

Realness Respect

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



Press talk 28.9.2012, 11 a.m.

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Opening 29.9.2012, 11 a.m.

Duration 30.9. – 7.12.2012

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

Special opening hours during steirischer herbst

29.9. – 14.10. 2012, Wed – Sun 10.30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Location Kunstverein Medienturm, Josefigasse 1, 8020 Graz

Curator Sandro Droschl

Coproduction steirischer herbst & Kunstverein Medienturm

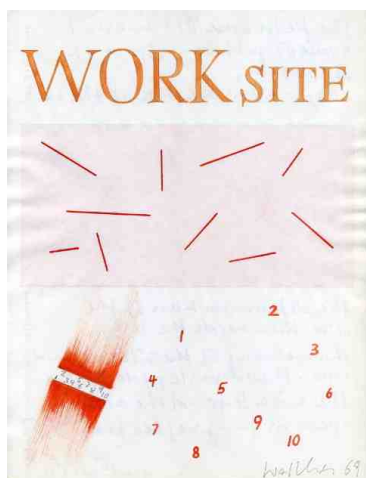


Realness Respect

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.



Franz Erhard Walther, *Werkzeichnung*, 1969 – 1970. Water-colour, pencil on paper. Courtesy the artist, Galerie KOW, Berlin



Carola Dertnig, *Again Audience / Stage / City Movement*, 2012. Photo. Courtesy Galerie Andreas Huber, Vienna

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 artwork 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.



Claire Fontaine, *Situations*, 2011. Videostill. Courtesy Metro Pictures, New York

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 of the word KAPITALISMUS (capitalism) was smashed, "P" is the final 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".



Supporting programme

Shuttle service

Vienna-Graz-Vienna for the guided exhibition tour of steirischer herbst on September 29, 2012. Information and registration tickets@steirischerherbst.at

Interventions

by Carola Dertnig, Christian Falsnaes, Ilja Karilampi, Santiago Sierra
29.9.2012, starting at 11 a.m.

Curator's guided exhibition tour

4.10.2012, 5 p.m.

Catalogue presentations

with Bernhard Frue, Nicole Six & Paul Petritsch
6.10.2012, 6 p.m.

Lange Nacht der Museen

6.10.2012, 6 p.m. – 1 a.m.

Guided exhibition tour of steirischer herbst

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