

Nadim Vardag



Press talk 09.03.2011 11 a.m.

(Download <http://medienturm.at/presse>)

Opening 10.03.2011 6 p.m.

Shuttleservice 10.03.2011 Vienna-Graz 3 p.m.,

Graz-Vienna 10 p.m., free of charge,

registration: key@medienturm.at

Catalogue presentation 26.03.2011 4 p.m.

Period 11.03. – 30.04. 2011

Tue – Sat 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Wed – Fri 3 – 6 p.m.

Location Kunstverein Medienturm, Josefigasse 1, 8020 Graz

Curator Sandro Droschl

Series Concept Film (IV)

Catalogue cooperation Augarten Contemporary, Belvedere;

insert Kunstverein Medienturm

Cooperation Diagonale – Festival of the Austrian Film

Sponsored by Styrian Government, City of Graz

Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture

Thanks to aktuelle kunst in graz, Adam Wieland

Metallwerkstatt

Diagonale
2011
Festival des österreichischen Films
Graz, 22. – 27. März

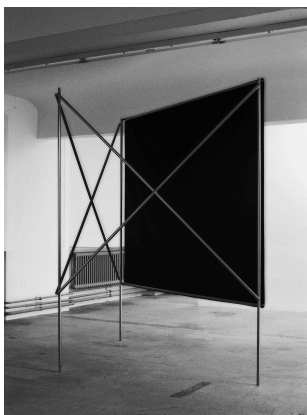
Lost in the Loop

At first glance it seems as though Nadim Vardag's art devotes itself to the cinema: it adopts the principle of the moving image, and it engages the technological and material presentation apparatus of the cinema hall, this spatial set of projector, darkroom, and canvas. It invokes it in sculptures simply called "Screens," empty surfaces in the classical screen formats of 4:3, 16:9, or Cinemascope mounted on simple scaffolds, as well as in short loops extracted from movies. And yet it would be inadequate – a product of the desire for a simple explanation, one based on content rather than addressing the structure – to claim that the "subject" of this art is "the cinema."

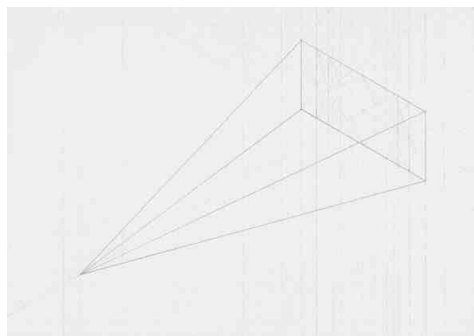
For the cinema is here more than anything an image in its own right, a placeholder. The cinema and more particularly its technological apparatus first and foremost provide the most persuasive – the most elegant and efficient – code for a principle of projection more broadly conceived – with all its iridescent ambivalence between the simple technical process of throwing a picture on a wall using a directed ray of light and the power of the imagination. In other words, to say that the cinema is the subject of this art is itself already a projection. Even if this nesting brings us to a first typical strategy of Vardag's art: to repetition, to the loop, and to their result, a reflective reduction to itself that seems to end with what is "essential."

Filmic images accordingly appear here forever only as decontextualized loops running to no more than a few seconds, appropriated from motion pictures such as Henri-Georges Clouzot's "Salaire de la Peur" (1953), Alfred Hitchcock's "Lifeboat" (1944), or Jacques Tourneur's "Cat People" (1942). Most of the scenes they show would seem to be marginal: thus the three similar yet not identical sequences from "Cat People" in which there is nothing to see but reflections of the water on the ceiling and walls of a swimming pool – brief shots into the off of filmic narrative that can generate even more suspense because they propel the beholder's imagination; but also short-circuits between two planes in which the pictures show exactly what they strictly speaking are: projections on a wall.

This self-reflective loop in which at bottom nothing is shown other than the fact that something is being shown can also be found in Vardag's installations. Thus when, at Kunstverein Medienturm Graz, he displays the display situation of the cinema hall itself: in a first room we look into sideways, a projector rests on a small tower of delicate occasional tables designed by Charles and Ray Eames. The projector casts its image through a small hole onto the far wall of an adjacent second room we again look into from one side. Relying on very simple means, the artist here cites the principle of



Nadim Vardag, *untitled*, 2008.
Stainless steel, fabric
view Künstlerhaus Stuttgart
Collection Belvedere



Nadim Vardag, *untitled*, 2007.
Pencil on paper, 14.8x21 cm

Nadim Vardag



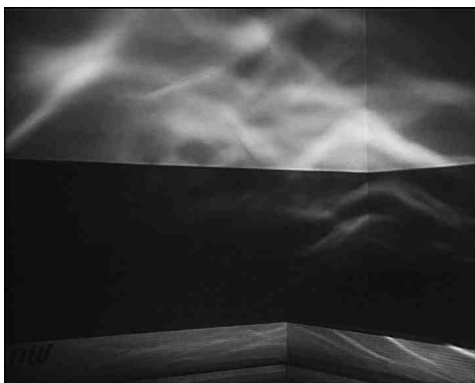
projection on which the cinema is based – its subdivision into a screening room and a projection booth – reducing it to its basic technological and spatial parameters and drily exhibiting it as such.

The same cool calculation, functionalist elegance, and minimalist “rigor” with which this art works on a revelatory reduction to the purely technological dispositif behind the pictures can be found even in the light piece of cloth in the projection-screen format of 4:3 that is loosely, even casually stretched onto a slight aluminum frame. And yet – or precisely because of this minimalist reduction taken to an extreme point, because of a repetition that works on emptying out – a specific kind of dry humor emerges: highly elegant and slick just a moment ago, these works suddenly seem to exude a certain sadness, a strange and not entirely uncomical helplessness, a sense of being lost in the loop.

So Vardag obsessively and relentlessly drags the structures framing the projection apparatus into the limelight; into a limelight in which these implements appear as precisely what they are: as apparatuses serving a projection. Yet ultimately even this “illumination” itself is revealed to be an empty or at least an evacuated gesture. What happens then is fully consistent with the circular structure of Vardag’s work: the machinery of illusion is set in motion at the very point where the art just a moment ago worked on

undoing its illusions. The emptiness that is born of repetition wants to be filled. And each unconcealment in turn results in a new concealment.

Dominikus Müller



Nadim Vardag, *Excerpt (Cat People)*, 2010.
DVD video, 2 sec. / loop



Nadim Vardag, *Excerpt (Cat People)*, 2010.
DVD video, 2 sec. / loop
all: Courtesy Georg Kargl Fine Arts

Nadim Vardag

Biography (selection)

*1980 in Regensburg, lives in Vienna

2001 – 2003 Academy of fine Arts
Nuremberg

2003 – 2006 Academy of fine Arts Vienna

Solo shows

2010 "Nadim Vardag", Augarten
Contemporary, Vienna

2009 "Permanent", Georg Kargl
Permanent, Vienna
"Nadim Vardag", Mayerei,
Karlsruhe

2006 "Nadim Vardag", Georg Kargl Box,
Vienna

2005 "Look", Kunstverein Kohlenhof e.V.,
Nuremberg
"the night", ehem. Nomadenoase,
Hamburg

2004 "explode*", fluc, Vienna

Group shows

2010 "Pattern Recognition", PS Project
Space, Amsterdam
Triennale Linz 1.0, OK Offenes
Kulturhaus Oberösterreich, Linz
"Fractional Systems", MAK
Center/Mackey Garage, Los Angeles
"Off", Georg Kargl Box / Georg
Kargl Permanent, Vienna (curator)
"Lebt und arbeitet in Wien III",
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna
"Waldbild", Städtische Galerie
Waldkraiburg

2009 "BC21 Art Award", Augarten
Contemporary, Vienna

"Endlosschleifen", Lothringer 13,
Laden, Munich

"Kunst im Bau", Vorgartenstr. 122 –
128, Vienna

"Le Sang d'un poète", Biennale St.
Nazaire-Nantes / Frac des Pays de
la Loire, Nantes

"Nothingness and Being", Funda -
ción/Colección Jumex, Mexico City

"ConceptIOUS", Galerie Jette
Rudolph, Berlin

"Trick of the Light", MOP, Sydney

"Filmsalon", Kunstverein
Nuremberg

2008 "Three Black Minutes",
Künstlerhaus Stuttgart

"difference, what difference?",
Art Forum Berlin

"Scene Missing", Galerie Thomas
Schulte, Berlin

"Videoform – Filmform", Video-
panel, Hamburg

"Scene Missing", Georg Kargl Fine
Arts, Vienna

2007 „Fade to Grey“, Bell Street Project
Space, Wien (curator)

„Kino wie noch nie“, Akademie der
Künste, Berlin

„This is Happening“, Georg Kargl
Fine Arts, Vienna

2006 "Crosskick", Studiogalerie
Kunstverein Braunschweig

"Merry go round", Projektraum
Schloß Solitude, Stuttgart

"Kino wie noch nie", Generali
Foundation, Vienna



Program preview

Again and Again and Once More? – Latitudes

Period 28.05. – 03.09.2011

Curator Sabine Winkler