

Acts of Voicing

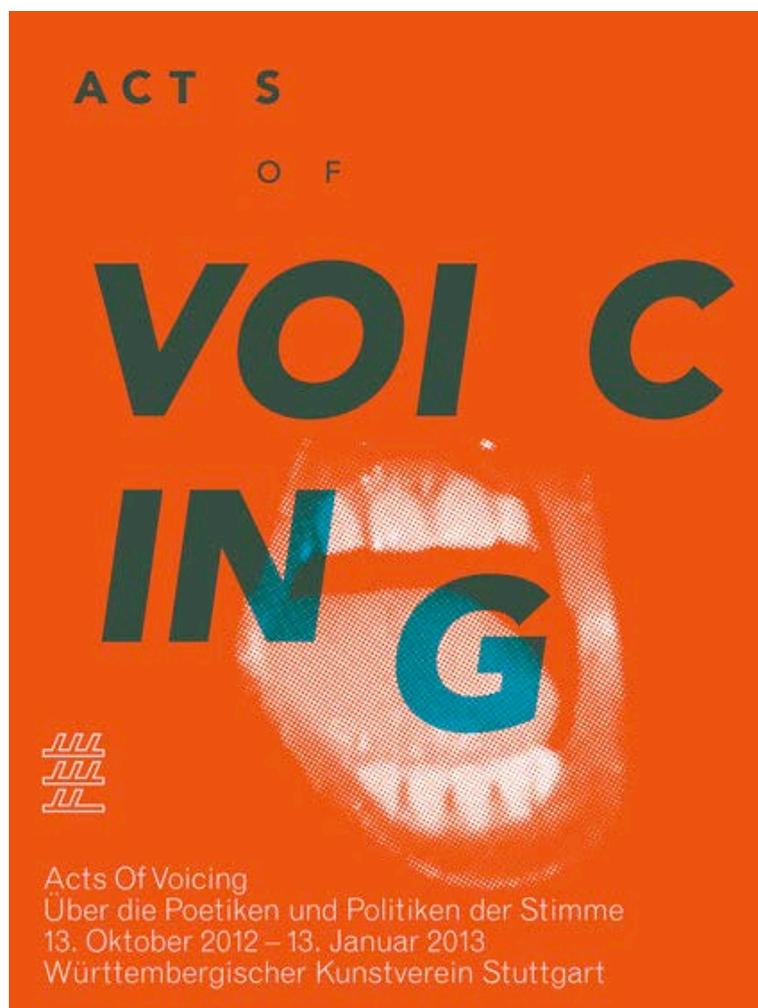
On the Poetics and Politics of the Voice

October 13, 2012 – January 13, 2013
Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Bani Abidi, Daniel García Andújar, Anonym / Transgender Voice, John Baldessari, Samuel Beckett, Gérard Courant, deufert + plischke, Ines Doujak, Juan Manuel Echavarría, Tim Etchells, Rainer Ganahl, Mariam Ghani, Gary Hill, Anette Hoffmann / Matei Bellu / Regina Sarreiter, Karl Holmqvist, Ranjit Hoskote, Jacques Lacan, Minouk Lim, Nazario Luque, Mara Mattuschka, José Pérez Ocaña, Manuel Pelmus, David Riff / Dmitry Gutov, Anri Sala, Smith / Stewart, Marcus Steinweg, Imogen Stidworthy, Raša Todosijević, Fadi Toufiq, Ingrid Wildi Merino / Decolonial Group Berlin, Katarina Zdjelar, Yang Zhenzhong **and others**

Press Meeting

Friday, October 12, 2012, 11 a.m.



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A project by

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Partners

Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong
Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul
Căminul Cultural, Bucharest

Curators

Hans D. Christ / Iris Dressler
Christine Peters
Cosmin Costinas
Natalie Boseul Shin

Main Funders

Funded by



In cooperation with



INTRODUCTION

The voice is difficult to grasp. In contrast to the eye or the ear, it is not an integrative organ of the senses but is rather spawned by the transient interplay among several organs, such as the lungs, vocal chords, tongue, and gums. The voice always simultaneously exists both inside and outside of the body, and its immateriality weights just as strongly as its social and political import. It equally yields screaming and talking, sense and nonsense, noise and chanting. What is more, the voice is not only a tool of articulation but always likewise associated with action: it can name things, give commands, or swear an oath, declare people innocent or man and wife. “How to Do Things with Words?” reads the title of John L. Austin’s 1962 book on speech-act therapy.

The exhibition *Acts of Voicing* deals with the aesthetic, performative, and political significance of the voice from the vantage point of visual art, dance, performance, and theory. The exhibition centers on the agency and performativity of the voice. The aim is to examine both the resistive and the disciplined/disciplining voice—those voices that are heard and others that are not. Fighting to have one’s voice heard is as much of a topic as the power to silence someone or to force them to speak.

Acts of Voicing, which evinces specially designed exhibition architecture, not only presents exhibits of more than 30 artists but is also conceived as a stage for performances, workshops, and lectures. Moreover, it embodies a series of process-related installations, which are expanded during the course of the exhibition and are thus perpetually shifting the overall scenario. In lieu of a static space, an ever-changing experiential space is engendered, through which the exhibition visitors advance along different planes, even physical ones. Both the exhibition choreography and the way it is displayed accommodate the performative character of the voice.

Based on a cooperative relationship between the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, the Para/Site Art Space in Hong Kong, the Total Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul, and Căminul Cultural in Bucharest, the project has been (and will continue to be) developed by the curators Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ, Christine Peters, Cosmin Costinas, and Nathalie Boseul Shin.

Accompanying the exhibition are a reader and a detailed program leaflet. In 2013, the exhibition will be on view in modified form at Para/Site Art Space in Hong Kong and at the Total Museum in Seoul. A book retrospectively documenting the project will be published in the fall of 2013.

THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF THE VOICE

The political implications of the voice, as explored and questioned by *Acts of Voicing*—which still resound, for example, in the German words for parliament, suffrage, and voting—hark back to ancient Greece. Aristotle, the originator of political philosophy, for instance differentiates between the bare voice (*phoné*), meaning the scream that can do little more than express desire and pain, and the meaning-producing voice (*lógos*), which may signify the just and unjust, the good and evil. This difference is—at least in the Occidental tradition of thought—constitutive of the distinction between human and animal, between bare life and political life: that is, between those excluded from the political community and those included.

For the French philosopher Jacques Rancière, in contrast, political agency—as well as aesthetic agency—consists in the constant challenging and redistribution of precisely that order which is responsible for certain voices being understood as speech and others only as screaming.

The aim is to prize open the existing orders—whether of a sensate, societal, political, spatial, or aesthetic nature—and to introduce thereto foreign elements, that is those which had previously been excluded.

In general a foreign kernel is indwelling in the voice, subsisting either totally inside or totally outside of the body. In the technical renditions of our own voice, this foreign kernel is known to pervade in a shocking way. It seems, as Slavoj Žižek has noted, as though the voice had never completely belonged to the body of the speaker, as if a hint of ventriloquism were taking place while speaking.

Acts of Voicing traces this foreign kernel, that is, this paradox, of the voice—at once familiar and foreign, internalized and externalized, tied to and detached from the body (and words). For it is the gap between the own and the foreign, the inside and the outside voice, that unbolts the space of the political and poetical.

THE EXHIBITION

The Exhibition Choreography

As a transdisciplinary project, *Acts of Voicing* queries not only the relations between the visual arts, dance, performance, and theory, but also the realignment of their spaces of agency and performativity. How can the structures of time, action, and movement—and the relationship between author, exhibit, and visitor—be newly and fluently distributed in an exhibition context?

The focal aspect here is a series of performative installations, arrays of archival materials, and working platforms that are continually expanded and shifted by the artists and visitors over the course of the exhibition. At the same time, these elements create the space and framework for events like performances, lectures, discussions, workshops, and film programs, all of which additionally traverse the exhibition and set out to redraft it. Here, the *Emergence Room* by **deufert + plischke** provides the cardinal structure, interlaced with further stations, that integrates the mood, actions, and knowledge of the visitors into the exhibition. The installations by **Daniel García Andújar**, **Fadi Toufiq**, and **Minouk Lim** moreover provoke points of intersecting with public space.

Acts of Voicing has been conceptualized as an overall display and fabric that breeds ever new and surprising readings and relationships between artwork and event, exhibition and performance, the spatial situation and the viewers, art and theory.

Facets of the Exhibition

The exhibition, which aspires neither to cyclopedic scope nor to homogeneous, self-contained discourse on the topic of the voice, revolves around various different overlaying, multivocal aspects:

The Foreign Kernel of the Voice

There is hardly another work that has staged the “foreign kernel of the voice” as impressively as **Samuel Beckett**’s piece *Not I* (1972), where an apparently discarnate, erratic mouth has been possessed by a voice. It incessantly produces speech that radically unsettles the familiar order of language and identity, body and voice. The corporeal and mediatic language experiments of **Gary Hill** and **Karl Holmqvist** likewise strive to agitate this order.

The Voice of the Other

In research on postcolonial, gender, and queer studies, the investigation of the voice of the other, the foreign, and how these are heard is of central import. A series of artworks and projects in the exhibition seize upon these contexts. The order that is responsible for certain voices being heard not as speech but as simple noise is particularly apparent in the history of a collection of voice recordings of the Namibian populace that were captured in 1931 by the German Hans Lichtenecker. For many years treated purely as sound samples, the recordings have only recently been translated. In the process it came to light that very poignant words were being addressed to the German people and government . . .

Taking recourse to indigenous forms of knowledge, the artist **Ines Doujak** explores the language and operational character of textiles in her image and text montages. **John Baldessari**, in contrast, endeavors to teach a plant the alphabet in his “educational film.” The Occidental concept of knowledge and speech are thus taken to the point of absurdity.

Dissent and Disobedience

Exemplifying the appropriation and redistribution of public space are works by the Spanish artist **José Pérez Ocaña**, a protagonist of the nineteen-eighties queer underground scene in Barcelona—public actions resembling a mix of carnival, flamenco, and Catholic processions.

The Unspeakable

A variety of artists and choreographers involved in the exhibition are concerned with articulations of the unspeakable, such as “angst” or death. In **Anri Sala**’s video work *Natural Mystic*, for instance, we see and hear how a man is mimicking the sound of a Tomahawk missile in a penetrating way. And in **Yang Zhenzhong**’s video piece *I Will Die*, we come to witness the dilemma inherent to saying the sentence “I will die” out loud.

Controlling and Disciplining the Voice

A speech therapist, like the one observed by **Katarina Zdjelar** in her video work *The Perfect Sound*, is responsible for dispelling foreign and aberrant qualities from speech. In contrast, the forensic analysis of voice and language circumscribed by **Imogen Stidworthy** in her multipart work (-) taps into precisely such foreign and aberrant facets of pronunciation. The focus here is not on the norm, but rather on the uniqueness of the voice. Has the aberrant always been suspicious?

The Power of Speech

Touching on rhetorical tirades, as brought to bear in totalitarian societies, is for instance **Raša Todosijević**’s performance *Was ist Kunst?*, where the artist asks another person this particular question again and again. At the same time, the performance references interrogation techniques, that is, ways in which violence is deployed to make people talk. **Mariam Ghani**’s installation *The Trespassers* likewise takes up the issue of interrogation—or rather, interrogation protocols—and studies their (re)translation back into spoken language. In his longstanding photo project *Lectures/Seminars*, **Rainer Ganahl** examines the exclusive spaces of academic speech, which in turn takes peculiar forms in **Jacques Lacan**’s only television appearance of 1974.

CREDITS AND DATES

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On the Poetics and Politics of the Voice

October 13 2012–January 13, 2013

A project by

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Partners

Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong
Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul
Căminul Cultural, Bucharest

Idea

Iris Dressler

Core Group

Nancy Adajania
Daniel García Andújar
Hans D. Christ
Cosmin Costinas
Iris Dressler
Martina Hochmuth
Ranjit Hoskoté
Manuel Pelmus
Christine Peters
David Riff
Natalie Boseul Shin
Ingrid Wildi Merino

Curators

Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler, Christine Peters (Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart)
Cosmin Costinas (Para/Site Art Space, Hong Kong)
Natalie Boseul Shin (Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul)

Funded by

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ProLab, Stuttgart

In cooperation with

Allianz Kulturstiftung

PRESS

Press contact

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Press meeting

Friday, October 12, 2012, 11 a.m.

Press images (.jpg, 300 dpi)

www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/press/2012/press-pictures

Press text (.doc and .pdf)

www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/press

PROGRAM (selection)

The complete program will be published soon and will be updated regularly at www.wkv-stuttgart.de

Friday, October 12, 2012, 7 p.m.

OPENING

Saturday, October 13, 2012

CONFERENCE + PERFORMANCES

Language: English

1 p.m.–3:45 p.m.

INTRODUCTION

Iris Dressler, *On the Poetics and Politics of the Voice*

LECTURE PERFORMANCE

Ranjit Hoskote

LECTURE

Marcus Steinweg, *The Voice of Chaos*

Marcus Steinweg talks about the methodical approach of the philosophical-artistic diagram, which he developed for the exhibition.

4–6:30 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF WORKS AND PROJECTS

Daniel García Andújar

Fadi Toufiq

Imogen Stidworthy

Nathalie Boseil Shin

7 p.m.

TEXT PERFORMANCE

Tim Etchells, *Let Go*

A text performance, poem and sound piece in which language is decaying and multiplying at a breaking and repeating point.

8 p.m.

PERFORMANCE

Ingrid Wildi Merino / Group Decolonial, *Arquitectura de las transferencias. La híbris del punto cero* (Architecture of Transitions. The Hybris of the Zero Point), 2012

Sunday, October 14, 2012

CONFERENCE + PERFORMANCES

Language: English

11 a.m.–2 p.m.

LECTURES

Nancy Adajania

David Riff / Dmitry Gutov, *The KMSEL* (Karl Marx School Of English Language)

LECTURE PERFORMANCE

Manuel Pelmus

Friday, October 19, 2012, 8 p.m.

PERFORMANCE

Apparatus 22, *Patterns of Aura*

In the framework of the conference *Other Knowledge*

Saturday, October 20, 2012, 8 p.m.

LECTURE

Angela Melitopoulos, *Wanderlinien*

In the framework of the conference *Other Knowledge*

Friday, November 2, 2012, 7 p.m.

FILM PROGRAM

Antoni Muntadas + Marshall Reese, *Political Advertisement VIII 1952–2012*

Video, 1984–2012, ca. 90 min., English

Saturday, December 1, 2012, 7 p.m.

PERFORMANCE

Xavier Le Roy: *Product of Circumstances*

Followed by a talk

Xavier Le Roy, Christophe Wavelet

Language: English

Wednesday, December 5, 2012, 7 p.m.

LECTURE

Anette Hoffmann

December 6–9, 2012

LECTURE + WORKSHOP

deufert + plischke

Friday, December 7, 2012, 7 p.m.

LECTURE

Janez Janša, Janez Janša, *NAME Readymade*

Language: English

Saturday, December 8, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

LECTURES + PANELS

Bojana Kunst, *The Paradox of Voiced Silence*

Mladen Dolar, *What's in a name, what's in a voice?*

Language: English

Friday, December 2012, 7 p.m.

LECTURE

Ramón Grossfoguel, *On Decolonial Studies*

Language: English

Friday, January 11, 2013, 7 p.m.

PERFORMANCE

Neto Machado: *Agora*

Language: English

GUIDED TOURS

Free Guided Tours

Each Sunday, 3 p.m.

Curators' Tours

Wednesday, October 31, 2012, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, November 14, 2012, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 12, 2012, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, January 9, 2013, 7 p.m.

HOURS

Tue, Thu - Sun: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. / Wed: 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

ENTRANCE FEES

Exhibition: 5 Euros / 3 Euros reduced / members free

WORKS AND PROJECTS IN THE EXHIBITION (Selection)
(Courtesy, if not otherwise noted: the artists)

Bani Abidi

born 1971 in Karachi (PK), lives and works in Delhi (IN), Karachi, and Berlin (DE)

The Speech Writer, 2011

10 flip books in a box, Raking Leaves publishing, 28 x 24 x 3 cm

www.baniabidi.com/works.html



Taking the form of a ten-part flip book, *The Speech Writer* is a fictional video documentary about a political speechwriter. The protagonist, a retired speechwriter who has spent his whole life composing the speeches of others, has installed a microphone in his apartment that is connected to the numerous loudspeakers attached to the front of his building. Every day he uses this setup to send messages to the outside world. Yet we still cannot hear him, as we are only privy to the mute gestures of his mouth.

Daniel García Andújar

born 1966 in Almoradí (ES), lives and works in Barcelona (ES)

Erik, the Ventriloquist, 2012

Installation, workshop, and performances in public space

Production: Württembergischer Kunstverein and Technologies To The People

www.danielandujar.com



Daniel García Andújar's installation and work platform, developed in the scope of this exhibition, investigates the forms in which protest and resistance are articulated in public space—and also how they are controlled by governmental authorities. He questions the hierarchies of power and its control mechanisms, performed by politicians, civic and state security forces and other actors in the theatre of public space. The installation consists of a costume/gear comparable to a ventriloquist's kit, which Andújar transformed into a performative "anti-anti-riot kit". It furthermore comprises flags, stencils, and other utensils of protest as well as a compilation of digital manuals and tools concerning the contested space of the city. The installation serves as the point of departure for a workshop and public performances.

Anonym, Transgender Voice 3

Video, Youtube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7qSJ19f_QU, 8:28 Min.



A young man/woman demonstrates in one of several youtube-appearances how he/she can shift between a 'male' and 'female' voice.

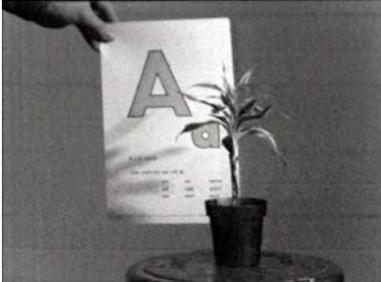
John Baldessari

born 1931 in National City (USA), lives and works in Santa Monica (USA)

Teaching a Plant the Alphabet, 1972

Video, 18:40 min., b/w, sound

Courtesy: Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York



Conceived as the futile act of eliciting a speech act from a plant, *Teaching a Plant the Alphabet* is an absurd lesson in matters of alphabetization.

Samuel Beckett

born 1906 in Foxrock near Dublin (IE), died 1989 in Paris (FR).

Not I, 1977

Video, 15:06 min., b/w, sound, BBC, based on the eponymous piece from 1972

Performer: Billie Whitelaw

www.ubu.com/film/beckett_not.html

Courtesy: BBC, London



Not I is a twenty-minute-long theater monologue that premiered in September 1972 at the Forum Theater in New York and was later produced as a TV play for the BBC in 1977 under the direction of Tristram Powell. While in the theater version there are two actors, "Mouth" and "Auditor," the television version is limited to "Mouth" only, with the mouth of actress Billie Whitelaw seen up close during the entire play. In a breathtaking tempo, Mouth yields a barrage of fragmentary sentences arranged through repetition and loops, indirectly telling the story of a woman who is suffering from a certain unnamed trauma. The woman has been nearly completely mute since childhood, with the exception of the occasional outburst. Mouth incessantly professes that she was not the person experiencing the events she is describing: "what? ... who? ... no! ... she!" In an affecting way, *Not I* revolves around the foreign kernel inherent to every voice, which here has taken possession of a mouth that has apparently become detached from the body. Simultaneously arising from this struggle to break free from the phallogocentric order of language is the possibility and impossibility of feminine speech.

deufert + plischke

Katrin Deufert, born 1973, and Thomas Plischke, born 1975, live and work in Berlin (DE)

Emergence Room, since 2010

Installation and workshop, modified

www.emergenceroom.net



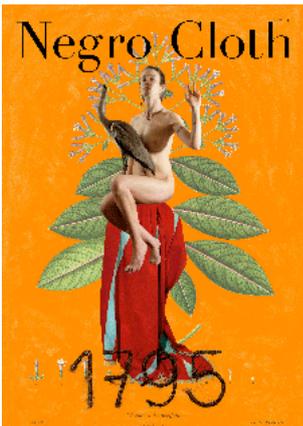
Since 2001, Katrin Deufert and Thomas Plischke have been working together as the artist twin deufert + plischke. In 2010 they initiated the *Emergence Room* project, an artistically configured working space that changes depending on the context. The *Emergence Room* alludes to the mythological figure of Arachne from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, whose art of weaving was legendary. Her skills and self-assurance were challenged by the goddess Athena, who turned Arachne into a spider after a weaving contest. In their performative installation, deufert + plischke seize upon the metaphor of weaving and interweaving patterns and thoughts, thus circling various aspects of the exhibition. Found here are an assortment of materials and tools that may be used and supplemented by exhibition visitors (and also by participants in a related workshop), allowing the archive to continually grow and change. Moreover, deufert + plischke have set up modules at various stations in the exhibition at which visitors can record their thoughts on a certain artwork and later publish them in *Emergence Room*. The objective is to integrate the visitors or users of the exhibition as multivocal commentators, interpreters, and prompters.

Ines Doujak

born 1959 in Klagenfurt (A), lives and works in Vienna (A)

Webschiffe, Kriegspfade, 2011–2013

Eccentric archive 17/48, series of seventeen posters and one booklet, work in progress



Ines Doujak's poster series was created against the backdrop of a research project where the artist selected objects from a collection of Andean textiles—from her "eccentric archive"—to be sent to experts all over the world, requesting that they enter into communication with the objects. Indigenous forms of knowledge that imbue the textiles with wisdom, agency, and speaking abilities were to be employed and taken seriously. The posters each display a visual interpretation of the objects accompanied by three texts that respectively refer to a history of the colonization of colors and fabrics, to a revolutionary date related to textile production, and to an instance of correspondence.

Juan Manuel Echavarría

born 1947 in Medellín (CO), lives and works in New York (USA)

Guerra y Pa, 2001

Video, 8:37 min., color, sound

http://jmehavarría.com/gallery/video/gallery_video_guerra_pa.html



The two protagonists of this video work, a pair of parrots, take to the “stage” one after another, the stage being a wooden construction resembling a cross on which they play out an acrobatic, dance-like battle for territorial supremacy. Identifiable in the cawing of the parrots are the words “guerra” (war) and “pa(z)” (peace).

Bocas de Ceniza (Mouths of Ash), 2003–2004

Video, 18:15 min., color, sound

http://www.jmechavarria.com/chapter_bocasdeceniza.html



The title of this video piece references the name of an estuary in Columbia where victimized corpses of the drug war are found on a regular basis. As a sequence of faces, we see eight people of varying age and gender telling us their personal stories through song—influenced by the violence and forced displacement that result from the armed conflicts persisting in Columbia since 1948.

Tim Etchells

born 1962 in Sheffield (UK), lives and works in Sheffield

Void Story, 2009-2012

Installation (Three-channel video projection and photo-prints), 81 min.

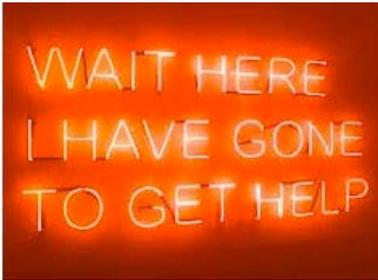
Production: Forced Entertainment and Württembergischer Kunstverein



Originally presented as a performance in 2009 by the British author, director, and visual artist Tim Etchells and the Sheffield-based Forced Entertainment theater company which he leads, *Void Story* is a dark-comedic, contemporary fable. Etchells text and collage-images combine to tell the story of the nerve-wrecking odyssey of two haunted protagonists navigating the dwindling vestiges of contemporary culture. Robbed, shot at, and stung by insects, they traverse one eerie urban landscape after the next, are hounded through underground tunnel systems, stow away in refrigerator trucks, shack up in spooky hotels, and wander through patches of wilderness, seedy streets, and annual fairs. They travel right into the blackest blackness of night with no stars in sight. Tim Etchells has adapted this performance for *Acts of Voicing* as an audiovisual installation for the first time.

Wait Here, 2008

Neon work



Rainer Ganahl

born 1961 in Bludenz (A), lives and works in New York (USA) and Stuttgart (DE)

Seminar/Lecture (S/L), since 1995

<http://www.ganahl.info>



Naomi Klein, Open Forum, Naomi Klein, Occupy Wall Street, Liberty Square, New York, October 6, 2011, one of six photographs

Since 1995 Rainer Ganahl has been regularly photographing lectures and seminars, most of which are held at Ivy League schools in the United States and feature prominent leaders in discourse on art and critical theory, such as Giorgio Agamben, Jeff Wall, Rosalind E. Krauss, Slavoj Žižek, Judith Butler, or Angela Davis. He goes beyond showing us each particular speaker in action to also include the audience and the image projections accompanying most lectures. Ganahl observes the various ways in which space, bodies, objects, and technologies are arrayed.

Mia Farrow, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Crisis Darfur: A Conversation with Mia Farrow and Bernard-Henri Lévy, The French Institute/Alliance Française, New York, 29.4.2008
6 photographs

Jeff Wall, Willem de Rooij, Total Visibility, The artists, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 17.4.2009
4 photographs

Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, Crisis and Hope, Theirs and Ours, Riverside Church, New York, 12.6.2009
4 photographs

T. J. Clark, Luc Tuymans, A Conversation with Luc Tuymans and T. J. Clark, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, 10.11.2009
8 photographs

Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, Angela Davis & Toni Morrison, New York Public Library, New York 27.10.2010
6 photographs

Judith Butler, Hannah Arendt and the Politics of the Street, Parsons, New York, 14.4.2011
4 photographs

Naomi Klein, Open Forum, Naomi Klein, Occupy Wallstreet, Liberty Square, New York, 6.10.2011
6 photographs

Boris Groys, Answering Marx: From the Artwork to the Installation, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 11.5.2012
6 photographs

Linda Nochlin, Gericault and Goya and Images of Misery, School of Visual Arts, New York, 12.8.2011
6 photographs

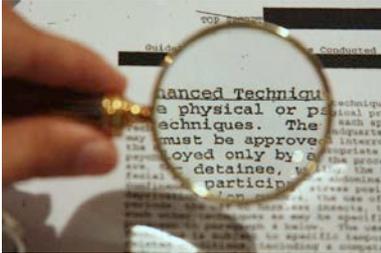
Mariam Ghani

born 1978 in New York (USA), lives and works in New York

The Trespassers, 2010–2011

Installation with video (105 min., color, sound) and archive

Commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation



The Trespassers is based on freely accessible English records of investigations into and interrogation transcripts originating from U.S. military prisons in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo and black sites. The video work shows a hand that tirelessly traces the flow of text in these documents with a magnifying glass. Offscreen, two different voices simultaneously translate the visible text into Arabic and Dari. Here the voices appear to be propelling the speed of the hand, which in turn fuels the gaze of the beholder to an accelerated pace that impedes the reading. Image and sound, voice and language are perpetually drifting apart in this (re)translation of a translation. Even when perusing the original documents, provided along with further contextual material in the archive alongside the video, the sound of translation constantly impinges on the reading. In creating *The Trespassers*, Ghani worked with interpreters from the Iraqi and Afghan diasporas, drawing from the same the same pool of people employed by the military to provide simultaneous translation during the interrogation of their compatriots—only to have their own loyalty questioned. The files show absolutely no record of their efforts, even though their spontaneous linguistic omissions, additions, and deviations—inherent to all translations—play a significant role.

Gary Hill

born 1951 in Santa Monica (USA), lives and works in Seattle (USA)

Tale Enclosure, 1985

in collaboration with George Quasha and Charles Stein

Video, 5:50 min., color, sound

Courtesy: Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York



In *Tale Enclosure*, Gary Hill explores the subconscious bodily origins of speech. The video work begins with individual words from a poem by George Quasha fading in and out, while his vocal experiments with George Stein during a performance can be heard in the background, around which the video will continue to revolve. Through a static camera setting, Hill focuses on the mouth, the face, and the hands of the performers, who are observing themselves live on a monitor and can thus influence the shots, for instance through quick movements, unsharpness, or blurring. The arrangement of the bodies and language is dissolved and reassembled in equal turn.

Anette Hoffmann/ Matei Bellu/ Regina Sarreiter

Anette Hoffmann lives and works in Cape Town (ZA)

Matei Bellu and Regina Sarreiter live and work Berlin (DE)

Unerhörter Bericht über die deutschen Verbrechen in den kolonisierten Gebieten und über das fortwährende Wirken der Gewalt bis in die Gegenwart, 2012

Digital audio records, video, wall text

In 1931, the German Hans Lichtenecker conducted a variety of anthropometric studies. He captured the faces of the indigenous population with plaster of Paris, photographed them, and recorded their voices with phonograph cylinders, whereby Lichtenecker was merely interested in the sound of their voices, not in the meaning of their

words. The voice recordings ended up in a Berlin phonogram archive where they were rediscovered through the efforts of a cultural scientist, Anette Hoffmann, and digitalized in 2007, before being later transcribed and translated in Namibia. As it turns out, the speakers of the most divergent messages—unheard for over seventy years—were addressing Germans: the messages included complaints about the practices employed by Lichtenecker, who appropriated their bodies, and descriptions of their living conditions under the regime of the German colonialism.

Karl Holmqvist

born 1964 in Västerås (SE), lives and works in Stockholm (SE) and Berlin (DE)

I'm with you in Rockland, 2005

Video, 25:03 min., b/w, sound

www.ubu.com/film/holmqvist_rockland.html

Courtesy: Galerie Neu, Berlin

I'm with you in Rockland is a text-based video work that plays on Allen Ginsberg's famous poem *Howl* of 1955 and is reminiscent of a slam poetry aesthetics. Audible is Holmqvist's voice, which is reciting an offbeat singsong of unrelated quotes taken from media, pop culture, and literature. He then reassociates the material with clichés and banalities from the realms of fashion and economics, but also with serious topics from politics, like the "War on Terror." The various quoted snippets are repeatedly linked to the central question that this video work seems to be addressing: "How do you say . . . ?" The pictorial plane is continuously black with white subtitles that determine—or, like a teleprompter, predetermine?—Holmqvist's litany.

Ranjit Hoskoté

born 1969 in Bombay (IN), lives and works in Bombay

Letters to Al-Mu'tasim, 2012

Research installation with historical documents, notes, and literature by the author

Letters to Al-Mu'tasim reverts to Jorge Luis Borges's 1944 novel *The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim*, a fictive review of an imaginary book, which among others refers to Farid ud-Din Attar's story *The Conference of the Birds*. It serves Hoskoté as trope for those "Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Indian cultural strands woven into the tapestry of Europe" (Hoskoté). This installation embodies many years of research into the cultural, economic, and philosophical confluences that have shaped the transcontinental belt stretching from Spain to Indonesia.

Jacques Lacan

born 1901 in Paris (FR), died 1981 in Paris

Psychanalyse, 1ère partie, Un certain regard, 1974

Television broadcast on March 9, 1974, ORTF, 45:58 min.

Interview by Jacques Alain Miller

Original without subtitles



In this television appearance by Jacques Lacan, the only such appearance by the French psychoanalyst (and broadcast in two parts), he answers a series of questions fielded by his son-in-law Jacques Alain Miller. The form of his speech, or communication via the medium of television, is just as fascinating as it is occasionally disconcerting and uncanny.

Minouk Lim

born 1968 in Daejeon (KR), lives and works in Seoul (KR)

Documentation and performance, 2012

International Calling Frequency

International Calling Frequency is a performance with a sound piece composed in collaboration with Minwhee Lee. The song is inspired by *The Internationale*. In contrast with the original song, *International Calling Frequency* is without lyrics. It distances itself from a political discourse, yet it performs a reinterpretation of its politicized content through the actors' humming of *The Internationale* tune. One location square at a time, the

performers gather and situate themselves at a twenty-meter distance from each other, which represents the legal distance for an undeclared protest in Korea. Disassociating itself from a call for a protest gathering, and closer in structure to a ritornello, the humming resonates in one's mind and brings people together through collective memory.
Furthermore Lim develops a new performance for the *Acts of Voicing* exhibition.

Mara Mattuschka

born 1959 in Sofia (BG), lives and works in Vienna (AT)

***Parasympathica*, 1985**

16mm on DVD, 5 min., b/w, sound

Courtesy: Sixpack Film, Vienna



The experimental film *Parasympathica* traces the binary constructions of body, consciousness, and language while simultaneously infiltrating them. The protagonist is the artist Mara Mattuschka in her role as Mimi Minus. Half of her body has been painted white and the other half black. Again and again her body spins at high speed either to the left or the right, making her divided body almost appear to be united again. From the off we hear, on the one hand, Spanish being recited—a listed account of the canon of Catholic vices and virtues, which the artist tries to mimic through various theatrical poses—and, on the other, a mundane text about butterflies—how their beauty is tied to their symmetry.

José Pérez Ocaña

born 1947 in Cantillana (ES), died 1983 in Sevilla (ES)

Various documents and materials



The artist José Pérez Ocaña, born in the Spanish province of Sevilla, counts among the protagonists of the queer underground culture in Barcelona of the nineteen-eighties, at the beginning of the political transition period following the Franco dictatorship. In his actions, performances, and parades carried out together with friends (like cartoonist Nazario) in public space—especially along the famous promenade La Rambla—a range of aesthetics mix, such as camp, carnival, Sevillian “Semana Santa” (Holy Week) and flamenco, to form unique scenarios. They are moreover characterized by ambiguous, intersexual self-representations. The same applies to Ocaña’s paintings, drawings, and sculptures, which he arranged as excessive total artworks in exhibition settings. Ocaña passed away at the age of thirty-six years after an accident at one of his parades during which his costume caught on fire.

Gérard Courant, Ocaña. *Der Engel, der in der Qual singt*, 1979

8 mm auf DVD, 10 Min., Spanisch



While visiting the Berlin film festival in 1979, Ocaña met the French filmmaker Gérard Courant, who captured his performative spirit in a Super 8 short film. Courant "invited him to go to one of the towers overlooking the Wall, at the Brandenburg Gate. As his only script, he took along a card board Marilyn Monroe. Ocaña climbed the tower, singing and taunting the cardboard. The film was made without sound, but Ocaña and Courant met up again a few month later in Cannes, where Courant asked him to dub over the soundtrack in a public performance. The result, reminiscent of the short films that Pedro Almodóvar had shown and dubbed live in Barcelona years before, is a fusion of Ocañas zany oral outpourings with his silent movie comedy gesture" (Ocaña, exh.-catalogue, 2011).

Nazario Luque, Ocaña. *El fuego infinito* (Ocaña. *The Endless Fire*)



Drawings of the costumes and scenography of the piece *Ocaña. El fuego infinito* (digital copies).
Courtesy: Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía. Agencia Andaluza de Instituciones Culturales. Consejería de Cultura y Deporte. Junta de Andalucía

Manuel Pelmus

born 1974 in Bucharest (RO), lives and works in Bucharest

preview 2012

Piece performed by Brynar Abel Bandlien

Coproduced by Württembergischer Kunstverein

The voice has repeatedly played a pivotal role in Manuel Pelmus's work. For instance in his solo piece *preview* (2007), the artist's presence is only discernible through his voice, which describes movements made by the body from behind a veil of darkness. His speech revolves around elementary questions pertaining to the boundaries of the visible body. *preview* has been further developed in 2012 for *Acts of Voicing*, where the boundaries between live performance and audio installation grow hazy, in favour of an altered hierarchy of the senses: ears ahead of eyes.

David Riff / Dmitry Gutov

Riff: born 1975, lives and works in Moscow (RU) and Berlin (DE)

The Need for Money, 2012

Installation with audio piece and 5 paintings

New production, coproduced by Württembergischer Kunstverein

The Need for Money is part and distillate of the project *The Karl Marx School of the English Language (KMSEL)*, an aesthetic re-reading of Karl Marx which started as a language workshop in Moscow in 2005. In this workshop the participants were coached to read aloud, pronounce and fully understand English translations of Marx. This practice has become a performative-painterly idiom for voicing fundamental aesthetic and political concerns. The title refers to a sentence in Karl Marx's *Capital* which is consistently repeated by an English teacher and his Russian speaking student.

Anri Sala

born 1974 in Tirana (AL), lives and works in Paris (FR)

Natural Mystic (Tomahawk #2), 2002

Video, 2:08 min., color, sound

Courtesy: Johnen Galerie, Berlin



A man enters an empty sound studio and positions himself in front of a microphone before proceeding to imitate the sound of an approaching Tomahawk missile in an impressive way.

Smith/Stewart

Stephanie Smith, b. 1968, and Edward Stewart, b. 1961, live in Glasgow (UK)

***Inside Out*, 1997**

Video, b/w, sound, 60. min.

Like many works by the Scottish artist duo Smith and Stewart, *Inside Out* can be read as a reference to the author Samuel Beckett. In his short novel, *Company*, Beckett describes an opening and closing eyelid as being "hooded. Bared." In *Inside Out* the mouth becomes an organ of fascination and the camera an organ of the gaze: we see an opening and closing mouth. When the mouth closes, the space becomes enveloped in absolute darkness and silence. Not until the mouth again opens and breathes is a white light engendered, facilitating communication between the inside and outside. This act of physically breathing alludes to the relationship between language and visualization: breath becomes image and sound, with the mouth-bound camera taking on the role of the retina, the mouth thus replacing the eye. The play on darkness and light, along with the suspension of distance between image and beholder, makes viewers aware of their breathing as a fundamental, preverbal, corporeal act.

Imogen Stidworthy

born 1963 in London (UK), lives and works in Liverpool (UK)

(.), 2011

Video installation

Courtesy: The artist and Matt's Gallery, London



Imogen Stidworthy's multipart video installation with the unusual—and unpronounceable—title (.) revolves around a man named Sacha van Loo who works for the Antwerp police and has been blind since birth. Because of his keen sense of hearing and knowledge of numerous languages and dialects, Loo conducts criminal and voice analysis. A video projection shows Loo at work, wearing headphones and concentrating on listening to an audio recording, now and again murmuring select comments. He then types something into a computer using a Braille keyboard, thus activating a voice computer that audibly renders his entries. A third text, at the same time introducing a fictional plane, deals with the sound recording itself, which we only encounter through Loo's comments. It is a passage from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel *The First Circle* in Russian. The story is about a group of imprisoned Soviet scientists and linguists who are ordered by Stalin to build two devices: one for concealing voices during telephone calls and the other for identifying voices.

A further element in this complex work of art shows 3D shots of a street that have been produced with acoustic instead of visual media, which are increasingly finding their way into the logistics of surveillance.

A third video, which is linked to a complex sound installation, follows Loo on a walk through town. We only ever see him from a posterior perspective and simultaneously listen to the sounds of his environment, one that we cannot see. We therefore localize Loo in a predominately acoustic way.

Marcus Steinweg

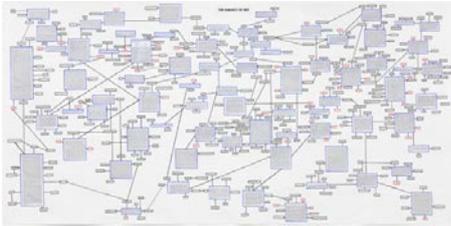
born 1971 in Koblenz (DE), lives and works in Berlin (DE)

Diagram: *The Real*, 2012

Diagram, laser print, felt-tip pen and adhesive tape on paper

Coproduced by Württembergischer Kunstverein

Courtesy: BQ, Berlin



The philosopher Marcus Steinweg is renowned for his conceptual diagrams, which he develops on various different topics and in collaboration with others, for instance the artist Thomas Hirschhorn and the artist duo deufert + plischke. The diagrams are comprised of the artist's own textual paragraphs, scientific terms, and philosophers' names, which are collaged on paper and interrelated through lines drawn with a permanent marker. These minimalist yet highly complex collages could also be considered abstract visual notions, mind maps, or concrete poetry. He is now producing a new diagram with the specifics of *Acts of Voicing* in mind.

Raša Todosijević

born 1945 in Belgrade (RS), lives and works in Belgrade

***Was ist Kunst? (What is Art?)*, 1976**

Video, 11:54 min., b/w, sound

Courtesy: Kontakt. Die Kunstsammlung der Erste Group, Vienna



This video documents a performance that Raša Todosijević presented at various locations between 1976 and 1981. A man, played by Todosijević himself, repeatedly asks one and the same question—"What is art?"—with varying degrees of aggression and exasperation, while the other person, usually a woman, just passively sits there in silence. In the video documentary we only see the face of the silent woman and the hands of the bellowing/imploping man, who touches her face with pressure that is at times gentle or stronger, slathering on black paint. The scenario evokes a multitude of associations and readings—a violent interrogation where the roles of perpetrator and victim, power and impotence, man and woman, speech and silence are clearly assigned, and where the persistent silence may also be viewed as denial and resistance. What is more, it is obvious that the powerful language of the German fascists is alluded to here—also considering the German title of the work—and thus, by implication, there is also a reference totalitarian discourse in the art world. Yet the question "What is art?" ultimately remains unanswered.

Fadi Toufiq

Author and artist, lives and works in Beirut (LB)

***Stuttgart's Tabula Rasa*, 2012**

Performative Research

Coproduced by Württembergischer Kunstverein

Fadi Toufiq developed for *Acts of Voicing* a game that fathoms the relationships between urban development, codetermination, and civic participation, and which harks back to the project Stuttgart 21.

In many cities across the world, there is either a plan or a project in progress to transfer an above-ground terminal station into an underground through station, with the aim of using the above-ground land resulting from the transformation process to erect mega real-estate projects. The ambition for new urban redevelopment projects is comparable to the perpetual neoliberal state of searching for property-led land for the accumulation of

capital. The game board considers the tabula rasa of land that is the outcome of the Stuttgart 21 project as the site of contestation among players who are competing to have a say over its use, and to obtain the right to shape the still blank cut-out land according to the plan they advocate.

Ingrid Wildi Merino / Decolonial Group Berlin

born 1963 in Santiago de Chile (CL), lives and works in Geneva (CH)

Arquitectura de las transferencias. La hibris del punto cero (Architecture of Transferences. The Hybris of the Zero Point), 2012

Performance and installation

Coproduced by Württembergischer Kunstverein and Hâute école d'art et desing, Geneva



Ingrid Wildi Merino has developed a new work based on a collaboration with the Decolonial Group Berlin. It involves a choreographed performance for six voices during which fragments from Santiago Castro Gómez's publication *La Hybris del Punto Cero* (The Hybris of the Zero Point, 2005) are recited. Taking a critical approach, *La Hybris del Punto Cero* probes the supposedly neutral discourses of the Enlightenment in Europe. Various sentence fragments from this book are distributed to different roles and then translated into a new, nonlinear order for presentation. The performance will premiere in Stuttgart in a room conceived for this specific work that contains, besides microphones, a series of portraits of pivotal figures supporting the theory of decolonization. After the premiere, the microphones will serve as loudspeakers while a video documents the performance.

Katarina Zdjelar

born 1979 in Belgrade (RS), lives and works in Rotterdam (NL)

The Perfect Sound, 2009

Video, 14:30 min., color, sound

Courtesy: The artist and CIRCUS, Berlin



In *The Perfect Sound* we observe how a speech therapist from Birmingham tries inventive ways of teaching an immigrant how to perfect his pronunciation of the English language—actually, at first we only hear the two talking, since the video work begins in utter darkness. After a while we see the picture matching the voices, with the latter emitting sounds rather than articulated speech. The point of the exercises is to overcome the telltale quality of the voice, to get rid of its foreign note. Here the British context plays a special role, since language and speech not only reveal the status of foreigner but also bring to light the last remaining, almost impervious traces of the class system.

Yang Zhenzhong

born 1968 in Hangzhou (CN), lives and works in Shanghai (CN)

I Will Die, 2000–2005

Video, color, sound

Courtesy: ShanghART Gallery, Shanghai



Over a period of five years, Yang Zhenzhong asked people all over the world at diverse public places to spontaneously say the words “I will die” into the camera.