

## Animals in hand

*Durchgänge (or „As you all know you just can't believe every thing you see and hear now can you. Now if you'll excuse me I must be on my way“. The Jimi Hendrix Experience. Axis: Bold as Love)*

When one opens a door onto a cross-roads self evidence often gives way to discursive misunderstandings and coquetry with the devil. One can perceive of these as presentiments hovering on a plane of migration and a peoples instinctive travels, since a traveller can elliptically re-enter a familiar route or not as the case may be. I mention this because there are indeed two and more streets that diverge at a Lornsenplatz 4, in Hamburg.

First perhaps to mention one that is geared towards a more extended audience appreciation as its title might suggest: „Galerie für Landschaftskunst“. Between 2.6. and 30.6. 1996 there was an inaugural exhibition brought to us by one Bob Braine. This took place in a small back garden. It was a show constituting of swaying lecterned photo-copies of animals, reptiles, insects and what-nots that were held in someone's hand(s). They stood at different heights on thin and fragile wooden storks hidden in different degrees by the foliage. The first thing that grabbed me was the length of time, patience and circumstances involved in accumulating these specimens (incidentally he also records the deaths/corpses involved in auto collisions as he goes on his way). The various speeds with which these creatures could escape or maim also determined the way they were held. Another enjoyable and impressive aspect of this garden – as it proceeds with outdoor sites – was its immediate re-appropriation of Bob Braine's appropriation. Since the garden, which is subtly landscaped, along with a tiny open sided „hut“ will be the site of future gallery installations, it will be interesting to see how exhibitors will play with this vector.

Another aspect of this exhibiting space is that it can accommodate propositions to be carried out on larger scales since the organisers have found a backer-patron who will, as I understand it, work towards extending the economic limits of some of these plans.

If there is a past to this present/future, then we must flash back to another residence in Hamburg. Constituted by the same constellation of people, many of the divergent concerns addressed at the present location were festering just under the surface of a space at Münzstraße 10. That space constituted a „Gallery“ which was to sporadically show individual exhibitions *and* also contain a perhaps obvious fantasy most „alternative“ spaces dream about: to develop a self valorising community/youth club/institution consolidating its base through a co-operative exchange sustained also by a desire to participate, and not just as a forum to represent ideas. If this communal desire had articulated itself at that time as a bunch of kids hanging out at openings, there are, at the present location more concrete manifestations of a network of travellers who are able to keep in touch outside of normal trading hours, constituting a second path.

Since there is a growing dispersal of interested and accumulating participants, it is not so easy or practical to keep in touch with each others programs in the limited time span of an opening. By approaching this problem as an indefinite abstract exchange where deeds and words are part of a collective assemblage, a concrete mechanism for interaction and delayed reaction was brought into action. A space – an attic and part of a stairwell – was developed to provide for this multivalent dangling conversation. This divergence is more self reflexive, participatory and therefore hermetic in the way its audience constitutes itself, and is perhaps partly reflected in its title „Das Museum Ferner Gegenden“. It seems to work on the basis of a pit stop which functions somewhere between an

26 Bob Braine, „Animals in hand. A selection of photographs of hand held animals and evidence from the Americas“ in der „Galerie für Landschaftskunst“, Hamburg, 2.6. bis 30.6.1996.

208 oasis and a notice board. Participants partake in a less hectic and perhaps more constructive dialogue within an inter-referential body of cogs moving at different speeds and preferences providing for a maximum number of possible occurrences.

In this respect if one considers Bob Braine's production as an oscillating movement his autonomy/sovereignty within the gallery functions rather like a very deep bass that feeds back into other tracks that, as Tricia Rose points out, is sometimes called working in the red where „this leakage means that the bass will take up more space than is ‚normally‘ emptied and bleed into other deliberately emptied tracks, which gives the bass a heavier, grittier, less fixed sound“<sup>1</sup>. So downstairs in the garden there is a thematic Landschaftskunst bass to entice a peoples interests by a continual shifting of its own variables (the environment, change of artist, fallow periods) and the variables of „Das Museum Ferner Gegenden“ as it bleeds into it (for ex. Braine's semi-permanent collaborative installation with Laura Nash).

One can see that in their supplication to be considered a „Galerie/Museum“, the protagonists Anna Gudjonsdottir and Till Krause do not dependent on their numbers to articulate a modest tactical request toward self representation. As for the proper names, how they are used in these struggles will be self evident as long as a particular name functions as an axiomatic boarder or fence by which ones movements are limited, and one finds oneself part of finite personal, familial and/or institutional sets. Quite simply they are trying to constitute an amalgam of ambiguous formulations which converge on demands to formulate their problems themselves within their particular conditions, and as non denumerable flows.

To contaminate a cultural hegemony on the level of an acquired status as the so called institutions residing at Lornsenplatz 4, one has to always struggle on a plane of capital.



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One is struggling to constitute a very minor cultural set of variable capital which only carries a potential to breach the plane. This is a contamination in which subjectivity is unfurled through the re-appropriation of communication<sup>2</sup> and the experience of co-operation. A contamination in which the material operation of re-appropriation is also a moment of self awareness. It is a period in which self organisation becomes the presupposition of an already known self valorisation; one which perhaps never ceased (at least in the form of resistance).

One should stress though that the recognition of a contaminating history of resistance is not sufficient, unless one is able to define in this past a deep line which is neither secured by conscience nor memory, but only the continuity of a feeling of communication and co-operation which constitutes a buzz, hum or wound which irritates and bleeds incessantly as it breaches the equilibrium of the dominant sets. KIRON KHOSLA

#### Anmerkungen

1) Tricia Rose, Black Noise, Wesleyan/New England 1994, p.76.

2) They have several publications available through a publishing company called „Kleine Reihe für den Spaziergänger“, and also produce a small pamphlet newsletter: „Mitteilungen des Museums Ferner Gegenden“. For more general information please call 040/3893364.