

In the video work *Situations* by the artist group **Claire Fontaine**, a powerful activism is performed in front of the audience, leaving behind the manifestations of political resistance and the fragments of authorship. Claire Fontaine shows that mere art production cannot oppose or subvert late capitalism, since we are inevitably within this economic system. In *Situations*, Claire Fontaine translate the effects and forces of the current political and monetary crises to a subjective emancipation of the individual. The forceful demonstration of lessons in close combat techniques and self-defense confront the audience with a depicted and a possible own radicalism.

Respect Realness finally shows a performance by **Santiago Sierra**, who instructs the monumental building of the letter "P" in order to have it subsequently destroyed. In a series of performances at locations around the world, where respectively one letter was smashed, "P" is the penultimate iconic monument to be destroyed. Sierra sets an example of our times in order to wreck it in the next moment and presents us thus his ideas of our reality. Also in this sense "Respect Realness".

Christian Falsnaes
Expansion, 2012. Performance/
video, Courtesy of the artist

Karen Mirza/Brad Butler
Hold Your Ground, 2012.
HD Video 13', Loop, Courtesy
Waterside Contemporary,
London

Jason Simon
Festschrift for an Archive, 2012.
Installation, Courtesy Callicoon
Fine Arts, New York

Martin Beck
The Environmental Witch-Hunt,
2008. HD Video 10'02",
Courtesy of the artist

Group, 2008. Woodcut on
paper, Courtesy of the artist

Franz Erhard Walther
Werkzeichnung, 1969–1970.
Watercolour, pencil on paper,
Courtesy of the artist, Galerie
KOW, Berlin

Carola Dertnig
Again Audience/Stage, 2012.
Mobile stage, video, Courtesy
Galerie Andreas Huber, Vienna

*Again Audience/Some exercise
in complex seeing is needed*,
2012. HD Video 2'42", Courtesy
Galerie Andreas Huber, Vienna

*Again Audience/Stage/City
Movement*, 2012. 6 photographs,
Courtesy BMUKK, art section,
Vienna

Ilja Karilampi
TRILLENIUM, 2012. Installation,
Courtesy of the artist

New York Minute, 2012. HD
Video, 1', Courtesy of the artist

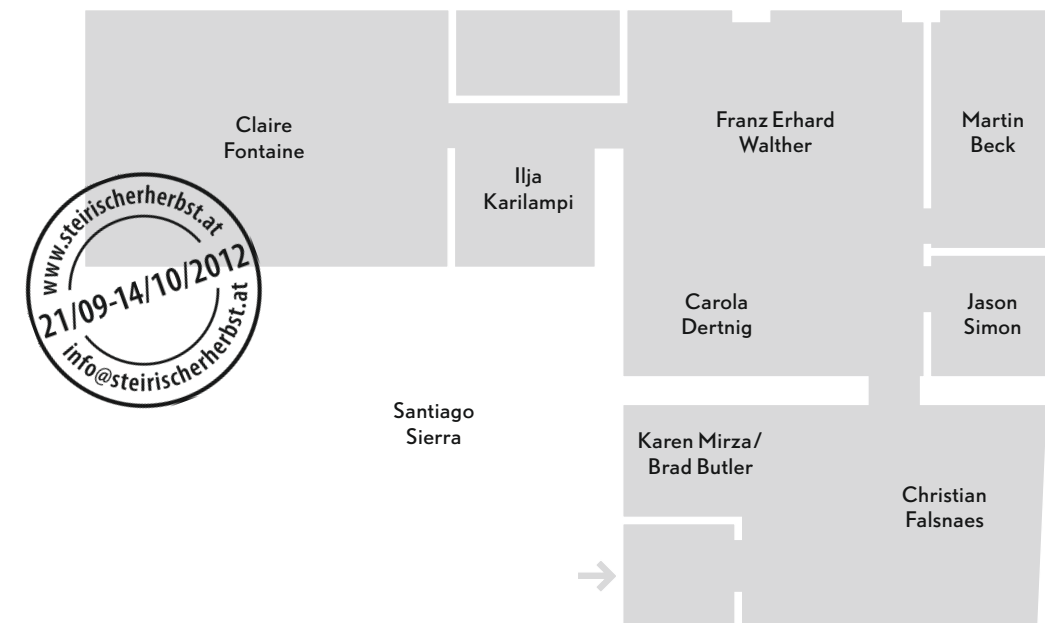
Claire Fontaine
Situations, 2011. HD Video 35',
Courtesy Metro Pictures,
New York

Santiago Sierra
*DESTROYED WORD, Destruction
of the Graz P, Sept. 29*, 2012.
Performance, Courtesy of the
artist, Galerie KOW, Berlin



Realness Respect

Martin Beck × Carola Dertnig × Christian Falsnaes ×
Claire Fontaine × Ilja Karilampi × Karen Mirza/Brad Butler ×
Santiago Sierra × Jason Simon × Franz Erhard Walther



Duration 30.9. – 7.12.2012

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

Special opening hours during steirischer herbst

29.9. – 14.10.2012, Wed – Sun 10.30a.m. – 6p.m.

Location Kunstverein Medienturm

Curator Sandro Droschl

Coproduction steirischer herbst & Kunstverein Medienturm

Performances 29.9.2012 from 11a.m.

Carola Dertnig, Christian Falsnaes, Ilja Karilampi, Santiago Sierra

Curator's guided exhibition tour 4.10.2012 5p.m.

Catalogue presentations 6.10.2012 6p.m.

with Bernhard Frue, Nicole Six & Paul Petritsch

Lange Nacht der Museen 6.10.2012 6p.m. – 1a.m.

Guided exhibition tour of steirischer herbst

7.10.2012 2 – 4.30p.m., meeting point Kunsthau Graz

Realness Respect

The more clearly we delimit ourselves from the consensus of a liberal democratic society, as delivered to us by the media, the stronger seems to be the need for construction of a reality that follows its own conventions and rules. Realness Respect shows current performative drafts that react to the tangible difference between reality as it is subjectively perceived and common reality as conveyed by the media. But when political art examines the relationship of aesthetics and reality, the question soon arises as to the autonomy and status of the art work, based on which artists achieve concrete, critical work on social issues. Even without any clear-cut answers, art creates its own concrete truths here.

The title *Realness Respect* already suggests that the view of reality is manifold, ultimately everyone will follow his or her own version, however, despite all antagonisms and medial communication, we assume one common reality, which per se implicates no outside beyond. This view on a common reality is characterized by an increasing uncertainty due to altered geopolitical structures and the financial- and credit market disruptions. In Central Europe, this destabilization is ultimately also driven by the concerns whether the accustomed experience of a stable monetary growth and the thereon based relative social peace that lasted for decades can be upheld in the long run.

Acting and realizing happen always in the one, assumed and communicated reality. Beyond the discourse which triggers this reality, it is impossible to claim an autonomous standpoint. After Jean-François Lyotard, this reality is subject to the economical system of capital which is characterized by the absorption of time: the upcoming is calculated and evaluated beforehand in order to make a profit thereof in the presence, or to profitably integrate the actions into the system. The discourse in art and also in philosophy, however, has possibilities on hand: It must continuously advance the speaking of the unspeakable and the presenting of the unrepresentable. In the realm of arts, the method of the unstoppable experiment is crucial: in this way, actions are generated which refer to the differences in the hegemonic discourse of capital.

Equal to a dense net of power relations connecting organizations and institutions (which amongst others create the discourse and the associated reality), after Michel Foucault, realms of resistance can spread, without being determined by organizations, institutions or other individuals. If the strategic encoding of power leads to an accumulation of power – equally – the strategic encoding of revolutionary

elements can lead to a revolution. The artists can thus try to handle the medially transported reality – in relation to the action – and in doing so not only question its basis but also become aware of their own symbolic position.

The performance- and video-piece *Expansion* relates to concepts of staging and perceiving performance as well as the role of the viewer in that process. Therefore it is carried out by **Christian Falsnaes** in collaboration with the attending audience. The work consists of a series constructed actions related to notions of individual and social identity that are performed by the artist as well as by different members of the audience. The artist performs one action, then instructs an audience-member to reenact the same action, then do a new action and make a new person reenact the new action, subsequently asking different audience-members throughout the opening to perform the same actions over and over again. Hereby, each person is subordinated a process of reproduction, shifting the focus from the person to the individual interpretation of the given structure. Like karaoke bar versions of famous songs, the audience covers the performance of the artist. After the opening, a video that displays the performance of the artist next to the interpretations of the audience will be shown in the space.

Hold Your Ground is a companion piece to a larger film work by **Karen Mirza** and **Brad Butler**, scripted in conjunction with the author China Miéville. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, and triggered by the artists' discovery in Cairo of a pamphlet of instructions for pro-democracy demonstrators, called "How to Protest Intelligently", the piece dissects the "semantics" of the crowd, and the resulting performative "speech act". The work calls forth the struggle to turn "fugitive sounds" into speech, addressing an audience predominantly in transit.

Jason Simon is interested in the linking of labor and cinema. Due to low wages and bad social security conditions, in 2000, a strike evolved among MoMA's staff in New York. Particularly involved was the curator Mary Corliss and her assistant Terry Geeskin, who were in charge of MoMA's Film Still Archive (FSA). As a consequence of the strike, they were laid off, after their 34-year-long commitment. The archive was transferred to a storage in Pennsylvania. Protest against it led the National Labor Relation Board to write down a judgment to document the precipitating events for the public. As a result the *Festschrift for an Archive* was published as a book and added by an interview with Corliss. Each book contains one still: the factory chorus of the *The Pajama Game*, hi-jinks at the *Car Wash*, Jane Fonda

punching a 9 to 5 clock, and other glimpses of cinema imaging labor, but here as contested important history between a most powerful institution and the first recognized union of museum workers entrusted with their care.

Martin Beck's docu-fiction *The Environmental Witch-Hunt* is based on a conflict at the 1970 International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado, where the modernist US-design elite tried to enter into a dialogue with the emerging ecology movement. Communcation formats and the function of design for a rapidly changing society were the points of contestation: is design a service for industry or a tool to effect society itself? Concurrently, a delegation of French architects and sociologists reproached the conference, stating, in a pamphlet written by Jean Baudrillard, that any discourse on ecology that does not address ideological and class issues would simply be an "opiate for the masses," since "napalm and chlorophyll" are part of the same ecological question. Beck's film transfers the discourse into an aspen forest just outside the resort town in the Rocky Mountains. Five protagonists wander around a forest that seems to have no outside; at intervals they rehearse and present fragments of the French delegation's pamphlet. The camera oscillates between still and moving shots, gazing at a nature in which the protagonists are found and lost and found again. Thus the forest becomes a protagonist itself. *The Environmental Witch-Hunt* opens up a social space which goes beyond the real setting, letting the viewers draw their own conclusions.

The *Group* diagram is adapted by **Martin Beck** from a small title graphic for an essay on group marriage. The article was published with the title "The Modern Utopian: Communes U.S.A." 1971 by Richard Fairfield (San Francisco: Alternatives Foundation).

From 1963 to 1969 **Franz Erhard Walther** created *1. Werksatz* (First Work Set), which comprises fifty-eight mostly tailored and sewed fabric elements. These objects are activated by the visitors, thus unfolding their meaning by utilization; the work process is completed by the interaction with the users. Walther provided "instruments", explaining their working. A series of drawings titled *Werkzeichnungen* which Walther produced in line with *1. Werksatz* (First Work Set), elucidate such genesis of the works, pointing at possible utilizations of the objects and experiences of the audience. Script and sculptural studies are linked to space, terminology and action. With his artistic and terminological approach, Walther ultimately intended to detach the definition of art from a traditional orientation

towards the object and its reception: the art-work understood as action piece. The presentation of a selection of Walther's drawings *Werkzeichnungen* in the exhibition refers to an anti-essentialist and relational concept or a model of symbolic participation of the audience, which can, according to the particular situation be activated, experienced and reviewed.

In her performance and installation *Again Audience*, **Carola Dertnig** explores the potential of actions and therein follows Walther's anti-essential approach to some extent. Dertnig goes back to A. M. Rodchenko's study of a Workers' Tribune from the 1920s which was conceived as part of an unrealized Worker's Club in the USSR. Rodchenko pursued the creation of a space for education and participation around artistic, social and political ideas. Dertnig redesigns Rodchenko's tribune as a freestanding and mobile speaker's stage, which can be folded up. The extendible size of the scissor fence determines the spatial presence of the performance. In the frame of a live performance on the nearby public place "Hier ist Platz" (Here is space), the artist enters the stage and speaks from there. After this she carries the stage together with the audience into the exhibition space where it is collectively reinstalled. The way of the stage's utilization implicates a transition of performative and political practices to daily routine. This piece is supplemented with six photographs of a person namely of the artist, which document the use of the stage. In addition, the video *Some exercise in complex seeing is needed* is presented. The artist's voice therein accompanies the monotone movements of a person swimming against the tide.

The depicted message *TRILENNIUM* plays with the ultimate superlative of the century, a combination of "trill" (true & real), and millenium. The fluorescent text is sprayed mirrored and reversed on the wall. On the opposite side is a mirror, which then makes the viewer see it properly, when exiting the space. Depth, double dimensions, hand writing, and visual effects, the site-specific wallpainting installation creates a glow-in-the-dark message still freshly made by **Ilja Karilampi** on the opening.

The video *New York Minute*, shown on a lying flatscreen, is a one-minute dense conceptual video work, which tells the story of Ilja Karilampi's own New York minute, a beat with the same name produced for French Monana, and hyper fast After Effects color correction. Its production time of one year, also compresses this time span, into one single minute.