

WeAreTheArtists



Update: Amsterdam

By skriemann@hotmail.com

The ballade of the Black Gold

Reoility
Beyond reality!
Oil is their main source of wealth
Is their main cause of problems.
It'll always be that way -
Oil both blessing and curse.
The struggle to harness this energy gushing forth
Will be their eternal destiny.

Reoility
Beyond reality!
Once upon a time there was this young active one
Transforming oil into luxurious perfume.
What did he think when doing it?
He might have saved the future of our earth.

Reoility
Beyond reality!
His name was John Davison.
The smell of oil industry was for him a scent of heavenly spirits.
Oil as a fashion hit, what's the message?
Can you identify yourself with this dirty business?

Reoility
Beyond reality!
John Davison's main source of inspiration is oil
And the cause of his stingy problems.
Will it always be that way?
Oil both blessing and curse?
His struggle to deal with this energy gushing forth
Will be his eternal destiny.

Reoility
Beyond reality!
Don't you get the message yet?
It's the oil, stupid



Left: Reoility by Susanne Kriemann. Right: Drawing by Aleksander Komarov

And the mighty ones to claim it.
Either they do it with weapon force
Or with aggressive diplomacy.
The struggle to harness the energy gushing forth
Will be our eternal destiny.

Reoility
Beyond reality!
All those numbers float each day
Through the machineries of the globe
There is no way to not get involved
Even if you hospitalize the galaxy
There is no "The End"
Within reoility.

Update: Berlin

By auk@bluemail.ch

It's like summer again during two or three early october days. Finally the 'MoMA in Berlin' finished with 24h opening times during its last week. (In the end, people waited up to eleven hours to see the art. That's at least what the newspapers said. And afterwards a woman who gave over 300 guide tours made one more, when the works were gone already, in sad reminiscence of the great show.) At the same time the 'art autumn' reached it's peak with many things happening at the same time: Art Forum, Berliner Liste, Kunstsalon, Sophie Calle at M.Gropius building, 'Shrinking Cities' at KunstWerke, and and and...

At an improvised space at Friedrichstrasse was the opening of 'Top Shop', an initiative from young artists and some friends of mine. Many came over from Amsterdam. Mass product versus single piece was the topic around which the show and the side programs were built. You could get cheap leftovers, prints, art pieces, design objects and so on from the shelves and grabbing tables, or even make copies yourself at the copyright free section. A one-man-entertainer supplied the perfectly fitting music, using a transportable set-up with keyboards, guitars, selfmade whistle instruments, light machine, etc. It was a very nice exhibition and busy atmosphere in that former supermarket space, people walking around with shopping baskets and beer bottles. With friends I headed for the 'Polish institute', which turned out to be just a German institution called 'Kunststiftung Poll'...not too exciting though. Main event was the Art Forum next to the big bus station in the west of the city. Surprising was the overwhelming percentage of painting, something like 80%! I know it's supposed to be the 'painting city', but still it was shocking! The special exhibition 'Made in Berlin', curated by Zdenek Felix, who was involved with Deichtorhallen in Hamburg before, was amazingly bad and uninteresting. 42 artists were selected, to give a picture about what is happening currently in the contemporary Berlin scene. It was really faint. I enjoyed walking through the gallery compartments, not like in Basel, where I always get depression or panic attacks after a short time. One of the few videoworks offered a nice change, to stick in the dark for a while with a moving image ('Süsser Wind im Gesicht' by Yves Netzhammer). Expectantly I headed to the other side of town for the 'Berliner Liste.' The same stuff was waiting there, just more hip and more fresh in it's display. Using the raw walls and the beautiful rooms of the former school building, the whole thing became more appealing - and trendy. Handwritten prices, directly scribbled onto the walls, popped into your eyes to satisfy your curiosity about market values. 'Buy me, buuy me!', said the little and

the big pictures... 'bye bye..!', I shouted back and walked out into the chilly night, to get a rest from looking at art. In a former empty house at Schönhauser Allee, the Czech art magazine Umelec gave a great party because of their new office in Berlin. It was a great night for dancing, thanks to the DJs from Prague.

Then the doors of Hamburger Bahnhof opened under a heated discussion with a lot of press coverage, for the long awaited Flick collection. (Gerhard Schröder officially attended the opening.) It's just h u g e! They even opened a very long extra building for this show attached to the museum. Totally crazy. On the floor, at the beginning of Jason Rhoades 'Creation Myth', letters are warning you, 'visit on your own risk'. Of course, yeah..thanks! The massive installation is spread half way in the big entry hall. On a little rabbit house a turquoise thread, with a label saying 'remove!', is bound to keep the little doors closed. Is it really a forgotten transportation note...? 'The films shown as part of the following installation may be morally disturbing to some viewers' - written on a pole next to McCarthy's 'Saloon Theater'. American style, isn't it, otherwise i'll might sue those bastards, after hitting my hat on some stupid transparent plexiglass piece, or maybe after having a brain disturbance by seeing some pornographic clippings glued to a pole. If you're lucky, you find some pieces you haven't seen before within the big spectacle of all those famous stars. I was happy to see some Pipilotti Rist pieces, Marcel Broodthaers' jardin d'hiver, and Dieter/Björn Roth's garden sculpture. Good to see as well, in a section called 'Eternity-Cult Is The Longest Disease Of Mankind' (hm..), Nam June Paik's robot K 456 from the 60s and good old Fischli/Weiss and Roman Signer with wonderful photos. Most works were probably by Bruce Nauman...yes, seen before. But the worst is the installation 'Delphine' by Diane Thater from LA, in a huge raw space, with many beams, wildly tilted to brick walls and floor, showing some underwater images of dolphins and some planetary images (sun? moon?), split by a block of nine video monitors. Maybe I didn't get it, but anyway, after 2,5 hours I desperately had to flee for a sandwich and continue another day.

Shortly after had seen 'Good Bye Lenin' in cinema, I almost bumped into him, just around the corner here in Kreuzberg. He's standing on a parking lot of some moving company, waiting for another revolution. Maybe he could hire meindemonstrant.de, the guy you can rent these days in order to bring your personal message to the street.



Lenin statue in Berlin. Photo by Aurelio Kopainig

Update: London

By shaan@ca.inter.net

Goldsmith

School has finally started and we have been given our studios... Residence is pretty grim - I'm sharing with ten other people. Very typical ugly residence. I don't think you would be very impressed. I'm not. I've already got into a big fight with the residence officials.... Yeah - my bad experience with the goldsmiths residence people. This place is such a crock of shit so far. Maybe that's a little harsh, but the bureaucracy of the residence people and the disorganisation of the profs is unbelievable. I'm not the only one that feels this way. I expected to feel special coming here because I'm paying a shitload of money and because it's this place with a huge international reputation - but so far I feel like cattle. I arrived to my room in residence to find that they had given me a room smaller than agreed upon where if I stood in the middle I could touch every wall. Of course I freaked out and found someone to trade with - a Romanian who was willing to swap her slightly more expensive room for a cheaper one. Now they want to charge us 50 pounds just for swapping. I got so mad at this bitch behind the residence office desk - I told her that this school is not going to get another fucking cent of my money. She told me to write a letter and then walked away! My room is stained with god knows what on the walls, huge paint chips falling off, and the kitchen is big enough to fit one person at a time - but we share it with ten people. The people I live with are nice and everything, but the place is a fucking dump. And then! - in our program I found out that there are five extra people than what they told us were going to be here. And they also told us that we would be able to invite five artists or whoever of our choice to guest lecture during the year. Now I find out there are "budgetary cutbacks" and that we can only invite one! Something like this happened at the Royal college a few years ago and a student took them to court and sued their ass for thousands. I'm starting to think this may be an option. Dispell the myth of goldsmiths !!!

Madonna

Yes- I've been meaning to write to you about my Madonna encounter. Its just that I have gone over the event so much in my mind and am so mad at myself for not talking with her that I guess I have been avoiding sharing my meeting God - Oh-I mean Madonna - with you. I was actually helping your old friend Rene Lahn take down his Eva Presenhuber booth at Frieze when it all transpired. It was half an hour before the fair was closing and I was just waiting around, wandering aimlessly, waiting for the fair to actually be officially over to start packing up artwork and



Tristan's messy room. Photo by Shaan Syed

stuff. There were announcements going on that the fair was closing and would people please head towards the exits....

I had my Frieze badge on when I wandered around this corner and came face to face with a very short and petite but glamorous older looking woman. We sort of stopped, as we were about to bump into each other and she stared at me in the eye with a sort of flirty mischievous kind of look. In that split millisecond I thought to myself this woman really looks like Madonna but she can't be because she's got too many wrinkles and is too short and her boots are not new enough. After she gave me the come hither lets do lunch and be best friends kind of look, I realized Fuck! this IS Madonna!!!! I turned to Rene, who was trying not to look too impressed, to confirm my sighting. I had just seen God - I mean MADONNA!!!

She was wearing an English bowler hat, a long black tapered trenchcoat, and very pointy high heel boots and was with a blonde haired woman who I didn't recognize. They were just wandering as aimlessly as I was around the labyrinth of booths. I tried following her a bit, but she just disappeared into the crowd that was leaving through the main exit - without being noticed or bothered by anyone... I of course had to leave frantic messages on all my friends' phones back in Canada -OH MY GOD I JUST BUMPED INTO MADONNA! ANDSHE STARED AT ME!!

Up until that point in the day I was in a terrible mood. But seeing her was like a revelation. The only thing that bothers me is that I didn't talk to her when she was face to face with me. I even had an 'in' - A good friend of mine who is Jamie Oliver's personal assistant took care of her and Tracey Emin having lunch at his restaurant the week before. I could have said something about that. But I was too star struck.

I've started to work as a studio assistant for Marc Quinn and when I told him I ran into Madonna at the end of the Artfair, he said he knew all the vultures would come out an hour before closing. As much as I love Madge, I had to laugh.

Update: Prague

By newsletter@flashartonline.it and biennale@ngprague.cz

Flash Art Newsletter: Prague Biennale 2

Between New Painting and Political Action
Curated by Giancarlo Politi and Helena Kontova along with the collaboration of numerous international curators and artists, the second edition of the Prague Biennale - opening at the end of May 2005 - will primarily be dedicated to new painting in Europe and art as a political action in Latin America.

Prague Biennale 2 involves some of the world's most influential and prestigious curators and artists, opening in late May 2005 and closing September 18. Prague Biennale 2 will take place in Karlin Hall (Thamova 14, Prague 8), a vast post-industrial space of 5000 square meters that has been specifically adapted for what will be the largest exhibition in Eastern Europe.

Expanded Painting

Painting and Around: a large, panoramic exhibition of about 100 painters characterizes this second edition of the Prague Biennale, following the great success of the first. The exhibition seeks to be an articulate, and at times contradictory representation of young painters in Europe, demonstrating their crossing of styles, techniques, cultures, and traditions. Today's painting, along with its relationship to technology and other media such as photography, video, cinema, and installation is interpreted here as a conscious critique on society and the world, not simply as an appeasement of the eyes and the senses. To see this one only must look at such works as those of Maurizio Cattelan, Damien Hirst, Ugo Rondinone, Jim Lambie, Wilhelm Sasnal, Shirana Shahbazi, Martin Creed, Ansel Reyle, Sophie von Hellermann. Particular attention will be paid to countries that have not yet come to real prominence on the international stage, but where artists are establishing themselves forcefully and rapidly.

"Second sight", International biennale of contemporary art 2005

International Biennale of Contemporary art 2005 - "Second sight" resumes the display of contemporary art, which took place at the Fair Trade Palace in the National Gallery in Prague in 2003.

At that time the National Gallery in Prague prepared the Biennale in collaboration with the Italian publisher of Flash Art. The preparation and course of the first Prague biennale did not run without organisational difficulties. While preparing the second biennale, the National Gallery management attempted to avoid unclearness and incompetent actions and offered Giancarlo Politi, the representative of Flash Art, a cooperation contract. Because

Politi did not accept this contract, the management of the National Gallery decided that the 2005 biennale will be organised by the gallery alone with the cooperation of Czech and International critics and curators.

The management of the Biennale is assessing projects including works by more than 200 artists. It is envisaged that the Biennale will present some 40 video projections, 300 photographic works, 20 installations and 6 communication projects, 90 works from the sphere of contemporary painting and further works. Part of the Biennale will also be a festival of contemporary alternative theatrical and musical culture, which will take place in the basement area of the cinema hall of the Trade Fair Palace. The Trade Fair Palace will be the exhibition core of the Biennale, which will spread according to the nature of the projects into further buildings of the National Gallery and the streets of the city of Prague. The International Biennale emphasizes the fact that art does not conform to power strategies in politics and culture including strategies and tactics of the art market, but creates itself with a desire for freedom.

The realization team (President of International Biennale of Contemporary Art is the director of the National Gallery in Prague Milan Knížák; chief curator is the director of the Collection of Modern and Contemporary art Tomáš Vlček; coordinator of preparation of the project is Svetlana Michajlová) cooperates with an international board of individuals representing top world museums of contemporary art and international critics and theoreticians of contemporary art.

IBCA 2005 is under the auspices of the President of Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus and the Lord Mayor of Prague Pavel Bem



Trade Fair Palace of the National Gallery in Prague

Update: Skopje

By ha@o-p-a.org

At the beginning of June 2004, the group OPA (Slobodanka Stevceska and Denis Saraginovski) was invited to take part at the international art event held in Bitola, Macedonia, in organization of the group "Elements" (Biljana and Ljupcho Isijanin). The group HA (Sasho Talevski) joined in the preparation process of the performance and then together, OPA and HA headed for Bitola (HA on its own expense) on the prearranged date confirmed by e-mail. The concept of the performance required the organizers to be informed on its venue only after the beginning of the performance.

However, the organizer does not turn up at the agreed venue and all onward communication is carried out by phone. Albeit the organizers have been explained that the manner of the performance and the informing on its beginning are conditioned by the concept of the performance, the concept is utterly ignored and any communication revolves solely round the question why the group OPA had not informed the organizers/curator on the exact time and venue of the event, which is in their words, "inappropriate behavior". The performance hence takes a different course and treats directly the attitude towards a work of art/artists. On the third and last day of the project, a direct confrontation occurs between OPA and one of the organizers. With the knowledge of the organizer (Ljupcho Isijanin) that the meeting will become part of the performance, the following conversation is taped:

Denis: What's your view on the whole event?

Ljupco: Well, we are quite satisfied with it and the only flaw was with your performance... You know, something not planned... I always have understanding for any creative work, no matter how bad, or strange or experimental or engaged it is, but I simply can't understand why you didn't contact us... After all, we are very much responsible for this whole event... Maybe it doesn't interest you, but 99% of the funds is covered by the Japanese... What I mean is that this has been the first large scale project to involve more money and it attracts more attention and we are rather taken apart... Anyway, we had a presentation in Skopje yesterday on their request and we did it to keep the work, not to let it end or create the impression "you give the money and want things to go your way"... O.K., we must go along with some things. It's no problem. Yet, things with you turned out to be very odd, alienated, strange, and on the other hand, we are working on a parallel project with the Japanese on collaboration. Well, you are not part of that program, but the moment called for at least some cooperation and socializing. Let alone your performance itself, because everybody kept asking me about it. Robert Jankulovski (a participant) asked me about your work and I told him that I only had a piece of paper in my hands, that sometimes I called, sometimes I didn't, that I didn't know what exactly it was and I had to see you to...

Denis: To talk!

Ljupco: Right. And I feel embarrassed. I tell people that you are working on something that was supposed to have a certain dimension of secrecy, a

dimension of I don't know what, but... A lot of people went by in these past four years. I don't intend to draw any comparisons now, but anyway, we really expected to see you for at least five minutes when you came here. As far as your performance goes, you have my complete understanding, there is no problem at all.

Denis: Well, it is quite understandable that you were expecting to see us before the event, but if we take in consideration the aim of the performance, we were not supposed to meet even for five minutes if we wanted to make the performance the way we wanted. The project focuses directly on the relation artist - curator/organizer. That's why we didn't have those five minutes and that's why we didn't tell you what we were doing and that's why we contacted you only after we started.

Dana: We were using the communication we received by e-mail and phone before we came to Bitola. You were informed on the time we were arriving here... and we showed up.

Denis: When it was the right time for you to come, you weren't available... I don't know why...

Ljupco: ... among other things, because of obligations, and you know, the interest for the overall event decreases because we have obligations to many people... and the time for your performance wasn't specified, so it was very uncertain and didn't promise any feedback...

Dana: Our failure to show up is part of our concept...

Ljupco: I realized that there was something at stake, one evening I even passed by the place to see for myself if there were some traces, I didn't know what it was about at all...

Dana: The idea for not showing up before the event and telling you...

Ljupco: O.K., we agreed we won't talk about that, it was a free decision and it's not our intention to impose any censorship, or insist, God forbid, on something like that... So, I won't spend any more time on this, I will only point out that we are the organizers and we want to have at least some control on the things we are responsible for... Besides, Biljana never acts as a curator with dictatorship. I wanted to say that we don't play strict organizers and curators.

Denis: By the way, I must say that Sasho Talevski should be sitting with us now because he is part of the team and we've worked with him not only in this project, but also in other projects. However, he was not able to come because he had other obligations.

Ljupco: It doesn't matter, I don't get on too well with Sasho, and to be honest, if I had known that Sasho was coming too, you wouldn't have come either. We've had similar experiences with him and it was for the best to keep things apart with him...

Denis: I don't care what kind of communication you've had with him. It's not my business...

Ljupco: That's why I'm saying this... I can't even talk with him... some things don't even matter now, but I wouldn't like to talk with him.

Denis: What's important for us is to build our work regardless of your relations...

Ljupco: I just want to tell you one moment which is very important and which you should place deep in your subconscious and always keep it in your mind.

Denis: The bottom line of what we want to say is that he is, after all, one of the authors and he cooperates with us in this work... Another thing I would like to know is how we got to be invited to this festival in the first place?

Ljupco: I don't know, this is the first time I see you. We often get information on what and how you work, there was also the Web site, and that was enough to include you in the project. We need artists whose creative acts are engaged and much more exposed in the public, rather than in some institution... whose work relates more to the passer-by than to an institution.

Dana: The subject of our last project addresses the relation artist - curator, artist - art critic...

Denis: Our last five works deal solely with this issue.

Dana: That's why we ask about the invitation and whether you are familiar with these issues.

Ljupco: No, I wasn't familiar with this moment and we didn't discuss with Biljana your attitude and your considerations on these relations... We also treat these issues in our work if that means anything to you...

Denis: Everything means a lot to us...

Ljupco: We won't be offended if the relation you are creating is beyond the usual frames, nor will we do anything to make your work worthless or meaningless. The main reason why I wanted to see you is what I told you at the very beginning. It's not only about the things before the project, but also about the things after the project.

Denis: What things after the project?

Ljupco: Well, it's what I said at the beginning that there should be a bit more open and closer communication with the organizer.

Denis: Well, it is happening...

Dana: You, as organizers, set the conditions in the prior communication with us and we stick to them and we created our work...

Denis: The work itself calls for another kind of communication, essentially completely opposite from the standard one.

Update: Switzerland

By morerer@yahoo.de

It makes free to overcome Switzerland

by Moriz Rerer

"Mais les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seuls qui partent Pour partir"
Charles Baudelaire

The recently failed plebiscite about the so-called facilitated naturalization in Switzerland is a good opportunity for the production of some text. Let's talk about Ausländer.

Switzerland is a very peculiar country. The details of Switzerland can not be fully discussed here. In general just this: Your country works very differently. Switzerland probably has the highest percentage of foreigners in Europe, more than 20%. This is not because more people immigrated than into other countries, but it's because almost nobody gets naturalized. The percentage is artificially highly increased.

Note that the German word "Ausländer" is not the same as the English "foreigner"; the German word for foreigner is "Fremder". "Ausländer" does not imply the moment "strange" at all. In Switzerland, people live for many decades as Ausländer, maybe for the whole life. There are people who lived in the same village as Ausländer for more than eighty years - no joke. An Ausländer is not someone who came from another country, but someone who is an Ausländer. They call you an Ausländer, so you are one. Please keep this in mind when the text switches back to "foreigner" to avoid the question how to pronounce "Ausländer".

Half of the foreigners grew up in Switzerland, they never had the chance of not growing up as foreigners, and they have no relation to any other country. The Swiss call people foreigners whose native language is Swiss-German. Foreigners can become naturalized in Switzerland only by a free decision of the local council. This could sound as follows: Last Monday in the local council: "This young man has grown up in our village and will presumably stay here for the rest of his life. Do we want to call him one of us?" - "No need." - "Have no opinion." - "Why not." - "No." - "Ok, the decision is taken that he'll stay an Ausländer forever. Next item ..."

This is out of question, and so almost nobody ever becomes a Swiss. So hundreds of thousands of people who grew up in Switzerland live their lives apart from the beautiful Switzerland of the Swiss.

Of course this is irritating. The Swiss just don't like foreigners. Moreover the self-confidence of the Swiss demands that every person on earth should aspire to be a Swiss. Everybody should be jealous of them. People from far countries want to immigrate, but those foreigners who grew up in Switzerland, those who know the country very well are rather disgusted.

And now they rejected democratically a proposal for a law for the so-called facilitated naturalization - as if the regular process of naturalization would be difficult. The targets of this law are exactly the young foreigners who visited all their schools in Switzerland. It would have turned the process of naturalization for them into an objective administrative task of the federal government. Now some of the Swiss are frustrated. The foreigners in question are not very impressed. It was an occasion for Switzerland to approach to the European normality in one particularly disturbing aspect at least. But then Switzerland would stop being Switzerland, and the other Swiss would honestly have a bad life.

To grow up as a foreigner in Switzerland is a special kind of life. There are good books about it. In our context we elaborate one aspect: to be called an Ausländer makes strange.

Under such circumstances no warm relation to the country will ever arise. There's no proper responsibility to carry for anything that might be important in life. Life stops being laid-out for endurance, tomorrow does not matter. The society are people who exclude me. The police a priori protects others against me. There is no dignity in this life, no matter how many Swiss-Franks I possess. And: it will never stop, for the whole life.

So how to get out of this? Well, people are different, so are foreigners. Some of them turn into beaten dogs, into servile nobodies. That's ok. There are in fact people who have to ask others who they are and what they should do in life. Those have a big chance to become naturalized Swiss and then to call others foreigners. But real people declare those who dominate them to be enemies who have nothing to aspire. We obstruct and look for our own way. A process of growing mutual suspicion begins.

The second position is consistent, but it makes strange to the own world. One is called an Ausländer and then he becomes strange. On the other hand it teaches not to concern at all about what the mob talks. It teaches to never satisfy any expectations of other people. This opens a wide horizon of options.

So if my home is not my home, if I am a stranger at my home, then I can be a foreigner all over the world. In other places the green colors in nature are just more beautiful than in Switzerland. Viewed from inside, Switzerland is huge and omnipresent, from outside it's tiny like a mouse. I saw that the real world just starts outside of the borders of Switzerland.

Being strange causes addiction. It's life as a sophisticated post-modern piracy. As pirates we perpetually move off for new shores. Beyond the huge blue sky we roam about all the seas on earth and we grab at everything that falls into our hands. We are restlessly driven forward, and our lives become full and rich, until one day they end on a reef or in a shower of bullets. There's nothing to regret. "Auf, Matrosen, oh-ee!"

Being strange is the core of a real global identity. Maybe mankind is about to fall apart. Most people erect new and higher walls in the head around their lands, around their gardens. And only a few surmount all walls and set sail. Maybe we just have to interpret good old Kubrick the right way: the new cosmic metamorphosis is only for the few.

If Switzerland is the best of all countries and does nevertheless not satisfy, we don't search for an other country, but the wide sea. Switzerland teaches us to overcome country, nation, law, exactly like the former best of all countries taught this the man they had to crucify. We are children of God. So we say thanks to Switzerland for making us really free. And our friends, our dears, our brothers and sisters? They are left behind. As Swiss.

Update: Toronto

By info@artfocus.com

Toronto Notebook—November 2004 by Pat Fleisher

The Toronto art scene now seems concentrated in two areas which compete for attention: a stretch of storefronts on Queen Street on the west side

where all the young new galleries seem concentrated and the Distillery Art District, a historic factory area formerly used for movie sets, on the east side near the waterfront. Toronto is recognized as the centre of the Canadian art scene with more than 150 galleries listed in the Slate Art Guide. During Toronto's Annual International Art Fair in October, Queen West staged a competing event (somewhat like the 'Liste' in Basel) in two small renovated hotels which are historical landmarks in the city, the Gladstone and the Drake. Newest project on the street is Immersive gallery at Dovercourt. The opening show was called 'Low Hanging Fruit - Between Nature and Technology', a digital art group exhibit of works by Andrew Davies, Napoleon Brousseau, Matt Gorbet and Susan Gorbet, Jim Ruxton and Camille Turner. The collaborative group show was organized around the effects that technology has had in changing our perception of our natural world. Each artist interpreted the technical expression 'low hanging fruit' that describes the use of innovative technologies that already exist in order to achieve a visual solution to a time sensitive artistic goal. I especially liked Napoleon's 'Digital Monet' slide show.

I write this coming down from the involvement of organizing Cityart Magazine's 1st group show at Metro Hall Rotunda in October. In the centre of the large circular foyer we placed an installation piece by Russian-born Toronto sculptor Marina Reshetnikova called 'Sotosphere'. The galvanized wire mesh installation, 170 x 160 cm, was lent to the show by Gallery Bibianne, where I had photographed it a few weeks before. There I had been fascinated by the strength yet fragility of the piece and its transparency which interacted and contrasted with the 19th century Toronto buildings seen thru the gallery windows.

Over the summer months Ian Lazarus, known as an installation sculptor, with his co-sculptor Badanna Zack presented 'Serpentine Mounds' in the African pavillion of the Toronto Zoo. It was a fascinating installation that successfully transformed a conventionally landscaped area into a sculptural environment. The installation was comprised of two mounds of earth and grass (incorporating scrapped automobiles with all toxic elements removed) and wetland between the mounds. This site-specific installation was 45,000 square feet in area and 28 feet high and resembled an archaeological dig. It was built by carving into existing mounds and stacking the brilliant coloured car shells to suggest traffic and momentum.

This outdoor car installation reflected the continuing battle between our modern cultures need for the automobile, and the resulting environmental damage caused to habitat, humans and wildlife. Planned to trigger questions around conspicuous consumerism and environmental sustainability, the two artists enlisted the help of the City of Toronto Solid Waste Management Services, Terrafox Geo and Standard Auto Recycling. However, after only three months of public viewing, the Toronto Zoo dismantled Serpentine Mounds, despite the fact that the installation was created with public and private funds and is receiving critical acclaim. The outdoor installation was intended to serve as a platform for messaging about environmental responsibility and sustainability. 'Given the significant contributions made by the artists, the sponsors, and funders, more time should have been given to the lifespan of this public art,' says Kristian Clarke, Co-Director of CARFAC Ontario, the professional association for visual artists in Ontario. 'It's not only a loss of public art, it's a wasted opportunity, as well as a waste of funds.' CARFAC works to defend cultural, economic and legal rights individually and on a collective basis, as well as provide education on fair dealings with artists. Badanna Zack and Ian Lazarus had received repeated indications from the Zoo CEO that the work should and could remain in place longer than the duration of the Festival, given the magnitude of the piece. 'Three months barely gives time for the work and the messaging around it to filter through to the public,' says Zack. Noel Harding, chair of the City of Toronto's Art Committee for Public Places says, 'this act of removal runs counter to the intention of the City of Toronto's master plan as a creative city. A contradiction exists when one element of the city's government supports another in creating a work of public art, and yet an ill-considered process allows the work to be removed. After all, the Toronto Zoo is city property and the city gave \$50,000 for environmental messaging.' Harding, who initiated the Livearts program that resulted in the development of the Zooarts Festival, adds 'the Ontario Cultural Attraction Fund regards the work as significant enough to have supported it as a magnet for tourism and educational outreach about the environment.'

Update: Trondheim

By aeneaswilder@hotmail.com

Greetings from Trondheim. The sleet has now turned to snow and there is a thick white blanket covering the city. Thanks for sending over the taped series "The Fear of Nightmares". The students here are fascinated by the conclusions made by Adam Curtis, and it is an astounding piece of historical reportage. It is a classic that the BBC should be rightly proud of. I am sorry that you were unable to watch the programme yourself, but I can easily recap on the main points here. I have made some duplicate copies of the programme so I will return this tape to you and when you have finally fixed that old television of yours you can sit back and enjoy. Basically, a summary of the three programmes goes like this:

In the past, Politicians promised to create a better world. They had different ways of achieving this, but their power and authority came from the optimistic visions that they offered their people. These dreams failed and today people have lost faith in ideologies. Politicians are seen increasingly as managers of public life. But now they have discovered a new role that restores their power and authority. Politicians now promise to protect us from nightmares. They say that they will rescue us from dreadful dangers that we cannot see and do not understand, and the greatest danger of all is international terrorism, with sleeper cells in countries across the world. But much of this threat is a fantasy, it is a dark illusion that has spread unquestioned

through governments around the world, security services and the international media.

At the heart of the story are two groups: The American Neo-conservatives and the radical Islamists. The programme charts the political causes of both groups from their origins in the thinking of both Leo Strauss, an obscure political philosopher who taught Paul Wolfowitz, and Said Kutu, whose martyrdom at the hands of the Egyptian authorities back in 1966, inspired the young elitist aristocrat schoolboy Ayman Zuwahiri. The programme shows clearly the failings of both fundamentalist organisations to rally the masses to their separate, but linked, causes.

Because of the horrific violence throughout the Arab world during the eighties and nineties, (Egypt, Algeria and elsewhere) Zuwahiri and Osama Bin Laden (the blank cheque writer) had failed to raise the consciousness of the Islamic world and to make it rise up and seize power in the secular Arab states. The Arab world did not want them. Their ideological belief was that those involved in politics could be legitimately killed because as politicians they had been corrupted. If you believed in elections, so it goes, you reject the Koran. Because the ordinary people did not rise up it proved that they too had been corrupted and so had condemned themselves to death. Tourists were legitimate targets as they put money into the pockets of corrupt regimes. In Algeria, thousands of ordinary people were killed. In turn the generals ruling Algeria convinced infiltrators to push the extremists further, encouraging them to kill further.

In the end, fundamentalists were killing fundamentalists! Zuwahiri and Bin Laden were ultimately back in Afghanistan, where they had first met, because they had nowhere else to go. After these failed uprisings, a new jihad was announced by them. This time the efforts would be focused against Jews, Americans and Christians exclusively. This was a strategy of desperation, born out of failure. They had no revolution at all. They had failed. However what they were about to do would dramatically have an effect on the Neo Conservatives, who had alienated themselves because of their fundamentalist Christian beliefs and extreme moral judgements, amongst other things. By the end of the 90s both groups were failing in their roles and had become marginalized both domestically and internationally.

But with the attacks of September 11th the situation dramatically changed. After their brief moment of triumph the Islamists were virtually destroyed in a matter of months in Afghanistan, while the Neo conservatives took power in Washington. But then the Neo conservatives began to reconstruct the Islamists as a phantom enemy. And as this nightmare fantasy began to spread politicians realised the new power it gave them in a deeply disillusioned age.

In January 2001 a trial had begun in a Manhattan courtroom, of four men accused of the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. They had also decided to prosecute Bin Laden in his absence. To do this under American law the prosecutors needed evidence of a criminal organisation, because as with the mafia, this would allow them to prosecute the head of the organisation even if he could not be linked directly to the crime. Evidence of this organisation was provided for them by an ex associate of Bin Laden's, Jamal al Fadel, who is taken on by the American prosecution as a key witness in the trial. His account is used to build up a picture of Al Qaeda. The picture that Al Fadel drew for the Americans of Bin Laden was a man at the head of a large terrorist network that had an organised hierarchy of control and had a name Al Qaeda. In reality Bin Laden and Zuwahiri had become the focus of a loose association of disillusioned Islamist militants who were attracted by the new strategy. But there was no organisation. These were militants who mostly planned their own operations and looked to Bin Laden for funding and assistance. He was not their commander. There is also no evidence that Bin Laden used the term Al Qaeda to refer to a group until after 11th Sept, when he realised this was the term the Americans had given him. In reality Al Fadel was on the run from Bin Laden having stolen money from him. In return for giving evidence the Americans gave him witness protection in the USA and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Many lawyers at the trial believe that Al Fadel exaggerated and lied to give the Americans a picture of the terrorist organisation that they needed to prosecute Bin Laden. This made Al Qaeda the new mafia or the new communists.

The attack on America by 19 hijackers shocked the world. It was Ayman Zuwahiri's new strategy implemented in a brutal and spectacular way. But neither he, nor Bin Laden were the originators of what was called "the planes operation". It was the brain child of a Islamist militant called Kaled Sheik Muhamed, who came to Bin Laden for funding and help in finding volunteers. But in the wake of the panic created, the politicians reached for the model of a vast international terrorist network, Al Qaeda.

Now the Neo-conservatives became all powerful, because this "terror network" proved that America was at threat from terrifying new forces in a hostile world. A small group began to shape America's response to the events of September 11th, including Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney and Richard Pearle. The last time these men had been in power together was under Ronald Reagan, when they had taken on and as they saw it defeated the evil that wanted to take over America, the Soviet empire.

In that time they created the image of a hidden web of evil run from Moscow that planned to dominate the world, when in reality the Soviets were on their last legs and collapsing from within. Now they did the same with the Islamists. There are extremist and fanatical groups around the world who have been inspired by the Islamist theories and they are prepared to use the techniques of mass terror to achieve their objectives. The bombings in Madrid show this only too clearly, but this is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the way the American and other governments have transformed this complex and dispiriting threat into a simplistic fantasy of an organised web of uniquely powerful terrorist who may strike anywhere and at any moment. But no one questioned this fantasy because increasingly it served the interests of so many people; for the press, television and hundreds of terror experts.

I hope this fills you in Jim, until the tape is returned and your television is up and running once again. Enjoy your Victory Gin this Christmas, and best wishes for the New year, Aeneas

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Information: WeAreTheArtists

By kielmayer@gmx.net

WeAreTheArtists is a longterm network project, the idea of which is to create a worldwide platform for open discourse about art. The main aim is to make an ever growing network of artists, curators and writers visible and accessible, currently by a free newspaper with updates from all over the world written by artists and a collection of video sketches. In 2005, WeAreTheArtists has a homebase at k3 project space in Zurich and will participate at the 2nd Prague Biennale. Number 4 will be published in April 2004. For all enquiries, please contact weartheartists@gmx.net. As the newspaper is free its future depends on selling ads on the last page. There is a big variety available, starting with the 'Unknown artist ad' for Euro 30 up to the 'Fuck the rest I'm the best ad' for Euro 4000.

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