzken’s Hi-Fi Series” is published in the volume on Isa Genzken in the Phaidon-series (London-New York 2006) and “Art and Artists: Please wait for a Commission” is published in the catalogue of the International 04. Liverpool Biennial 2004.

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Utopia and Monument

Participating artists

Lara Almarcegui

born 1972 in Saragossa (E); lives in Rotterdam (NL).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2008 "Ruins in Nederlands", Gallery Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam; "Bilbao Wastelands", Cabineta, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao; Gallery Pepe Cobo, Madrid. Recent exhibition participations, 2009 "Radical Nature", Barbican Art Center, London; 2nd Athens Biennale; "Monument to Transformation", Tranzit, Prague; 2008 "Annual Report", 7th Gwangju Biennale.

Nairy Baghramian

born 1971 in Isfahan (IR), lives in Berlin (D).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2009 "Ein semiotisches Haus, das nie gebaut wurde", Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen; "The Walker's Day Off", Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden; "Janette Laverrière: La lampe dans l'horologe" (together with Janette Laverrière), Schinkel Pavillon, 5. Berlin Biennale, Berlin. Recent exhibition participations, 2009 "Pop-Up!", Ludwig Forum for International Arts, Aachen; "Looking is Political. Ane Hjort, Nairy Baghramian, Bojan Sarcevic", Kunsthalle Bergen, Bergen.

Ayse Erkmen

born 1949 in Istanbul (TR); lives in Istanbul and Berlin (D).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2008 "Weggefährten", National Gallery at Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; "Ayse Erkmen. Ups and Downs", Yapi Kredi Art Gallery, Istanbul; K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Recent exhibition participations, 2008 "All-Inclusive. Die Welt des Tourismus", Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt; Folkestone Sculpture Triennale; "Above-the-Fold", Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel; "Word Tale, Mixed Narrations", Hacettepe University Art Museum, Ankara.

Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik

Jesko Fezer, Anita Kaspar, Andreas Müller, live in Berlin (D).

The Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik (Cooperative for Representational Politics) researches into the representation of political and cultural issues in the public sphere. It understands exhibiting as a public form of discourse – as a cultural method of questioning and convincing. Exhibition design continues these negotiations in enclosed space, tapping into discursive social spaces with its politics of representation and inherent viewing conditions.

David Maljkovic

born 1973 in Rijeka (HR); lives in Zagreb (HR) and Berlin (D).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2009 "Retired Compositions", Metro Pictures, New York; "Nothing Disappears Without a Trace", ARCO, Madrid; "After the Fair", Galerie Georg Kargl, Vienna; Fondazione Morra Greco, Nerapel. Recent exhibition participations, 2009 "Modern Ruins", Kate MacGarry, London; "Places to be", Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam; The 4th Video Biennial, Mechelen; "What Keeps a Mankind Alive", 11. Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul.

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Heather and Ivan Morison

Heather Peak, born 1973 in Desborough (GB), Ivan Morison born 1974 in Nottingham (GB); live in Arthog, Wales (GB).

Recent solo exhibitions and projects, 2009 "The Shape of Things to Come", Situations, Bristol; "I hate her. I hate her", Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, New York. Recent exhibition participations, 2009 "Mythologies", Haunch of Venison, London; "Trying to Cope with Things that aren't Human", David Cunningham Projects, San Francisco and Air Gallery, Stoke; "Radical Nature", Barbican, London.

Nils Norman

born 1966 in Kent (GB); lives in London (GB).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2008 "You have been misinformed", Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York; 2007 "A Mystery Thing", Vilma Gold, London; 2006 "Degenerate Cologne", Galerie Christian Nagl, Köln. Exhibition participations, 2009 "Street Art, Street Life", Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; 2008 Liverpool Biennale; "STARSHIP various sketches for leaving the room", Ludlow 38 Kunstverein, München and Goethe-Institut, New York; Folkestone Triennial 2008.

Andreas Siekmann

born 1961 in Hamm (D); lives in Berlin (D).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2008 "Verhandlungen unter Zeitdruck. Aus: Faustpfand, Treuhand und die unsichtbare Hand", Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin; 2006 "Faustpfand, Treuhand und die unsichtbare Hand", Heidelberger Kunstverein; 2005 11. Neu-Delhi Triennale. Recent exhibition participations, 2009 "Islands + Ghettos", Stadtmuseum Graz; "Modernologies", Museu d'Art Contemporani di Barcelona; 2008 "The Way Things Are...", Centre of Contemporary Art, Torun; "Shrinking Cities", 1. Moskauer Architekturbieniale.

Michael Zinganel

Born in 1960 in Bad Radkersburg, lives in Graz and Vienna (A).

Recent exhibitions, 2009 "Islands + Ghettos", Stadtmuseum Graz; NGBK Berlin; Internationale Architektur Biennale Rotterdam; "Islands + Ghettos", Kunstverein Heidelberg; 2008 Vienna Museum; 2007 Festival der Regionen, Austria, ACC Galerie Weimar; 2006 Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt; 2005 Kölnischer Kunstverein and Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig.

Dolores Zinny / Juan Maidagan

Dolores Zinny, born 1968 in Rosario (ARG), Juan Maidagan, born 1957 in Rosario (ARG), leben seit 2002 in Berlin (D).

Recent solo exhibitions, 2009 "Instead of Heaven, Architecture", Galerie Sabine Knust, München; "Work in progress", Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; 2007 "La Costa. El Ataque Lo Mismo", Sala Rekalde, Bilbao; 2005 "I have no revelations to offer you", Galerie Sabine Knust, München. Exhibition participations, 2008 7. Gwangju Biennale; 5th Berlin Biennale; 2007 "Exil des Imaginären", Generali Foundation, Vienna.

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