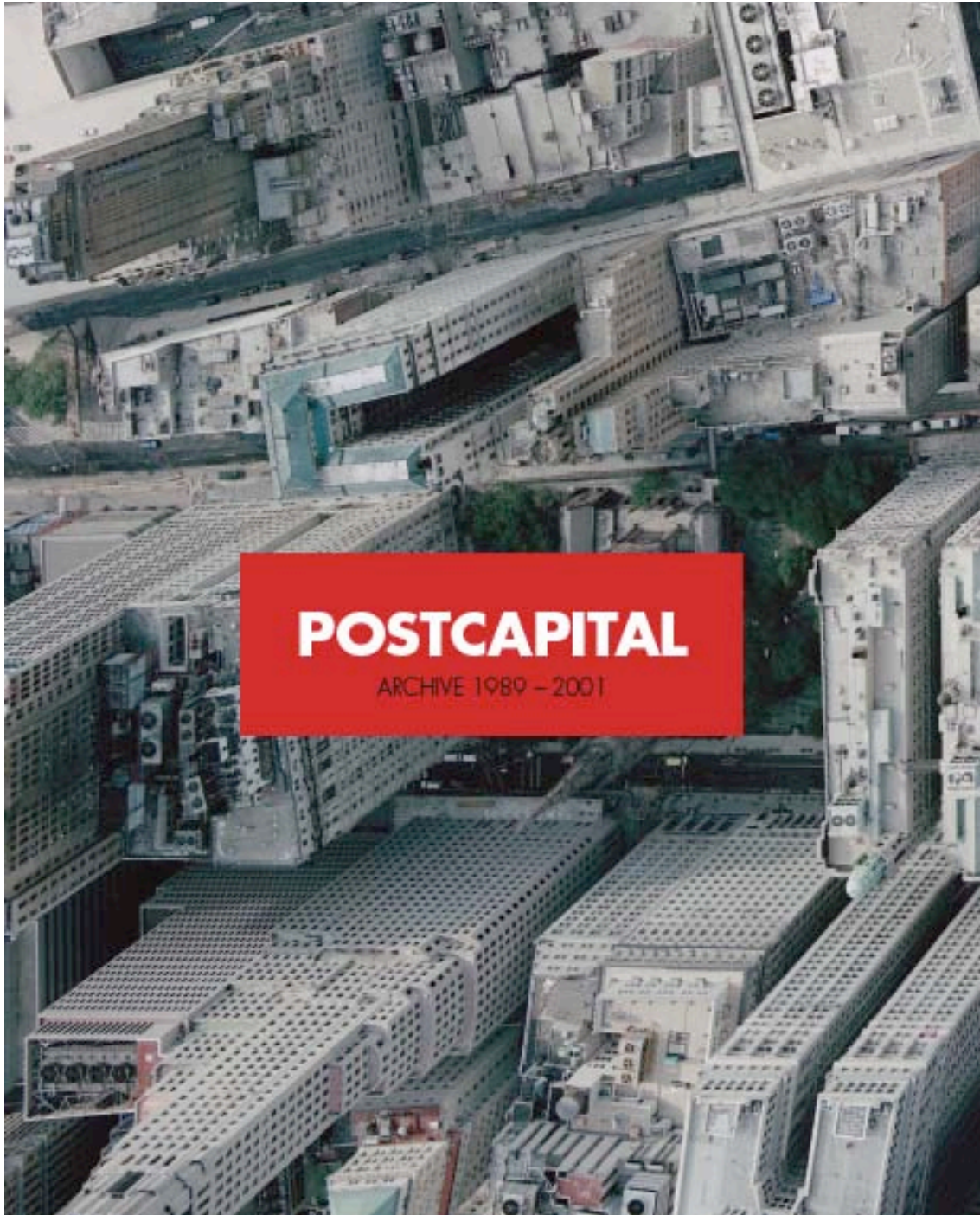




Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart



Postcapital. Archive 1989 – 2001

An art project by Daniel García Andújar / Technologies To The People
November 22, 2008 – January 18, 2009

Press conference: November 21, 2008, 2 pm

Introduction

From November 22, 2008 to January 18, 2009, the Württembergischer Kunstverein is showing Spanish artist Daniel García Andújar's project *Postcapital. Archive 1989 - 2001*. The project—conceived, in equal measure, as multimedia installation, stage, open databank, and workshop—is founded on a digital archive comprised of over 250,000 documents (texts, audio files, videos, etc.) from the Internet compiled by the artist over the past ten years. With this project, Daniel García Andújar will also participate at the Venice Biennial 2009.

Postcapital revolves around the far-reaching changes having evolved worldwide in social, political, economic, and cultural realms over the last two decades, their watershed moments emblemized in the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the attacks on September 11, 2001. Here, Andújar views the developments subsequent to the “fall of the Wall” not as aspects of postcommunism but rather of postcapitalism. Emerging here is the question as to what extent capitalist societies have changed in absence of their erstwhile counterparts and which new walls have been erected through the global politics following events of 1989 and 2001.

The triumphal course of capitalism and of the Western democracies has by no means proved to guarantee peace, security, and stability, as the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, the war in Iraq, or, even more recently, the slumps in the U.S. financial markets have demonstrated. *Postcapital* is an attempt at reading the complex and divergent realities of the twenty-first century by virtue of their forms of representation: the review of an age whose prelude has been pinpointed by Andújar as localized between 1989 and 2001.

The English term “postcapital” references financial capital as well as capital cities. As such, the project explores both the transformations of capitalist societies and the shifting of their urban loci of power.

In 1989, the first cornerstones were laid at the Genevan research institute CERN for the World Wide Web, the significance of which for the transition from industrial to knowledge society has been sufficiently noted. *Postcapital* therefore alludes less to the utopias of a vanquished capitalism than to those upheavals affecting all areas of life that are both spawned and exacted by the networked age of information.

In view of contemporary information and storage media, knowledge is, according to the artist's theory, no longer acquired by visiting archives but rather through life in the networked archives. Thus, an essential role is inherent in the interpretation of information. In this sense, *Postcapital* is an open model for traversing archives, as metaphorical as it is practical and implementable.

Postcapital. Archive 1989 - 2001: Scenarios

Postcapital, first shown in 2006 at the art institution La Virreina in Barcelona, is presented in a different way at each exhibition space it graces. In Stuttgart, the presentation consists of an ensemble of accessible exhibition modules portraying the outside view of an “urban silhouette” shifted from the center. The video montages, images, and documents which can be seen inside are all based on Andújar’s digital archive and are focused on various contextual aspects.



Exhibition view at Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (Archive), 2008

Chronology

The expansive setting is framed by a voluminous frieze of images delineating a subjective chronology of events having taken place between 1989 and 2001. The first and last images are derived from an advertising campaign in a South African daily newspaper operating with the slogan “The world can change in a day.” One motif shows the Berlin Wall on November 8, 1989 and the other the square at New York’s World Trade Center on September 10, 2001.

Private/Public

Contrasted on two respective banners are logos of globally operating companies opposite names of left-wing organizations: in proxy for, on the one hand, the privatization of almost all public spheres of life and, on the other hand, the reappropriation of public scopes of agency.

Media Noise

Positioned in front of the “urban silhouette” is an open video installation drawing on “old-media” archive inventory. It interrelates Cold War propaganda films, political advertisements, entertainment “for men” (soccer; sex), commercials and financial news.

Modules

The “urban silhouette,” a labyrinthine ensemble of exhibition modules, can be accessed through two entrances where visitors encounter a video projection. One shows a video montage of documentations of walls being stormed. The other shows a helical camera pan along the satellite image of a metropolis. Only upon second glance is the urban texture recognizable as “Ground Zero.”

Border Crossings

The six exhibition modules connecting the two entrances contain audio, image, and video collages focusing on the various contexts. The space adjacent to the “storming of walls” presents various declassified documents related to the “revolutions of 1989” in Eastern Europe. Highlighted here are, furthermore, a series of other events that provoked or heralded decisive changes in 1989: for instance, the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing, the invasion of U.S. troops in Panama, or the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

9/11 Mysteries

The exhibition module next to “Ground Zero” reveals different counterstatements to the official reports on the attacks of September 11, 2001—such as, for example, a video documentation substantiating how the collapse of the World Trade Center towers could only have been caused by targeted explosions. The aim here is not to corroborate or to invalidate any particular theory but rather to explore the question of what its collective credibility is dependent on. At the same time, Andújar references Pinochet’s military coup on September 11, 1973 in Chile.

Red Box/Black Box

Situated at the center of the architectural ensemble are two exhibition modules, one red and one black. The red box comprises sources like the “Marxists Internet Archive” or a compilation of various musical interpretations of the “Internationale.” In the black box, Andújar shows his video work *Honor*, which interweaves images of war and terror from computer games, newscasts, amateur documentations, and advertising campaigns. In contrast, he examines the representational forms of resistance in a slideshow, collecting images of the global demonstrations against the war in Irak, which took place on March 20, 2003.

Cartographs and Diagrams

Forming a “hub” between the different spatial segments, an open booth houses a collection of maps and diagrams that present distinct interpretations of globally entwined social, political, and economic changes. An animation interlinking the satellite images of current megacities and agglomerations likewise points to an altered perception of the world.

Archive and Workshop

The “heart” of the archive—the server—is concealed behind the “urban silhouette.” Through different computers networked with the archive server visitors are provided with direct access to the entire stock of data in the archive. They can use it for personal research, to copy materials, to intervene in the archive’s classification scheme, or to present their own selection from the archive on monitors. In addition, a series of events will be held in the archive section.

Library

As element decoupled from the archive section, the digital library offers access to writings, texts, videos, and audio documents from, or about, over two hundred authors who have enduringly influenced current thought. A selection from the inventory will be made available in printed form.



Exhibition views, Württembergischer Kunstverein, 2008

Statement

by Daniel García Andújar, Ivan de La Nuez, Carlos Garaicoa
(in the frame work of the exhibition „Postcapital. Politics, City, Money“, La Virreina, Barcelona, 2006)

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist bloc, Eastern European countries entered a phase termed “postcommunist.” Within barely a decade, this diverse process—sometimes peaceful, other times violent (as in the countries of former Yugoslavia)—became the focus of attention for programs, studies, diagnostics, theories, warnings, criticism, and applause by analysts as diverse as Ralph Dahrendorf and Slavoj Žižek, Timothy Garton Ash and Grzegorz Ekiert, Vesna Pusić and Tibor Papp, John le Carré and Frederick Jameson, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt . . .

The West, under the umbrella of a range of emergency measures—a postmodern, and stingier, version of the former Marshall Plan for Europe following the Second World War—laid down a series of economic, political, and doctrinal recipes with a view to establish a free-market order in the former communist territories. Whether by means of shock therapies, as in Russia, or through more moderate programs, their efforts were aimed at converting those countries to capitalism and the market economy—all according to the basic rules of liberal democracy and the reformulation of their international relations (life under the rulings made by the IMF, entry into the European Union, NATO membership, etc.).

Barely two decades later (seventeen years to be exact), we see that, in spite of theories about the end of history—having presaged a boring and relaxed eternity for capitalism—the West is involved in a process of changes that are only just beginning to be considered in their full magnitude. From both the right and the left, from Robert Kaplan to the penultimate recycling of Francis Fukuyama, as well as Ulrich Beck and Oskar Lafontaine, the belief that the world order had been resting on a secure foundation started to explode in worrying fashion.

Without its dancing partner in the modern era (socialism), we have started to discover liberalism as being more and more orthodox and less and less democratic. The old East-West standoff has given way to a confrontation between the West and the Arab world, between Christianity and Islam, between democracy and terrorism. And all this has given rise to a new geopolitical map, the beginnings of which may be situated, chronologically, in the attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States.

To sum it up in a sentence: the Berlin Wall also collapsed on the West. And quasi-sacred terms, having played a leading role in bringing down the governments and the borders in the former communist empire countries—“solidarity,” “transparency”—were buried under the rubble of the old walls and the foundations of the new walls being put up in new global politics. We call this situation “postcapital.”

Daniel García Andújar / Technologies To The People

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Daniel García Andújar uses irony and presentation strategies that employ new communication technologies to question the democratic and equalitarian promises of these media and criticise the desire for control lying behind their apparent transparency. Based on the confirmation that new information and communication technologies are transforming our everyday life, Daniel G. Andújar created a fiction (*Technologies To The People*, 1996) designed to make us increase our awareness of the reality around us and of the deception in promises of free choice that are converted, irremissibly, into new forms of control and inequality. A long-time member of *irational.org* (international reference point for art on the web) and founder of *Technologies To The People*, he is the creator of numerous projects on the Internet such as *art-net-dortmund*, *e-barcelona.org*, *e-valencia.org*, *e-seoul.org*, *e-wac.org*, *e-sevilla.org*, *Materiales de artista*, etc. He has directed numerous workshops for artists and social collectives in different countries.

Exhibitions (Choice)

2009

Venice Biennial (Catalan Pavilion, with: Archivo F. X./Pedro G. Romero, sitesize; curator: Valentín Roma)

Postcapital Archive (1989 – 2001), Centro de Arte Tomàs y Valiente, Fuenlabrada

2008

Postcapital Archive (1989 – 2001), Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart

Kunst im Zeitalter des Geistigen Eigentums, Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund

Mediating Conflict, Maison de La Culture, Montreal

Herramientas del Arte, Parpalló, Valencia

Irational.org - Tools, Techniques and Events 1996-2006, Kuda, Novi Sad

2007

Irational.org - Tools, Techniques and Events 1996-2006, Center for Contemporary Art, Aarhus

2006

Irational.org - Tools, Techniques and Events 1996-2006, Center for Contemporary Art, Glasgow; Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund

Photo España, 2006, Madrid

Postcapital, City, Money, Politic, La Virreina, Barcelona

Close window. Refresh, Senko Studio, Viborg

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Press conference

Friday, November 21, 2008, 2 pm

Opening

Friday, November 21, 2008, 7 pm

Artist's Tour

Saturday, November 22, 2008, 1 pm

An exhibition by

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

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Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler

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La Virreina, Barcelona

Centro de Arte Tomàs y Valiente, Fuenlabrada

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Press release + images

<http://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/press/2008/press-releases>

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