



NEW
WAYS
OF
DOING
NOTHING

Museumsquartier

NEW WAYS OF DOING NOTHING

27/6 – 12/10 2014

www.kunsthallewien.at

New Ways of Doing Nothing

Productivity and growth are the philosophical premises of the present day. Working processes are being optimized to increase efficiency, working hours are being deregulated until the distinction between work and leisure time disappears. Artistic work seems to follow other criteria, but in this field too professionalization and selfoptimization are on the rise. But what would happen if “doing nothing” or “inaction” were to become a source of inspiration for a refusal to produce.

New Ways of Doing Nothing devotes itself to a form of artistic production that opposes activity, doing and manufacturing and instead gives an affirmative slant to forms of doing nothing, of refraining or asceticism. Here, refraining from something not only leads to a critical moment but also a creative one. *New Ways of Doing Nothing* – the title derives from Swedish artist Karl Holmqvist – focuses on positions in contemporary art in which “doing nothing” generates its own potential with respect to the requirements (and impositions) of a society that concentrates on activity and productivity.

Curators: Vanessa Joan Müller,
Cristina Ricupero

Robert Breer

* 1926 in Detroit, † 2011 in Tucson

Sponge, 2000
Motorized sculpture
Painted foam, motor, wheels
17 x 100 x 37 cm
Courtesy gb agency, Paris

Sponge, 2000
Motorized sculpture
Painted foam, motor, wheels
15 x 62 x 65 cm
Courtesy gb agency, Paris

Moving Canvas, 1965-2000
Battery-driven oil painting, motor
46,5 x 62 cm
Collection Clémence and Didier Krzentowski

Robert Breer’s work, which includes painting, sculpture, drawing and film, is mostly characterized by a dialogue between each of these processes. Although he refused to be labeled under any fixed category, he was nevertheless associated from time to time with several French and American avant-garde movements of the 1950s such as neoplasticism and geometric abstraction.

While he lived in Paris in the 1940s and 1950s, Breer presented his work at the prestigious Denise René gallery, met with artists from the Concrete art movement, and built friendships with Tinguely and Vasarely. Quickly though, the direction of his artistic entourage became too authoritarian for him. He stopped painting, returned to New York, and devoted himself to film and sculpture. His approach to filmmaking was that of a visual artist and he produced animated films.

Breer, who first devoted himself to experimental film and abstract painting, was the artist-son of an engineer and an enthusiastic constructor of mechanical devices. Thus, it is not surprising that in 1965, he attached small wheels to one of his structures, which he placed on the ground. As geometric modules, his sculptures are recurring shapes drawn from his films.

The Floats – or *floating sculptures* – as Breer called them, have primary shapes, neutral colours and were then made with polystyrene, foam, painted plywood, and, more recently, out of fibreglass. At first sight, the floats look like nothing more than objects set on the ground, fairly heterogeneous in shape and size. However, at a closer look the viewer will notice instead that the sculptures move, very slowly to traverse the spaces in which they are placed, indoors or outdoors, following straight lines. When they meet an obstacle, they stop and change direction. Breer described his sculptures as “motorized mollusks,” and stated that his objective was to set his sculptures free from the pedestal and make them autonomous. Without pedestal, these “pure” forms are an ironic allusion to Minimalist art. They are discreet motorized presences that move slowly, at ground level, almost imperceptibly and without logic.

The whole of Breer’s career has been molded by a creative restlessness, by a desire for experimentation in the effort to break fresh ground. *New Ways of Doing Nothing* will showcase two float sculptures as well as *Moving Canvas*, a drawing that slides imperceptibly to the right and left.

Alejandro Cesarco

* 1975 in Montevideo, lives in New York

Why work?, 2008

Digital c-print

76 x 101 cm

Courtesy Galerie Tanya Leighton, Berlin and Murray Guy, New York

Portrait of the Artist Approaching 40 – I-III, 2013

Archival inkjet print

17,5 x 12,5 cm

Courtesy Galerie Tanya Leighton, Berlin and Murray Guy, New York

There is a long tradition of criticism of a life determined by work and the stylization of “gainful employment” as the highest

civilizational good. In 1893 Paul Lafargue, Karl Marx’s son-in-law, wrote his polemical work *The Right to Be Lazy*, and its criticism of growth and the drive for full employment is still relevant today. Oscar Wilde advocated a society freed of work which devotes itself to idleness, and the Situationist International gained fame for its call “jamais travailler” (never work). Alejandro Cesarco has compiled an imaginary book that combines texts on the theme of work and leisure as well as constructive inaction. He presents it in the form of a list of contents that also includes an introduction by the artist and a case study written by him.

In *Why work?* Cesarco, whose work is notable for references, notes, and allusions, and utilizes an aesthetic influenced by conceptual art, questions the ideas of authorship and staging, but also offers an easily understandable range of reading on the theme: the texts and essays compiled in an anthology do indeed exist, only the artist’s own contribution remains empty. But in fact the planned case study, in its non-existence, already answers the question “why work?”.

Alejandro Cesarco was born in Montevideo in Uruguay in 1975. His work entitled *Portrait of the Artist Approaching 40* was created when he was 38. The approaching 40th year of life does not bring a true caesura but indicates that the category of the young, up-and-coming artist will soon no longer be applicable, neither as self-image nor as external description. Cesarco makes use of the “portrait of the artist” in the sense of a traditional form of self-portrait, but instead of presenting himself he shows the floor of his studio in New York. The three small black-and-white photographs capture its structure, whereby seemingly random punctuation signs seem to evoke expectations of works still to come or texts still to be written. *Portrait of the Artist Approaching 40* is a laconic self-description and a gesture of negation, but also an answer to Cesarco’s earlier work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, a concentrated and personalized translation of the novel of the same name by James Joyce, presented in the form of calendar pages for the month of January from Cesarco’s youth.

Etienne Chambaud

* 1980 in Mulhouse, lives in Paris

Disclaimer, 2007 (2014)

Neon

15 x 180 cm

Courtesy Etienne Chambaud

The figure of *Bartleby, the Scrivener*, who drives his employer to desperation with his attitude of noncompliance, saying only a friendly “I would prefer not to” in response to every task requested of him and refusing all constructive work, is a key figure of modern culture. Written by Herman Melville in 1853, the novella *Bartleby, the Scrivener* is exemplary for a deeply sceptical attitude toward a society that insists on productivity and efficiency, but also toward every form of authority.

Etienne Chambaud’s *Disclaimer* picks up on the famous sentence from Melville’s short story: “I would prefer not to.” However, Chambaud adds a “too” to the original English text and presents the sentence as a neon sign, which, although connected to the power grid, remains stoically unilluminated. Who is speaking? Who “would prefer not to, too”? Questions of authorship, the status of the neon work as a form of artistic work that draws attention to itself, the realization of which is delegated to others, but also the position of the artist and the curator within a business system programmed for maximum output – all these themes are addressed in Chambaud’s work. The “I would prefer not to, too” is presented in the handwriting of one of the curators of the exhibition.

Natalie Czech

* 1976 in Neuss, lives in Berlin

Today I wrote nothing / Daniil Charms, 2009

22 c-prints

each 38 x 28 cm

Courtesy Kadel Willborn, Düsseldorf and Captain Petzel, Berlin

The series of photos *Today I wrote nothing* is based on a diary entry by the Russian avant-garde poet Daniil Charms (1905-1942). The co-founder of the OBERIU association of artists (Association of Real Art) was a well-known writer and poet of the Russian avant-garde. In 1931, he was denounced as “anti-Soviet”, arrested, and in 1941 suffered forced committal to a psychiatric clinic. Charms died in his cell in 1942, probably as a result of starvation. It was only with the advent of Perestroika that it became possible to publish his texts and to make them available to a wider public.

In 1937 Charms noted in his diary: “Today I wrote nothing. Doesn’t matter. 9 January”. Natalie Czech varies this entry each time by leaving out a few words from the text of an English edition of Charms’s diaries. The photographs, 22 in total, consist of a printed page from a book on which the text from the diary entry is reproduced in a fragmentary manner. In this new combination of the text elements, the statement about having written nothing creates a rich visual-poetic repertoire that ranges from existential self-confirmation “I do matter” to a laconic “nothing”. Simultaneously a visual object and a text, *Today I wrote nothing* draws on the potential of language to open up imaginative spaces.

Oskar Dawicki

* 1971 in Warsaw, lives in Warsaw

I’m Sorry, 2001

DVD, colour, sound

4 min. 30 sec.

Courtesy Raster Gallery, Warsaw

Oskar Dawicki began training as a painter but soon shifted his focus to performance. Later he extended his repertoire of artistic expression by the media of video, photography, documentation, objects and installations. However, for Dawicki the most promising aspect of artistic activity is that of non-productivity, which he explores extensively.

His works always have a post-conceptual character and present a slightly ironic, sometimes almost absurd attitude. Dawicki himself appears in his videos and performances as a tragic-romantic artist figure who reflects his own precarious status within the institutional art system and reveals his fragility, weakness and willingness to compromise. Hereby one can clearly sense his unease with the situation, his non-acceptance of it and the overall sense of complication. *I'm Sorry* shows the artist apologizing in tears to the public, and also to those involved in setting up the exhibition that the exhibition hasn't turned out as he imagined. It's all his fault and he asks for forgiveness. The crying artist – which also clearly references Bas Jan Ader's famous film work *I'm too sad to tell you* in 1971 – becomes a staged metaphor for the opportunity contained in failure.

Edith Dekyndt

* 1960 in Ieper, lives in Belgium

Perpetual Room, 2010
Projection, camera, MAC G4 computer, wire
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels

In many of her works, Edith Dekyndt examines the idea of the living object. It is a familiar storytelling fantasy that profane domestic items can develop a life of their own when we are not using them or are not there – from the Sorcerer's *Apprentice of Goethe* to Disney's *Toy Story*. However, in a highly rationalized world the objects and devices surrounding us no longer wait for us to turn our attention elsewhere before they commence their own activities: they even display their "own business" ostentatiously.

In her work *Perpetual Room* Dekyndt presents the signal of a computer in stand-by mode in the form of a closed circuit installation: a camera films the signal and projects it in enlarged form on the wall. The softly pulsating, circular light indicates the "sleep

mode" of a laptop. It originates from an Apple PowerBook G4; the design of the pulsating point of light is inspired by the computer HAL in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001 – A Space Odyssey*. Enlarged, it becomes a living pulse that reminds us that the computer is not switched off, but instead is waiting for us to return to our work – or also a gentle reminder that at this moment the computer is engaged intensively in doing nothing.

Mathias Delplanque

* 1973 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso,
lives in Nantes

*Ma chambre quand je n'y suis pas (Montréal)/
My bedroom when I'm away (Montreal)*, 2006
Sound piece
45 min. 15 sec.
Courtesy Mathias Delplanque and Mondes
Elliptiques

Mathias Delplanque is a French musician working since the end of the 90's under various monikers: Bidlo, Lena, Stensil, or simply Mathias Delplanque. He is also the founding member of several musical ensembles such as The Floating Roots Orchestra, The Missing Ensemble, AAA Men, AMR ... Amongst his numerous collaborations are performances and albums with Rob Mazurek, Steve Argüelles, Black Sifichi, John Sellekaers, Shahzad Ismaili, etc.

Mathias Delplanque first studied visual arts to later abandon it and worked essentially with sound. The projects he sets up under his own name are sound pieces, that mostly relate to space. He is especially interested in the complex and dynamic organization of contrasted sounds: drones and rhythms, pulses and random beats, noises and melodic patterns. The aim is to give birth to a living structure that evolves organically, between chaos and order.

Somehow following John Cage's experiments with chance operations, with the series *Ma chambre quand je n'y suis pas/My bedroom*

when I'm away, Mathias Delplanque uses field recordings from empty private spaces to compose works standing at the border between concrete and drone music. He will present a documentation of the second part of this series, *Ma chambre quand je n'y suis pas (Montréal)*, which is a stereo version of a sound installation presented at Montréal's Studio Cormier in December 2004. The piece is based on the recording of "silences", i.e. the recording of sound produced in spaces with no human presence. The sound of an "empty" Studio Cormier was therefore used as the material for the production of this piece. The sound takes were done during the quietest moments of the day, by means of microphones placed strategically throughout the studio by the artist. The sounds gathered were then amplified, and their frequencies, accentuated to the extreme. In the installation itself, the sound was broadcast in multi-channel mode over 11 loudspeakers, including a subwoofer, in four Studio Cormier spaces (*Hall, Living Room, Bedroom, Lab*).

Heinrich Dunst

* 1955 in Hallein, lives in Vienna

Objekt, 2014

Different materials

Variable dimensions

Courtesy Heinrich Dunst and

Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie

Schwarzwälder, Vienna

In his works, Heinrich Dunst examines the relationship between the language of writing and the language of objects, the sayable and the visible, and also the empty spaces within the texture of a highly differentiated system of reference consisting of words, illustrations and their referents in the real world.

Descriptive systems such as "Abb." (German for "Fig."), in which words refer to visual representations, present themselves here as replacements or wildcards for absent objects. The word "Objekt" (German for "object"), in the spatial order of the installation, which unfolds like a text along a wall, develops in turn

an object-like quality in its visual presence, although direct referents are lacking here. A facsimile of the famous title page of the *Le Figaro* newspaper on which Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto* was printed as leader article on 20th February 1909, can be recognized only fragmentarily because it is partially covered by a monochrome surface. Under the title *Le Futurisme* Marinetti's text, extending over three columns, begins as follows: "We have been up all night, my friends and I, beneath mosque lamps whose brass cupolas are bright as our souls, because like them they were illuminated by the internal glow of electric hearts." In Dunst's installation, the uninhibited energy demanded by Futurism, and which from our current perspective seems interesting less for its programme and more for its rhetoric, is locked in place both formally and aesthetically, and inserted in an ensemble of negation, overpainting and absence. This system of mutually referential elements does not attempt to present any evidence, but instead an internally consistent order that can be read as a pictorial gesture of refusal or denial.

Gardar Eide Einarsson

* 1976 in Oslo, lives in New York and Tokyo

In Taxis, On the Phone, In Clubs and Bars, At Football Matches, At Home With Friends, 2013
Two light boxes

200 x 60 x 40 cm and 150 x 60 x 40 cm

Private collection, Oslo and Yvon Lambert, Paris

Gardar Eide Einarsson is interested in subtle social conflicts between individuals and within society. Authority and alienation, fear and paranoia play a role here, as well as the ways that the authorities react to this tendency. Another characteristic feature of his works, which utilize various media, is an examination of the relationship between authority and rebellion as an essential structure of social conflicts in modern society. Continuing formal considerations taken from minimal art and

conceptual art, Einarsson chooses simple, mostly black-and-white objects but however imbues these with multiple layers of meaning by referencing content from everyday life and popular culture. In this context the invitation, or challenge, “Whatever you say / Say nothing” gains an aggressive component in that it demands one should say nothing that could call into question the statements of the speaker. Here, “saying nothing” is not a gesture of speech avoidance or aversion, but instead the challenge to respond to something said in an argumentation by “saying nothing”, or by not raising any objections.

Marina Faust

* in Vienna, lives in Vienna and Paris

Travelling Chairs, 2003-2010

Wood, metal, silicon, vinyl

Different dimensions

Courtesy Marina Faust

Marina Faust’s artistic activities focus on exploring the boundaries of photography and her work comprises photographs, videos, objects and collages. In low-budget film productions, which have no rails for tracking shots, one often uses wheelchairs instead. For the shooting of her film *Gallerande* (2004), in which the camera team are themselves “actors” (those who film are filmed by those who are filming), Faust developed her own *Travelling Chairs*. These were chairs found and collected on the streets of Paris, to which wooden boards with wheels were attached. Handles were fastened to the armrests, and actors and cameramen pushed each other through the film. It’s an action that one can experience only through a “connectedness”. One pushes, the other is pushed. In the new group of *Travelling Chairs* shown here, the wooden boards and handles do not make an appearance. However, a substructure with too many or overly large wheels was developed for these chairs. Outside the context of the film these *Travelling Chairs* are used for experiencing the world in a seated position, from a slightly raised perspective and in motion.

Claire Fontaine

Bartleby le scribe brickbat, 2006

Brick, digital print

17,8 x 10,7 x 5,4 cm

Courtesy Claire Fontaine and

Galerie Neu, Berlin

Bartleby, la formula della creazione brickbat, 2006

Brick, digital print

17,8 x 10,7 x 5,4 cm

Courtesy Claire Fontaine and

Galerie Neu, Berlin

This neon sign was made by ..., 2009

Neon

30 x 350 cm

Courtesy Claire Fontaine and

Galerie Neu, Berlin

Claire Fontaine is an artist collective, who name themselves collective artist, based in Paris and founded in 2004. The name comes from a popular brand of school notebooks in France evoking the blank page, but also makes direct reference to Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain*, one of the first “ready-mades” in modern art history. Inspired by Italian feminist groups of the 1970s the collective occupies the third person singular feminine as its subject position. In her biography, she describes herself as a “readymade artist” who makes a version of neo-conceptual art that often resembles other artists’ works in a world characterized, in part, by political impotence and a “crisis of singularities”, or fixed identities. Through the détournement of symbols, signs, images and objects available in contemporary visual culture, she questions individual skill, originality and authority. The production ranges from neon, video, sculpture, and painting but also text.

Claire Fontaine presents two works in the exhibition. *This neon sign was made by...* is a work where the artist experiments with a new tautological use of the medium of neon by asking the artisan that produced the work to write his name and his remuneration so that the sign reads “This neon sign was made by X for the remuneration of X euros (or other

currency)". This type of neon signs does not aspire to any singularity in its appearance, it merges into the space as authorless words, and its strength is not to be found in its visual identity but in the way its content acts as a subtitle to the space where the work is installed. Here the problem of the value of exchange is frontally tackled as much as the material production of artworks that is often delegated to obscure and unacknowledged artisans whose name will never appear next to the title of the artwork. The refusal of forgetting this truth is at the core of this work.

The other work is called *Bartleby le scribe brickbat* and refers directly to one of the show's main concept. A brickbat is a projectile wrapped within a threatening message that is usually thrown through the window as a last warning. The two books transformed into bricks in this case are a bilingual French and English edition of Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener* and an Italian edition of Agamben's and Deleuze's seminal texts on Bartleby grouped under the title of *Bartleby, the formula of creation*. Bartleby, this laconic and moving character, represents a total and final refusal of the authority. He is the employee that would prefer not to and brings his non-action to the extent of an absolute strike, which leads him to prison and eventually death. Bartleby sets an example for what Claire Fontaine calls "human strike" – a strike that attacks the economic, affective, sexual and emotional positions within which subjects are imprisoned.

Ryan Gander

* 1976 in Chester, lives in London and Amsterdam

You had the time, but I didn't have the money, 2011

Installation with 18 framed lithographs
In total 210 x 294 cm
Courtesy gb agency, Paris

You had the time, but I didn't have the money consists of 18 frames that Ryan Gander

stuck with black sticky tape on the wall of his studio, which he then photographed on a 1:1 scale and now presents these photographs, themselves now also framed. This creates a trompe l'oeil of the artist's working environment, from which the content has been removed and the only thing presented is the idea-generating starting point. The work seems to imitate itself ironically, as if the clunky markings in the photo print attempt to represent the frame in which they are themselves presented. In a way, the representational space pursues its constantly disappearing content like a snake biting itself in the tail.

Ryan Gander's work, which is indebted to the tradition of concept art, often focuses on self-referential and self-reflexive themes such as artistic authorship and the genesis of works. In addition to sculptures, photographs and videos it also includes discussions conceived as performances, and artist books in the format of scripts for television series. While the observer is usually confronted with self-contained works of art, Gander often presents individual work elements that we ourselves must combine to form a whole before the interpretative concept reveals itself.

Lasse Schmidt Hansen

* 1978 in Albertslund, lives in Copenhagen and Berlin

Making Things, 2011

4 b/w-photographs
each 15 x 25 cm (framed 54 x 44 cm)
Courtesy Lasse Schmidt Hansen and
Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart

For objects and the infinite – like or after a Katarzyna Kobro exhibition design (retitled and changed display), 2011

Glass, wood, paint
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Lasse Schmidt Hansen and
Galerie Reinhard Hauff, Stuttgart

Lasse Schmidt Hansen's series of photographs *Making Things* shows four views of rooms, in each of which a desk and a few chairs are standing. These are obviously studies in which, however, no work is underway. So what does the "making things" that gives the photographs their title refer to? In fact, it is always the same room and the same furniture, but arranged in different constellations. Therefore, the working process must refer to the creation of a work situation that, once finalized, does not necessarily need to be used actively.

Creative activities are bound neither to particular working hours nor to standardized working spaces. Work and leisure flow into each other, meaning that the so-called creative workers have become the role model for a neoliberal deregulation and flexibilization that adapts the concept of complete identification with one's work, ideally perceived as self-fulfilment. An initial attempt to answer this aporia might be an activity that produces nothing and instead refers to the situation within which the production would be possible, and which in turn would influence that which is produced.

The works of Schmidt Hansen are characterized by unspectacular materials and resemble objects to be found in the exhibition space: display cases, partition walls, furniture. They are works that do not even attempt to distinguish themselves, through an explicitly artistic nature, from the surroundings in which they are placed. The glass cubes are reproductions of objects by the constructivist artist Katarzyna Kobro, which Schmidt Hansen saw in a museum and later recreated from memory. Kobro, who was a member of the Polish Unistic movement, attempted with her sculptural objects to create a fusion of artwork and the infinite nature of space. The cubes were intended to look like sculptures freed of gravity. Schmidt Hansen adopts their form and gives the work a title that is nothing more than a description of what has been changed: the title is different and the size deviates slightly from the original. Talking

about a similar work, the artist said: "I am well aware of the rather vague nature of this more or less unfamiliar object, and I know that it may be confusing to decide whether it represents the one thing or the other". This decided vagueness – display case or container for the infinite? – is the central moment of *For objects and the infinite ...* – the presentation of a thing in a manner as if it were not at all important or as if the main thing of interest were its openness.

Julia Hohenwarter

* 1980 in Vienna, lives in Vienna

Untitled, 2014

Exhibition display *New Ways of Doing Nothing*

Black pigment, cadmium red,

Prussian blue

Variable dimensions

Courtesy Julia Hohenwarter

The exhibition display consists of modified elements from an earlier exhibition in the Kunsthalle Wien. Julia Hohenwarter emphasizes this aspect by changing the formats and dimensions of the existing elements, but at the same time renders this act of change visible because unused components of the exhibition architecture are stored without function in the space.

The freestanding walls and platforms do not create a linear route through the exhibition, but instead suggest spatial situations of various densities. Moreover, the choreography of the exhibition reveals a certain discontinuity that matches the theme. Coloured pigment is applied to some sections of the display without creating a hierarchization of the elements. Instead, the sculptural presence of the elements refers more to their independent status, which however will remain ephemeral because the display will disappear again when the exhibition ends.

Karl Holmqvist

* 1964 in Västerås, lives in Berlin
and Stockholm

Untitled (Posenenske RV Series),
2009-2014
Wood, poster
2 x 2 x 2 m
Courtesy Karl Holmqvist and
Galerie Neu, Berlin

Untitled (Posenenske Dreieck), 2014
Wood, metal, paint
2 x 2 x 2 m
Courtesy Karl Holmqvist and
Galerie Neu, Berlin

Untitled (Doing Nothing Wallpaper), 2014
B/w-print on paper
each 59,4 x 84,1 cm
Courtesy Karl Holmqvist

Karl Holmqvist is known for his text-based works, which he presents in the form of artist books and posters as well as through readings and performances. He is interested in concrete poetry, language drawings, in which letters and words form abstract patterns – (word) repetitions – that blur the boundary between sense and no(n)sense, as well as in found texts, which he adapts and defamiliarizes. The exhibition title derives from Holmqvist, and he has also designed it as a poster.

The two works by Holmqvist based on a structure made of doors, however, directly reference the works of the German artist Charlotte Posenenske who in the 1970s created serial works, some of which involved the participatory principle. Later she withdrew from the art scene, studied sociology and was involved in social projects until her death in 1985. Posenenske's *Drehflügel* (1967/68) is an artefact created with simple means: six door wings that are mounted movably in axis on a square ground plate, and can be adjusted by the viewer at will to form both a closed space and an open structure. Works such as these formulate a democratic

artistic position, but also a criticism of the art system. This was because the artist stipulated that her objects should be reproduced in an unlimited edition as long as there was a demand, thus more or less ruling out an increase in value. Moreover, she sold her works at cost price so that they would be affordable for all. She used the art market simply as a distribution system to make her work known. Holmqvist adapts the structure of *Drehflügel*, but also individualizes the work through subtle differentiation and repetition.

Sofia Hultén

* 1972 in Stockholm, lives in Berlin

Grey Area. 12 Attempts to hide in an office environment, 2001
DVD, colour, sound
9 min.
Courtesy Sofia Hultén and Konrad Fischer
Galerie, Düsseldorf / Berlin

Sofia Hultén works chiefly as a sculptor and in her video works, too, she examines objects, causalities and the relationship between the body and space. In *Grey Area* we see her in the grey costume of the senior executive, literally disappearing in the office in various ways: she hides under, behind or in articles of furniture, climbs on top of cupboards or adapts to her surroundings in perfect mimicry. The office in which this performance takes place is empty apart from herself, where she would constantly make new attempts to become invisible. The surroundings appear to be a closed system, determining all activities and something that needs to be escaped from. The grey area between work and refusal of work becomes blurred, however, in the face of the efforts and inventiveness to be physically present at the workplace but nonetheless inactive or idle. Each attempt to hide leads to a transformation into an inanimate object that pretends to be part of the furniture.

Jiří Kovanda

* 1953 in Prague, lives in Prague

XXX. Waiting for someone to call me ...,
November 18th, 1976

B/w-photography with text on cardboard
29,7 x 21,3 cm

Courtesy gb agency, Paris

*Untitled (This is my mobile phone. If it rings,
I shall not answer. But those who pass by here
can pick it up.)*, May 30th, 2008, Akademie der
Künste, Berlin

B/w-photography with text on paper
29,7 x 21,3 cm

Courtesy gb agency, Paris

Untitled, 2008

Installation, 2 kg of sugar in a row
Courtesy Jiří Kovanda and gb agency, Paris

Jiří Kovanda gained a name with his interventions in public spaces in Prague during the 1970s. These performances and interventions that bordered on the invisible were characterized by a minimal difference with the surrounding social environment or the everyday surroundings. Kovanda interacted with the people behind him on an escalator, for instance, looking them directly in the eyes, or he stood with outstretched arms on Prague's Wenceslas Square. The performances were documented in photographs and images were presented together with a short description and the date of the event. Other works of a conceptual nature in the 1970s consisted of small towers of sugar cubes that were erected at unspectacular locations within the city, or small piles of leaves.

This practice of minimal, almost casual gestures is also to be found in two happenings that, in their juxtaposition, highlight the change in our society in recent decades. While the work *Waiting for someone to call me ...* from 1976 centres around the fact that someone might possibly call, the work *Untitled* from 2008 resists the imperative of constant availability created by the mobile phone and challenges others to possibly answer the call. Waiting for something to happen has morphed into the rejection of constant activity.

Rivane

Neuenschwander

* 1967 in Belo Horizonte, lives in Belo Horizonte and London

00:00, 2011

Metal, plastic, vinyl

16 x 29 x 10,5 cm

Private collection

Rivane Neuenschwander and Cao Guimarães

Inventory of Small Deaths (Blow), 2000

B/w-video, transferred from Super 8 mm film,
silent

5 min. 30 sec.

Courtesy Stephen Friedman Gallery, London

Rivane Neuenschwander produces playful, ephemeral and often participatory projects that blur distinctions between author and viewer, object and memory, permanence and temporality. Her wide ranging and interdisciplinary practice includes sculpture, installation, sound, photography, film, as well as collaborative action. She creates aesthetically fragile works that she has termed "ephemeral materialism".

She frequently works with perishable organic materials, such as culinary spices, dried fruits and flowers, and desiccated insects, and has on occasion incorporated decay and deterioration directly into her art. She has produced a large number of works that seem to capture materials, living or dead, right at the moment before they change state or disappear. The artist is also very interested in the repetitions of simple chronometers. Neuenschwander's earlier work, for instance, includes several iterations of the calendar as a regulating device that aims to coordinate continuous human lives with natural cycles. Many of her projects create atmospheres of immense tension, pushing the viewer into a state of expectancy, strategically withholding narrative and therefore resolution.

In this vein of thought, she will present two works in the exhibition. One is a flip clock or

timer, which perennially shows a time of 00:00; each time the figures flip over they again reveal 00:00. If this is a countdown, the expected event never arrives but is forever imminent. If interpreted as a clock, time is never permitted to advance. Here time has stopped. The flip clock inevitably evokes a ground-zero situation that is central to the exhibition's concept – a moment to stop and think.

The other work is a film she produced in collaboration with Cao Guimarães. *Inventory of Small Deaths (Blow)*, presents a giant soap bubble as it floats and blows across the Brazilian tropical landscape. One sees slightly distorted palm trees and shimmering clouds through the transparent membrane. The bubble acts both as a lens that mutates the visual observations and as a point of orientation for the viewer in the silhouetted surroundings. It is an extremely vulnerable creature that carries the world within itself and also on its changing surface. Set on a loop, this black and white 8mm film shows the bubble flowing in the wind, shifting shape, but never popping. The climax of the bubble's death is eternally postponed, so that something fleeting is granted permanence. A very simple yet extremely powerful gesture and message.

George Perec / Bernard Queysanne

* 1936 in Paris, † 1982 in Ivry-sur-Seine /

* 1944 in Rabat, lives in Paris

Un homme qui dort, 1974

DVD, b/w, sound

81 min.

© la vie est belle Editions

Courtesy Cecile Neurisse and

Bernard Queysanne

Georges Perec was a French novelist, filmmaker and essayist who died early at the age of 45. He was a member of the Oulipo group. Many of his novels and essays deal with experimental wordplay, lists and attempts at classification, and they

usually have a melancholic touch. Bernard Queysanne is a French film director and writer who has worked with film and television, both in fiction and documentary.

Un homme qui dort/The Man Who Sleeps is a film co-directed by Georges Perec and Bernard Queysanne based on Perec's novel from 1967 with the same title. The main protagonist for both novel and film is highly inspired by Melville's character Bartleby and said to be somewhat autobiographical.

The Man Who Sleeps tells the story of a 25 year old student in Paris who becomes indifferent to the world around him and refuses to continue his studies. The film, beautifully shot in stark black and white and meticulously edited, is narrated by a second person, female voice (Ludmila Mikaël in the French version and Shelley Duvall in the English version) straightly directed at the viewer, insistently speaking for him but the "you" is also clearly the author. "You have hardly started living, and yet all is said, all is done". He decides to withdraw from life, simply not accepting the inevitable path that has been mapped out for him, in a way not accepting any future. It all starts when he sleeps through an exam, the first step to abandoning his routine and studies. He then refuses to answer the door or see any of his friends, cutting himself off from his environment. He simply drifts through the streets of Paris, practically sleepwalking through life. The dream, the sleep are merely an extension of reality's inactivity. Everything is static and the character becomes an observer, an object of nature, a participant in the city's traffic and weather changes. The character's life is made up of indifferent automatism as everything becomes futile. Isolation and solitude become a form of existence, or better yet, resistance. Here there is no dialogue, no action, but simply the hypnotic voice quoting Malcolm Lowry, Marguerite Duras, Melville, etc. *The Man Who Sleeps* portrays a gloomy, depressing Paris, full of boredom yet phantasmagoric and mysterious. The film, which became cult later, has a social-political and metaphysical touch becoming, in a sense, a discrete critique of society.

Superflex

The Working Life, 2013
HD video, colour, sound
9 min. 50 sec.

The film is produced by Pasha Parts.
Commissioned by the Mead Gallery in
association with the Harris Museum & Art
Gallery, Preston, England, 2013.

Credit List:

Script: Nikolaj Heltoft & Superflex
Hypnotist: Tommy Rosenkilde
Director: Caroline Sascha Copez
Cinematography: Magnus Jønck
Camera Assistant: Ivan Molina Carmona
Grip: Christian Broe Brøndum
DIT: Rasmus Jørgensen
Sound: Morten Bak Jensen
Composer: Mads Heldtberg
Editor: Copenhagen Brains
Thank you *Only Rental*, Sille Martens

Euro, 2012
Poster
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Superflex

Superflex is an artist collective based in Copenhagen whose members are Bjørnstjerne Christiansen, Jakob Fenger and Rasmus Nielsen. Superflex view and describe their projects as *Tools* for which they invite the spectator to actively participate in them. Their projects directly relate to the current social, political and economic situation, often proposing alternative experimental models through self-organized structures. *Tools* include a wide range of productions from alternative energy production methods (*Supergas*), Internet TV channel (*Superchannel*), free stores (*Free Shop*), projects that deal with copyright, intellectual property, and creative commons (*Copyshop*) to fair-trade and license free products (*Guarana Power*).

Superflex contributes with two works in the exhibition. The first is a 9:50 minute film that addresses our current work situation where longer hours are demanded, salaries are

cut and availability is requested at all times, through a therapeutic perspective. The growing fear of losing one's vital workplace has created great uncertainty and anxiety in terms of future perspectives in our societies. One realizes that the pace is maybe just too much to keep up with. In *The Working Life* a hypnotist slowly takes us deeper and deeper into our working life that is falling down to pieces in search of relief and perhaps a way out – if that could exist. For reasons unknown, the patrons and staff have left the premises, leaving viewers behind to watch, think, and speculate.

The second work *Euro*, initially conceived as an outside billboard, was especially re-adapted for the context of the exhibition as a set of posters that will be given out to the audience during the show. The image depicts a manipulated Euro coin – the symbol of the European currency that strikes at first glance as familiar yet unsettling as one realizes the coin has been emptied out of any actual value. We are only left with its skeleton, its spectrum – a very simple gesture that perfectly mirrors our present European crisis.

These two works as the exhibition *New Ways of Doing Nothing*, propose a halt, a moment to stop, reflect, maybe to do nothing as a condition of survival within our current context of overabundance of information and economic crisis.

Mario García Torres

* 1975 in Monclova, lives in Mexico City

Transparencies on the Non-Act, 2007
49 b/w 35 mm slides
Courtesy Mario García Torres and Jan Mot,
Brussels / Mexico City

Xoco, The Kid Who Loved Being Bored, 2012
HD video, sound
9 min. 55 sec.
Courtesy Mario García Torres; Jan Mot,
Brussels / Mexico City and Taka Ishii, Tokyo

Marcio García Torres draws the inspiration for *Transparencies on the Non-Act* from an article that appeared in the journal *Art News* in 1969, in which the art critic Kiki Kundry reported on the young artist Oscar Neuestern, who at that time was still unknown. Neuestern was intensively investigating “the absolute” and founded his artistic career on the principle of absence. Entitled *The Ultimate Non-Act*, the article describes an artist who is interested in the visual on the condition that it is invisible and who did not permit his artworks to be photographed. Moreover, he declared that although he had not yet fully achieved it, true transparency could only be possible through an “ultimate non-act”.

García Torres translates Neuestern’s exercise in the successive removal of the artistic self into roughly 50 black and white slides in various shades of grey, with copied-in lines of text. In this way, he attempts to grasp the radical attitude of the mysterious Oscar Neuestern – a person who may perhaps never have existed.

In this multi-layered artistic work, García Torres often investigates forgotten details of recent art history and especially of concept art. He translates these into the form of video works, slide projections, books or exhibited archive materials in stories, and investigates them anew from the perspective of today. Reality and fiction are often superimposed here, but even if not all historical facts are true, the insights gained from the presented material remain relevant.

Xoco is a character who appears both in an artist’s book and in various films made by García Torres. The main thing about Xoco is that he does virtually nothing. In his world, however, doing nothing takes on a highly positive character and boredom is greeted as an emancipatory attitude. In the form of an animated film about beauty and doing nothing, Xoco introduces us to his current existence in a cloud of light; this first becomes perceptible when the outside world is forgotten and the imagination has adjusted to absolute nothing: a world of productive boredom.

Program

Talks

Tue September 23, 7 pm

**Vanessa Joan Müller & Cristina Ricupero
*Bartleby & Co***

The two curators of the exhibition will talk about the Bartleby syndrome, passive negation, and doing nothing as a source of constructive criticism. (In English)

Sun October 12, 11 am

**Ruth Sonderegger & Andrea Hubin
*Was nicht tun?***

Today, every form of resistance elaborated in art and available as a creative resource seems to be sucked up by market economy forces. The question is whether there are alternative routes and, if so, who can take them. (In German)

Special

**Making friends with doing nothing –
A Meditation Sit-in**

This “sit-in” is not a class, but a collective experience, a quiet gathering in the exhibition space. Belinda Hak will guide you through the session and offer some practical exercises. We let the future unfold spontaneously and become friends with doing nothing.

Tue July 1, Thu July 24, Tue August 5,
Thu September 4, Tue September 23,
Thu October 9, 5:00-5:45 pm,
Sat October 4, 12:00-12:45 am
(During the Lange Nacht der Museen)

Kids Program

A Day in the Land of Milk and Honey
Sat September 27, 11 am-5 pm

Doing nothing but lounge around, listen to stories and eat lots of sweets for a whole day! This is how we imagine a day in the land of milk and honey. For children 5-10 years

Sunday Tours

Sunday, 4 pm

Guided tour in German through the exhibition with free illycaffè. The tours are free of charge with admission.

Colophon

New Ways of Doing Nothing
27/6 – 12/10 2014

Exhibition

Curators: Vanessa Joan Müller,
Cristina Ricupero

Curatorial Assistant: Martin Walkner

Exhibition Management: Barbara Nowy

Technicians: Beni Ardolic, Johannes Diboky,
Frank Herberg, Mathias Kada, Othmar Stangl

External Technician: Harald Adrian,
Hermann Amon (Video, Audio), Danilo Pacher

Art Handling: Scott Hayes, Johann Schoiswohl,
Andreas Schweger, Antoine Turillon

Marketing: Dalia Ahmed,
Katharina Baumgartner, Bernadette Vogl,
Michael Wuerges

Press: Katharina Murschetz,
Stefanie Obermeir, Ellen Tiefenbacher (Intern)

Education: Isabella Drozda, Belinda Hak,
Stefanie Fridrik (Intern)

Education Team: Wolfgang Brunner,
Daniela Fasching, Maximiliano Kostal,

Ursula Leitgeb, Alexandra Matzner,
Anna May, Martin Pfitscher, Michael Simku

Visitor Service: Christina Zowack

Exhibition Booklet

Publisher: Kunsthalle Wien GmbH

Texts: Vanessa Joan Müller,
Cristina Ricupero

Editing: Katharina Baumgartner,
Viven Trommer

Design: Boy Vereecken, Antoine Begon

Print: Rema Print

© 2014 Kunsthalle Wien GmbH

Information

For more information on the program,
please visit:

kunsthallewien.at
blog.kunsthallewien.at
facebook.com/KunsthalleWien
instagram.com/KunsthalleWien
twitter.com/KunsthalleWien
#Nothing

Opening hours
Daily 10 am – 7 pm, Thu 10 am – 9 pm

Admission
General: EUR 8
Reduced: EUR 6
Special rate for students: EUR 2
Annual ticket: EUR 29

Kunsthalle Wien GmbH
Museumsplatz 1  1070 Vienna, Austria
www.kunsthallewien.at
+43 (0)1 5 21 89-0

Director
Nicolaus Schafhausen

CFO
Ursula Hühnel-Benischek

Kunsthalle Wien is Vienna's exhibition
space for international contemporary art and
discourse.



German
Design Award

WINNER

WIEN
KULTUR



MUSEUM
OF SOUND

DER STANDARD **FALTER**



snipcard® 