

Politics of Space

Conference in the context of the exhibition „On Difference #2: Grenzwertig“

7. – 9. April 2006

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

With contributions by

Solomon Benjamin

Iara Boubnova

Francisco Ali Brouchoud

Stefan Constantinescu

flyingCity

Javor Gardev

Ligia Nobre

Kyong Park

Gabriele Steffen

Krassimir Terziev

Joseba Zulaika

In the context of the exhibition “On Difference #2: Grenzwertig” Württembergischer Kunstverein and Heinrich Böll Stiftung BW are organizing the **conference “Politics of Space”**. The aim is to highlight and explore in greater depth various aspects of the exhibition. One focus is on a critical reflection of the **political and economic background of urban developments**, which will be discussed both in the local and global context. Taking the city of Sofia as an example, it is planned to analyze the profound **changes of the visual culture** in so-called post-communist societies. The **Bilbao Guggenheim Museum**, together with other “cathedrals” of the Basque city, will be reflected in regards to an “ethnography of desire”. At the same time, the focus will also be on informal practices of **reappropriating public spaces**, for example in Indian metropolises, or approaches to the “**social city**”. In addition to a more detailed analysis of the changing situations in major cities and booming metropolises – and the question of where and how social and cultural free spaces are organized in these contexts – the aim is also to examine “non-places” by example of **border regions**: as “screens” that are both ideologically charged and characterized by economic power structures – and which can be also interpreted as open spaces of action. In addition to lectures by artists, curators, sociologists, urbanists and architects, the symposium will also feature films.

The conference will be held in English language!

PROGRAMME

Friday, 7. April 2006

7:00 pm

Welcoming Address

Heike Schiller-Schenten,
Head of Heinrich Böll Stiftung BW

Introduction

Director of Württembergischer Kunstverein

Ligia Nobre, São Paulo

Architect, co-founder and co-director of EXO experimental org.

São Paulo S.A. Archive: 3 case studies

Ligia Nobre presents the "São Paulo S.A." project and 3 ongoing researches developed in a collaborative working ground by artists and authors from different contexts. They focus on possible representations of the metropolis of São Paulo – the economic, political and cultural epicenter of Brazil since mid-20th century.

Joseba Zulaika, E

Sociologist, till 2005 director of the Center for Basque Studies in Reno, Nevada

The Architecture of Desire: Bilbao's Four Cathedrals

It has always been said that there are three important things about Bilbao: the soccer team Athletic (its field is popularly known as "The Cathedral"), the Mother Virgin of Begoña (her basilica overlooks Bilbao), and the Bank of Bilbao (its headquarters are the tallest buildings in Bilbao). In 1997 a fourth "Cathedral" was added: the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum. The presentation will argue that the interactions between these four buildings provide a basic grounding for an ethnography of desire in Bilbao.

Saturday, 8. April 2006

11:00 am

Iris Dressler

„On Difference #2“: exhibition tour

12:30 pm

Solomon Benjamin, Urbanist, Bangalore

Beyond the Concept and into Occupant Cities

Can we open our conceptual boxes in more rooted, and interdisciplinary ways to reveal complex politics and economies that shape city formative processes? These are necessarily turbulent and very different from the 'Concept city' (drawing from De Certeau). In that hierarchical city, turbulence is sought to be contained and processes posed within a linearity of "development" progress and modernity. Is the removal of the turbulent a narrowing of the political? Can we explore, via a closer look at forms of occupancy, concepts that are beyond the hierarchical structured.

1:30 pm

Lunch

3:00 pm

Gabriele Steffen, Stuttgart/Berlin

Manager of Weeber + Partner, Institute of Urban Planning and Social Research

Dealing with difference – Concepts and examples of integrative urban renewal

New approaches to urban renewal combine urban development, social action, culture and a strengthening of the local economy, and they are founded on active participation of citizens in the district. Gabriele Steffen presents experience from the German “Soziale Stadt” (social city) programme conducted by the Federal government and Federal states, that aims to improve life opportunities in disadvantaged districts, and from the conversion of former military areas.

4:00 pm

flyingCity, Urban Research Group, Seoul

Stimulating Collective Imagination through Reorganizing the Past

The artist group “flyingCity” wants to underline the importance of informal small-scale relationships in urban environment as a reasonable alternative to institutionalized ways of urban planning processes, which are quite prevalent and violent in South Korea. In the conference the group will present its activities in regards to the artificial river Cheonggyecheon, which is located in the city center of Seoul.

5:00 pm

Iara Boubnova, Sofia

Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Sofia

Local Configuration of Global Processes through Visual Seminar

The Visual Seminar is a multidisciplinary project that analyses the developments in the urban visibility of a neo-capitalist city and society. 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 addressed using Sofia as an example and their political dimension revealed. Art actions in public space and discussion forums offer the broad public strategies for dealing with and deciphering the images.

6:00 pm

Javor Gardev, Sofia

Theatre director and artist

Credibility Gap Beyond Repair

The lecture describes and analyzes the preparation phase as well as the reception of Javor Gardev's TV-simulacrum project "Visual Police", presented in the exhibition „On Difference #2.” This project is realized in collaboration with some of the most prominent Bulgarian TV-anchors and opinion makers and explores the manipulative power of electronic media.

7:00 pm

Screenings

Krassimir Terziev, Video artist, Sofia

Battles of Troy, 2005, 51 Min.

“Battles of Troy” is a study on the internal economy of today’s globalized cinema production, seen through the eyes of the lowest unit in the hierarchy - the extras. On focus here is the making of the Blockbuster “Troy” (2004), which brought 300 extras from Bulgaria to Mexico.

8:00 pm

Stefan Constantinescu, Video artist, Stockholm

El Passaje, 2005, 62 Min.

Stefan Constantinescu’s documentary film, „El Passaje“ (the passage), is about the existential transition of three Chileans who were forced to leave Chile after the Pinochet controlled coup d’etat of 1973. All three ended up living under Nicolae Ceausescu’s communist dictatorship, and over time, two of them left for Sweden. „El Pasaje“ is a film about refugees, strangers, the past, prejudices and loneliness.

Sunday, 9. April 2006

11:00 am

Kyong Park,

a retired informal architect, a substitute curator and an aspiring urban theorist

Europe Lost and Found

With other founding member of Centrala Foundation for Future Cities (Rotterdam), Kyong Park is planning an open source research project on possible economic, political and cultural geography of future Europe. Starting with Lost Highway Expedition, a massive intelligence swarm that will move through nine major cities of ex-Yugoslavia and Albania, Europe Lost and Found, will explore the contradictions and synthesis of balkanization and europeanization, in the notion of temporary society, moving city and stateless state.

12:00 pm

Francisco Ali Brouchoud, Artist and Critic, Buenos Aires

The Rogue Zone: An Artistic Project in the Tri-Border Region between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay

How can a region become a "rogue" one? The Tri-Border Region between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay suddenly turned into a "hot" zone, with an "extra" geopolitical charge in the post 11-S world. This complex border place - a true linguistic, social, economic, cultural and political laboratory - provides a platform where contemporary artistic practices could be used as a trigger for the transformation of this enclave into a "temporary autonomous zone", in which artists, writers, thinkers, researchers and activists - in intensive engagement with local communities - promote collective thinking, reflection and activities as resistance against the hegemonic logics and narratives.

REGISTRATION

Desired

Registration and Information at

www.wkv-stuttgart.de

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Entrance Fee

Friday and Sunday: each 4 Euro, reduced 2 Euro

Saturday: 8 Euro, reduced 4 Euro

Venue

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Schlossplatz 2, D – 70173 Stuttgart

A project by

Württembergischen Kunstvereins Stuttgart

In cooperation with

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Baden-Württemberg

Supported by

Europäische Gemeinschaft, Kultur 2000

Kulturstiftung des Bundes/German Federal Cultural Foundation

Allianz-Kulturstiftung

Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen