

IT IS HARD TO TOUCH THE REAL

List of Works by Artist (alphabetical by last name)

Kamal Aljafari

Visit Iraq, 2003, 25 Mins. **68**

'Visit Iraq' is a poetic document that exposes the stereotypical thinking that underlies many social and political clashes throughout the world. Aljafari exploits an urban fragment (which, as the narrative evolves, turns out to be a powerful social one as well) of present-day Geneva: the abandoned office of Iraqi Airways. Through a series of interviews with people living in, or passing through this particular neighborhood, Aljafari presents the viewer with a number of suppressed clichés about world power constellations and the positions that individuals take when confronted with the unknown, distant, or the other. Through the windows of the deserted agency, the camera registers dusty remnants of what once must have been a sumptuous interior that imposed respect and admiration. Here, the empty, abandoned office functions as a space from which one can speculate about its past. The artist does not offer us a *real* story, no account of events in the agency is provided; we only hear the opinions of the interviewees, which have clearly been influenced by stories perpetuated in the media. Aljafari facilitates this story telling, but at the same time, he makes us understand how suspicious he is of the superficial conclusions some people arrive at. In this way, Aljafari exposes the mechanisms of fantasy, which – especially in current political circumstances – much too quickly fall into the trap of articulating overused, superficial conclusions.

Maria Hlavajova

Yael Bartana

Kings Of The Hill, 2003, 7 Mins. **82**

Rituals are characteristic of a country, a group or culture. Language, art, culinary traditions, the greater part of everyday habits, originate from rites that are usually not consciously defined, although possibly meaningful. Yael Bartana shows us group behaviour from her native country, Israel, in such a way that it is bound to make us reflect on the deeper meaning of this behaviour.

For *Kings of the Hill*, she filmed people gathering at the bottom of the dunes at the coast near Tel Aviv. They meet here every Friday, late in the afternoon when the Sabbath begins. We see them trying, time and again, to drive their all-terrain cars up the sand bulges, which are much too steep. Like crabs on the beach they try again and again, but they hardly ever make it to the top.

Bartana makes a meticulous use of camera standpoints, composition, light and editing to create beautiful images and gently ease them away from reality. She shows the event as a romantic, slightly deviant variation on a street race. But this first impression is also the start of a thread that connects the fate of bored rich men's children in a country governed by eternal struggle with the rules of the Sabbath and the work of Sisyphus. (Vinken & van Kampen www.catalogue.montevideo.nl/)

Ursula Biemann

Writing Desire, 2000, 23 Mins. **49**

Remote Sensing, 2001, 53 Mins. **48**

Ursula Biemann's videos address the status of the mobilized female body in a new world economy and examines its significance as both agent and commodity. Biemann locates her work at the intersection between the symbolic space of the representation of women who migrate into the transnational labor market and the space of a gendered geography produced by their trajectory. In her 2001 "Remote Sensing," for example, this examination takes place in the context of the journeys women have embarked on in the global sex business. In "Performing the Border" from 1999, the female body is addressed in connection with the geo-social definition of borders and the effects those borders have on the daily lives of female inhabitants of a particular region between Mexico and the USA. Based on such issues, Biemann's work also raises the question as to how other manners of portrayal and narration can be developed as alternatives to the tangled web of objectifying clichés in television's production of information? Perhaps that is why Biemann so closely connects her research interests with the open form of the video essay - a format whose possibilities she continually plumbs both on a theoretical and an artistic level. The essay allows for a research-oriented, associative, and imaginative method of working and portrayal all in one. It occupies a niche between scientific and artistic methods. Adapting the essay style into the context of video offers complex possibilities for working with images, texts, situations, people, etc. Rather than providing a rational, scientific definition of the subject or object, the essay instead offers the possibility of analysis whose aim is not to pin down its content, but rather, to cultivate it. Interesting essays make their subject more complex. The essay also admits to being "non-objective" as its style is associative and playful. It therefore stands in contrast to the methods of contemporary media; it is not particularly suited for gaining a quick overview and evaluation of events in the framework of current ideological constructions. *KM*

Johanna Billing

Make It Happen On Tour, 2001/2002, 12 Mins. **32**

Missing Out, 2001, 4 Mins. **33**

Project For A Revolution, 2000, 13 Mins. **34**

What Else Do You Do? 2001, 5 Mins. **35**

Where She Is At, 2001, 7 Mins. **36**

Johanna Billing's works often revolve around achievement and individualistic attitudes. ..., "Missing Out" (2001) describes a situation characterised by individual achievements. A few people are stretched out on the floor practising to breathe in a kind of group activity commonly found in schools and kindergartens across Sweden in the 1970's. Billing's video tells us something about a society oriented so heavily towards achievement that you need help and instructions to perform such a fundamental bodily action as breathing.

In "Where she is at", this achievement becomes synonymous with diving from the tower, with doing what everybody is expecting you to do, even though you're not certain it's the right thing. ... On a sunny summer's day, a girl stands alone atop a diving tower at a swimming resort outside of Oslo. But she doesn't dive. The swimmers below spot her and start wondering why she's hesitating - why she doesn't jump and get it over with. The girl walks back and forth on the trampoline, as though unable to decide whether or not to take the step into the air and jump. *taken from www.modernamuseet.se Text: Camilla Carlberg Translation: Johan Gille*

David Blandy

Hollow Bones, 2001-2002, 16 Mins. **29**

David Blandy's work deals with his problematic relationship with popular culture, highlighting the slippage and tension between fantasy and reality in everyday life. Either as a white man mouthing the words to the soul song "what is soul?", or reciting the samurai code along with Jim Jarmusch's "Ghost Dog" in 'ghost' (2001), Blandy searches for his cultural position in the world. His work humorously asks the difficult question of just how much the self is formed by the mass-media of records, films and television, and whether he has an identity outside that. David Blandy

Mircea Cantor

Smen, 2002, 5 Mins. **1**

Mircea Cantor was born in Romania but now lives & works as an artist in France. He is famous for hitchhiking his way out of Eastern Europe as a teenager and making work in turn about travel as a complex range of experiences that enabled a range of interventions and experiences. He is interested in travel and tourism as experiences that raise discussion about cultural misunderstandings. In *Smen* he holds an anonymous interview with a Romanian con man who describes in great detail how, where and why he scams money from tourists. It raises questions about the gulfs between economics and understanding within Europe.

Lou Lou Cherinet

White Women, 2002, 52 Mins. **39**

Born 1970, Sweden

Lives and works in Sweden

White women (2002) is a full length feature film that is set at a dinner table. The camera observes a group of similarly dressed African men engaged in after dinner conversations. The men talk about their experiences of the games of love and chance between African migrants in Sweden and "native" Swedish women. There was no script for this production. Loulou Cherinet states *I set up the theme of the conversation (white women), the costume, the menu the camera movement, the scenery and the participants.... but the stories candid are all documentary.*

Loulou Cherinet's parents are Swedish and Ethiopian. Consequently much of work with photography and video examines the shifting borders within culture, gender and race. Borders not only contain and define areas but they are also places where ideas and goods are exchanged. In earlier times goods that came from over the border or what is known as the 'other side' were fascinating and sometimes exotic. Globalisation has shifted this traditional understanding and response.

White women touches upon many real life issues - beauty, politics, black and white relations, and the mysterious mind sets of men and women. This humorous and intimate film shows that communication is a complex system of interaction and understanding dependent on many conditions.

Text from www.biennaleofSydney.com

Josef Dabernig

Wars, 2001, 11 Mins. **72**

The work of Josef Dabernig sometimes seems to be a sort of personal archaeology of modernity. It displays an admiration for the utopian and rational, but also a certain pleasure at gaps, mismatches and failures in such ideally conceived structures. It is important that he sees modernity as marked by contradictions and as heterogeneous in spite of its claims for universality. Admiration for the rational forms and structures of modernity and a certain obsession with them are always combined with an ironic and distanced attitude. *Igor Zabel*

In this work precisely framed black & white images laconically depict a restaurant car's Formica charm as a moving microcosm: a service job as scheduled monotony.

Shirin Damerji

München und Die Frauen mit den Schwarzen Schleiern, 2002, 12 Mins. **87**

The title translates as "Munich and the women with the black veils". Damerji films Muslim women in the streets, hiding behind her camera. Each time the artist is spotted the women hide their faces, ashamed or not allowed to be seen. Later in the film a few women of varying ages are interviewed and speak about their lives in Munich and the importance of their beliefs especially in surroundings which do not always support them.

(synopsis by Site staff)

Ricarda Denzer

Tüvierzehn –Reading In Absence, 2001, 13 Mins. **43**

"how are stories created?- and how can one capture the moment of their creation?" With this reflection artist Ricarda Denzer starts her audio-visual production *Tüvierzehn –Reading In Absence*. Denzer has people she knows wander through an empty apartment commenting on what they feel....While those people believe they are talking about others, about a strange world, reconstructing them based upon their lingering but minimal traces, imagining them, working their memory, they are already caught within the net of their own language and imagination. *Judith Fischer*

Emmanuel Danesch and David Rych

Utopia Travel, 2003 9 mins. **87**

In spring 2002 after several years preparation these two artists undertook a journey from Cairo to Vienna in a taxi fitted with a video monitor and stocked with a number of video documentaries made in or by artists native to the countries they passed through. The taxi functioned as a mobile screening room as well as their transport for the journey and as a site for the discussion of local and international issues of culture and politics.

Mo Diener

Light Steps, 2000, 6 Mins. **47**

In *Light Steps*, Swiss artist Mo Diener dresses herself in the traditional clothing of a Xhosa woman, and walks regally through the railway station and streets of Cape Town. Filmed in extreme slow motion, it often appears as if Diener is walking towards us while everyone else is walking backwards. The sound track is an accompaniment by Sergeui Nikokcheve on a jews harp - an inspired choice. It sounds almost as if it might be a traditional Xhosa instrument - and yet - the same sense of dreamlike dislocation provoked by Diener's appearance prevails.

Volker Eichelmann and Roland Rust

Martello Towers, 2002, 10 Mins. **4**

Survey of the remaining Martello Towers on the south-east coast of England

Eichelmann / Rust's works looks at instances of fortification from a variety of perspectives, historical, psycho- and sociological, military and subjective.

Another key feature of their work is the role of new technologies in their advancement of real yet immaterial fortifications. The work provides a detour through the effects of computerisation and visits crucial sites of the implementation of surveillance technologies on a global scale. As the architecture of these installations bears no intelligible link to its function the viewer is left to wonder at the geodesic design of Menwith Hill's radomes and the pyramid-cum-space station lay-out of Fylingdales; contemporary military installations that in their eccentricities mirror early 19th Century Martello Towers or the pagodas and tumuli erected during the 2nd World War on Orford Ness, a site visited by W.G. Sebald on his ramblings in 'The Rings of Saturn'.

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sacs/about/news.htm>

Ewa Einhorn and Terese Mörnvik
Warszawa Street .02, 2003, 10 Mins. **31**

The film "WARSAW.STREET 02" is moving more or less towards an obvious staging of the documentary. The camera takes us for a walk through central Warsaw. People in the street are confronted with the question: What does feminism mean to you?

Annika Eriksson

Copenhagen Postmen's Orchestra, 1996, 9 Mins. **27**
Stockholm Postmen's Orchestra, 1996, 13 Mins. **27**
Collectors, 1998, 17mins. **27**
Staff At Moderna Museet, 2000, 6 Mins. **27**
Anagram, 2001, 10mins. **27**
Connecticut Firefighters Pipes & Drums, 2000, 6 Mins. **27**

In her videos Annika Eriksson works with individuals or groups to whom she offers the chance of presenting themselves within her video framework, whether it be, for instance, in the form of a small performance, the account of a chosen passion or simply an introduction to one's person, citing name and profession. ...For example, the presentations of the collectors are structured along the following lines: the collector stands before the video camera, introduces himself and names the object of his collection. Then the collector speaks freely as long as he thinks it right or as long as he has something to tell about his collection and his passion. He then ends with the set phrase "thank you" and Eriksson switches the camera off. .. Eriksson's projects always ask how individuals deal with the possibility of an authentic self-presentation or performance as well as what the relationship is between the individual and the collective. Søren Grammel

Staff At Moderna Museet

It begins with the camera moving swiftly, as if flying, through a museum with paintings, sculpture, furniture and handicraft from different periods all presented together. Then they enter, one after another, present themselves in front of the camera, giving their name and their position, and then find a place in the room which is precisely where the camera movement halted. One older woman who has worked with natural history and education since the 1960s has brought a stuffed hedgehog with her, and one of the men says that, in addition to being the boss, he is also a nice guy. A smiling, well dressed, middle-aged man, with a well-groomed mustache, finds a seat in the front and the woman who has presented herself as the restaurant manager's wife, moves to the side. Most choose a seat on the benches and chairs that are spread out in the room, while some remain standing. In this way, Annika Eriksson's 20-minute long, softly directed, group portrait of the employees of Malmö's museums in the south of Sweden (Malmö Museer) develops in front of the video camera. The social dynamics and hierarchies emerge discreetly, as the people are present both as individuals and a collective.

As she has done often before, Annika Eriksson works here with a group that is used to doing things together and has asked them to do something over and above their ordinary activities. She has done this with temporary creative communities such as the postal orchestras in Copenhagen and Stockholm and the Connecticut Fire fighters Pipes and Drums orchestra who have all, at her request, played the emotional pop song "Sour Times" by Portishead, a piece not ordinarily in their repertoire. She has worked with the Bremen-based amateur theatre group, Die Silberlocken, with female pensioners who performed a play of the artist's choice, The Musicians of Bremen, and with members of the Mooms Theatre in Malmö, who performed a swinging choreography based on and including a sentence that the artist had chosen. Like a visual echo, the unedited videos, usually filmed in one go and with a steady camera, that document and accompany each project are often shown either in the vicinity of or in the place where they were filmed. *Maria Lind*

Esra Ersen

Hello, Where Is It? 2000, 7 Mins. **59**
This Is Disney World, 20 Mins. **59**
Hamam, 20 Mins., **59**
If You Could Speak Swedish, 23 Mins. **59**
Im Straf Raum, 5 Mins. **59**
I Am Turkish, I Am Diligent, 21 Mins. **59**
Brothers and Sisters, 23 Mins. **59**
Which One You Choose? 17 Mins. **59**

Sociology and ethnology provide examples of the complicated rituals carried out for the acceptance of strangers in a culture. Esra Ersen's video, *If you could speak Swedish ...*, offers a symbolic-political perspective on the institution of the language school for immigrants, which she takes as a model both for the site and the implementation of such rituals today, and thus opens it to examination. The aim of such schools appears to be the assimilation of the cultural identity of immigrants to the values of the surrounding society and to therefore make them compatible with it.

In her latest video, *Brothers and Sisters* (2003), Ersen contrasts the usual discussion about immigration, which generally focuses on immigration to Western Europe, with the situation of immigrants in Istanbul. She worked with a group of African men who had come to Istanbul because they hoped to reach Central Europe from there. The video shows how their plans fail to work out. The immigrants have to struggle with their impending illegal status, which threatens them as soon as their Turkish residence permits expire. The video also takes time to show the hopes and goals of the Africans, who relate at places of their own choosing, their plans and experiences.

Characteristics of Ersen's projects are her close co-operation with her subjects and the freedom she gives them in making decisions. Although she does not portray herself, the reciprocity of the relation between her and her subjects can be felt through her use of the camera. By keeping the camera in permanent motion, she never films those portrayed from a fixed angle and so also never fixes them within a rigid pictorial composition. The camera is generally guided by the movements of the actors themselves and, especially notable in the videos *If you could speak Swedish ...* (2001) and *Hamam* (2000), the camera follows their body-language constantly.

Søren Grammel

Nina Fischer and Maroan El Sani

Berlin Sunrise – 10 Sekunden an Die Zukunft Denken (10 Seconds to Think of the Future), 2000, 5 Mins. **86**

[...] Andy Warhol was embracing total nowness in the polysexual atmosphere of the Factory. His three minute Screen Tests celebrate nothing but glamour and mystery in the look of people like Edie Sedgwick and Bob Dylan. The portrait subjects were supposed to simply be themselves,. But the invitation to authenticity turns into a total performance (just as Warhol intended ?) the effect of being recorded on film. During the decades since the the Screen Tests, this compulsion for self-presentation in media posturings has attained the status of social normality, not least in Berlin - see the *Love Parade*. But Fischer / el Sani's 10 second-movies (like Andy Warhol's Screen Tests, these involve unmoving moved portraits) play a trick on this kind of normality. When the face concentrates on thoughts of the future, gazing them into the camera lens as if thoughts could telekinetically be burned into the film itself, the face forgets its repertoire of studied poses, and a sober portrait is possible even with stoned night owls. Maybe there's not always a flash of glamour, but in each case, the mystery of a possible future glitters from glassy eyes. [...]

Jörg Heiser extract from: *Quobo, Kunst in Berlin 1989-1999, Catalogue, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V., Stuttgart*

Luke Fowler

What You See Is Where You're At, 2001, 28 Mins. **6**

The Way Out: A Portrait of Xentos, 2004, 33 Mins. **6**

What You See Is Where You're At, is a study of the social experiment of Kingsley Hall in the east end of London. On the initiative of the psychoanalyst and author, R D Laing, a permanent community of psychically ill persons was founded in the mid-sixties in the community hall to find out new ways of dealing with what most people call madness. This included, for instance, doing away with the hierarchies between doctor and patient with the result that in the course of the experiment, the distinction between the two became increasingly difficult to make. ...

For his film, Luke Fowler used existing documentary material which he re-edited. He also contacted some of those formerly involved in the courageous experiment to leave the traditional paths of psychotherapy. One of these is Leon Redler: "I hope that Luke's work will stimulate people to reread Laing's texts and to rethink the questions which he addressed. These are questions which are just as important today as they were back then. There is more at stake than we perhaps realize."

From catalogue text *Manifesta 4*

Stefan Geene/Judith Hopf

Bei Mir Zu Dir, 2002, 17 Mins. (Ger) **61**

a TV-show, the TV-host/anchorwoman leaves the studio, there is a teardrop in her eye. flashback: the talk-show on the subject of violence + love gets out of control when the TV-guest, a dead-man, a talking corpse, begins his monologue. Stephan Geene

Alex Gerbaulet

Über Land, 2002, 10 Mins. (Ger) **15**

People trying to enter fortress europe by land depend on border crossing services in order to overcome harsh restrictions for immigration. ...In my video I'm interviewing an escape helper about what border crossing services mean for him and about his motivation for doing his "job". My video shows camera shots of different landscapes and cities. Inbetween you see my interviews with the escape helper (his face being made unrecognizable). Shot as a fake documentary the video comments on the reception of moving images as being „true“ and „authentic“. Alex Gerbaulet

Johanna Gustavsson

Marla, My Heart, 1999, 5 Mins. **28**

A humorous looped video of a woman tentatively practicing a dance routine to country and western music.

Dirk Herzog

Souvenir Saigon, 2003, 30 Mins. **62**

SOUVENIR SÀI GÒN presents itself as the work of a traveling documentary filmmaker, who, making use of an expert (his wife), is granted an extraordinary view into an exotic culture (Viet Nam). He negotiates the fiction of a fundamental confidentiality or intimacy with the Other, whose status as the exotic is heightened and exacerbated. In order to undermine a colonialism of the imaginary, the film addresses the alleged colonialists, the euroamericans, and the western gaze. The images of the film remain searching and ambiguous throughout, and the viewers are invited to construct their own images on the basis of the images they see. Thus the film remains absolutely clear in its refusal to offer any clarity. Even the very first scene serves as a reversal of the documentary format. In a comical exchanging of roles, the film producer undergoes "ethnological methods", and turns the viewer into an object of study, rather than the viewed. The continuously helpless behavior of the storyteller demonstrates the inability of western-rationalist culture to cope with other forms of civilization; especially in the sequences during which the storyteller insists - with the help of a hand-held camera - on the urgency of his "mission". But this helplessness leads time and again to distant urban observations, which, in their search for western cultural signs, highlight the distinctive features of one's own western culture. The narrative thread of the film, the documented search for origin and homeland, presents itself in a reduced and simple manner. The film runs through everyday situations without tension or excitement. In doing so, it maintains a banality of the situation, despite the exoticism of the image content. This way, existing distances in imaginary areas are blurred. By shifting and appropriating the cultural codes that regard such questions of identity, the film gradually discovers its own point of view, and thereby gets caught up in its own privileged perspective. All things considered, the question that remains is how far one has actually traveled. *Dirk Herzog*

Heidrun Holzfeind

Corviale – Il Serpento, 2001, 20 Mins. **46**

Corviale is a 1 km long housing complex in the periphery of Rome. The building was commissioned in 1972 by the IACP (Institute for social housing) to a group of architects directed by Mario Fiorentino to solve the acute lack of housing for working class families. Finished in 1983, it is home to 9.500 tenants. The building was based on the idea of social housing according to Le Corbusier, to provide all needed infrastructures of a city within the complex itself, and to encourage social contacts between the occupants. For internal and political reasons many of these originally planned structures were never realized or are, almost 20 years after the first occupants moved in, still unfinished. The occupants discuss missing infrastructures and prejudices from outside which characterize Corviale as a ghetto with high rates of unemployment, criminality and drug abuse. The work addresses the failure of the utopian modernist architecture in social and everyday life. Interviews with the occupants are juxtaposed with music-video like sequences featuring Roman Hip Hop which addresses social issues that are of concern in the film.

Heidrun Holzfeind

Vimukthi Jayasundera

The Land Of Silence, 2001, 30 Mins. **75**

This work in black and white describes the victims of a civil war carried on in Sri Lanka since fifteen years. Filmed with the help of cinematographical equipment of the sixties, with the least dialogues purposely not translated but relayed by a distant commentary, this film transforms the actual pictures into ghostly archives. It is because he dislikes to revive the horror by the illusion of its closeness, that he denounces the link created between technological virtuosity and martial fascination and that he believes, against all silence, on history as a form of knowledge. *Jean Pierre Rehm*

Ruth Kaaserer

The Professionals, Part 1, 1999, 7 Mins. **40**

The Professionals, Part 2, 1999, 6 Mins. **40**

Balance, 2000, 28 Mins. **42**

In Watte, 2001, 20 Mins. (Ger) **41**

Ruth Kaaserer's videos are based on her collaborative work with people who interest her and whom she depicts in her work. The video "Balance" (2000) and the more recent "In Watte" (In Cotton, 2002) address the lives of young girls. "Balance" portrays the Vienna-based immigrants Magda Karwat, Andrea Ozabalova, and Ewa Rogal; it is a video about girls in an urban environment and their position in a world perceived as male-centered. "In Watte" depicts the small Austrian town of Etsdorf - a rural, extremely family-centered area - where Birgit and Maria live. In contrast to the urban scenarios presented in "Balance," the family's house, its adjacent yard, and the girls' strong regional accent stress the local character of Birgit and Maria's surroundings in "In Watte". What the two videos share is the collaborative effort of documentation. Kaaserer's videos provide the girls with a media platform for presenting themselves in their own way. This can be seen both in the dialogues and the topics discussed, as well as in the choice of location for making the videos and the manner in which the girls are portrayed or portray themselves. Thus, in part, Kaaserer allows her medium of video to serve others' self-representation. The girls' own ideas play a role in defining the work itself. The video-making process is based on the developing relationship and mutual inspiration between Kaaserer and the girls. The video therefore portrays the girls' hopes and ideas not only on a linguistic level, but on an aesthetic one as well. This working method lends significance to the everyday dialogues between Magda, Andrea, and Ewa, and between Birgit and Maria, and also provides a forum - two characteristics which are atypical of television reports on young people. These works

reject the investigative, documentary style of reports on youth which deem something "authentic" and instead, establish a collaborative relationship between the director and the people being portrayed. For the girls, such collaborative work goes beyond merely creating a video; it gives the girls the chance to confront and reflect on their own personal situation. "The Professionals," an earlier work by Kaaserer, shows young people at a sports field. That video perhaps shows Kaaserer's own personal point of departure: the video gives the viewer the impression that she has arrived at a public sports field, sees what is going on, and wants to join in on the fun - contributing her own, different kind of skill to the game, something which the other players find interesting: her video camera.

Kanal B

Argentinien, 2002, 60 Mins. **18**

After large unrests in Argentina this video, by members of Berlin video's group Kanal B, documents the processes of self-help and grass roots organization. "During the uprising of the Argentine people in December 2001 we thought, this could be the start of the world revolution, and we had the urge to go there and see for ourselves what was going on. Here you can find the archive of the 4 week video coverage." <http://germany.kanalb.org/topics.php>

Klub 2

Schwarz Auf Weiss – Die Rückseite Der Bilder (Black on White – the Back of Pictures) 2002, 5 Mins. **66**

Which things or events are remembered? How is the Shoah remembered? What role is played in this remembering by the way in which images are dealt with? This short video by the group of female artists Klub Zwei addresses the problematic nature of these questions on a formal and contextual level – and does so by means of a radical removal of the images discussed in a voice-over. While the director of a photo archive poses questions regarding memory, images and history, we see texts solely in black and white. Despite the fact that making mechanical reproductions is possible, images change, according to the thesis. More and more shades of gray disappear with each new generation of photographic print – and what remains are the stark contrasts between black and white. It is the removal of the images being dealt with which sets in motion a reflection on what gives them their status as historical documents. Not just the front side of photographs of destruction, which are often employed in a purely symbolic way, but the apparently innocuous reverse with its stamps and notes supposedly constitutes their place in the world, their historical context and therefore their significance, according to Klub Zwei's argumentation. The use of photographs as icons often leads to their being nothing more than illustrations of authenticity. **Black and White** also persistently points to a prudent way of treating photographs as historical documents. Walter Benjamin was one of the voices to identify as a photograph's most important aspect its "label (...)" without which all photographic construction must necessarily remain approximate". According to Benjamin, photographs provide something to read rather than see. **Black and White** conforms to this postulate. *Hito Steyerl*

Nina Könnemann

M.U.D. 2000, 8 Mins. **8**

Pleasure Beach, 2001, 8 Mins. **8**

Icke, 2002, 6 Mins. **8**

Unrise, 2002, 10 Mins. **8**

The starting point for Nina Könnemann's videos are observations of common events: the morning after a party, a neighborhood after a mini-tornado, a role-play gathering, a storm over an amusement strip. The people she observes are mostly in groups. They appear as small crowds, participants, and players; if seen alone then only in order to accentuate a collective state. The situations are documented with a handheld video camera. Könnemann doesn't choose this subjective camera mode to visualize a personal perspective or involvement. The characteristic visual style of the handheld camera, with blurred images or jumps, is used to evoke a sense of directness, a filmic "present tense". Another effect is a certain homogeneity of the recorded material, which allows her to inconspicuously manipulate the depicted situation. In the editing process Könnemann changes the chronology of events to disturb the cause/effect structure, accentuates incidents through repetition or adds later-filmed scenes post-production. Through these slight displacements and fictitious interventions, the documented everyday situations reveal a potential for the extraordinary, oscillating between being threatening, absurd and ephemeral. Könnemann relies on the mode of documentation as a basis for sensitizing her audience to the fictional potential of common and communal scenarios. Text by Nina Könnemann

For her video installation, *Unrise*, Nina Könnemann observed what was going on during the Berlin Love Parade. Already in her works, *M.U.D.* (2000) and *Pleasure Beach* (2001), the artist, who was born in Bonn in 1971, had visited sites in modern consumerist society where the organized, quasi-ritual flight from the compulsions of everyday life is sanctioned. Whether it be a festival or a visit to the discotheque, the deviant behaviour is itself saturated with codes and norms along which the ego practices its own staging. Embedded in the imaginary, temporary community of a shared lifestyle, the self-as-other constructed in this way comes into danger of falling into the same patterns which it rejects. Thus, leisure culture serves to engender identification with normality. At the end of the film, for instance, two boy group clones try to impress three teenage girls with their unaccompanied singing. The camera is close by and recalls the function of the media to serve as a model. The scenes in *Unrise* were shot in the future regional railway station at Potsdamer Platz. In the midst of a symbol of the new capital which has been planned down to the finest detail by town planners, the strange

choreographies provoke an atmosphere of indefiniteness. Are the scenes genuine or have they being posed?¹ What reality does such a place produce, and which reality does the film itself produce? The documentary character slides into the fictitious. The viewers' co-ordinates on the levels of content and film medium get mixed up. ... The camera's gaze, whose stability is repeatedly destroyed by violent movements, corresponds to the lack of inhibitions for those under intoxication. *Jörn Schaff*

Daniela Kostova

I See, 2001, 20 Mins. **83**

The "I see..." project presents Bulgaria and the capital Sofia in particular through the eyes of a tourist from the West. He is usually seen riding in a rented vehicle with a guide in central parts of the city and next to the most emblematic local street and buildings. This is a standard trip travel agents offer and is an attractive but superficial view of modern cities and to a certain extent of the situation in the country in general.. in the film we are riding in a shiny red Mercedes on a sunny day in March. I have replaced the beautiful panoramic view with a black nontransparent strip. There is no information. The information can be found at the location where one usually finds the two black strip that outline the edges of the film frame. One sees an abstract picture while a voice behind the scene extols the beauty of the city. The viewer builds a notion from what he hears, but is unable to see things in their entirety or to understand them. The voice continues to speak "You see..." Daniela Kostova

Bernd Krauss

Sender Mittelfranken (Verschiedene Beiträge) 2003-2004, 11 Mins. **19**

A series of very short and diverse clips. The *Sender Mittlefranken* was a transmitter which the artist created for a project at *Kunstveriein Munich* which broadcast to the surrounding area and was the focus for collaborative workshops.

Mari Laanemets and Killu Sukmit

The Cure, 1999, 6 Mins. **21**

Route 66, 2002, 7 Mins. **20**

The Nylon Moon, 2000, 7 Mins. **23**

When The Stories 60 Around At Night, 2002, 20 Mins. **22**

The Cure

Both of the protagonists in the video stand across from each other in empty corners of a space that is otherwise not in full view. ... Clothed in a traditional, probably Estonian costume, the two performers teach each other the steps to a folk dance. At the beginning they are slow and rather clumsy, but they become increasingly self-confident. This scene alternates with another scene in which the protagonists can be observed from a more distanced, bird's-eye view. They walk across an empty and snowy square. The camera perspective indicated an elevated standpoint - the performers suddenly turn toward the camera for a short moment and wave....

Like many post-socialist countries, a strong return to its so-called historical roots can also be observed in Estonia after the fall of the socialist system: one searches for one's own tradition. ... Mari Laanemets and Killu Sukmit investigate this mechanism through the importance of dance [and] its original function in the constitution of a sense of community and belonging Dance festivals (the second scene was actually recorded in the stadium during winter, the official venue for dance performances) can be interpreted as nationally organized identity therapy from this point of view. The mechanisms of healing, which Laanemets and Sukmit's "the cure" is about, are those which are designed to prevent the collective from degeneration.

The work critically exposes what is artificial and fake about the mechanisms of cultural reproduction. ... The final scene in which the protagonists suddenly disappear into thin air in a clearing is itself reminiscent of a popular and often used trick in eastern European films about fairy tale: one twists a ring on the finger and disappears. what made this subject popular may also be the demonstration of how reality can be overcome with filmic constructions. From text by *søren grammel*

¹ Könnemann in fact set up some of the scenes. The man with the flashing pierced ornamentation and the women with head-scarves follow observations of the artist not originally captured with the camera.

Kristina Leko

Sarajevo International, 2001, 20 Mins. **69**

Central to Leko's practice are her social and documentary projects. Acting as an initiator and mediator, she helps ordinary people construct their own personal stories through video. With a rare generosity of spirit, Leko dedicates herself to sharing her artistic and technological skills with others, who belong to diverse, and often socially disadvantaged, groups.

Faruk Sabanovic is a 26 year old graphic artist and music video producer who was born in Sarajevo. He was 17 years old when the war began in 1992 and Sarajevo came under siege from Serbs fighters in the hills surrounding the city. One day in 1995, during the final days of the war, Faruk was hit by a sniper's bullet. The bullet went into his chest and through his spine. He woke up in the hospital unable to move his legs. The odd thing about Faruk's wounding is that it was recorded by a television news camera. A doctor in New York who saw the news story called Faruk and offered to examine and perhaps operate on him to get him walking again. Eight months after being wounded Faruk found himself in New York city but within 24 hours he was given the dark news that the damage to his spine could not be repaired and Faruk returned to Sarajevo in a wheelchair. Back home, when Faruk discovered that Sarajevo was not wheelchair friendly he started an organization to fight for wheelchair accessible streets and buildings. He was successful enough that today he and others like him can travel around the centre of the city with some ease. However Faruk didn't dwell on his disability. He went back to school and studied graphic arts and today works in both animation and film. *Diana Yeh*

Sonja Lillebaek Christensen

Mother Like Daughter, 2001, 8 Mins. **7**

The single screen video *Mother like daughter* is composed of two simultaneously displayed half figure portraits, of two women belonging to each her own generation. On the left side of the screen, the mother Sonja Lillebaek Christensen, born in 1944, is portrayed in her living room surrounded by family portraits, bric-a-bracs and other items typical of her generation. On the right part of the screen, one finds the daughter Sonja Lillebaek Christensen, born in 1972, in her living room surrounded by children's toys, furniture and other domestic articles representing her generation. The mother and daughter are by turns telling about different life episodes. The two women's tales are at times remarkably similar and one gets confused whether the narratives are each woman's own recollection of the same episodes. The bewilderment grows as one realises that both the mother and the daughter's stories clearly do not represent their own generation. Mystified and distrustful one suspects the two women of having swapped identity with each other. This state of masquerade and confusion at times creates some very humorous scenes. As one's perception of belonging to the progressive generation are being questioned, one reflect on whether one really have advanced that bit more than the previous generation. The video *Mother like daughter* is arguing that one often experience the same complex of problems that one's parents have faced and that one's reaction on those complexes just as often mirror those of the previous generation.

Sonja Lillebaek Christensen

Eugenia Loguinova-Hünemörder

6 Stunden in der Zukunft (6 Hours in the Future), 2001, 35 Mins. **45**

This autobiographical film is titled '6 hours into the future' which is exactly the length of time it takes to get from the artists home town to her parents village, which is also the one that she grew up in. The film portrays old Russia, the way that her parents live and a town that has been forgotten, interviewing locals allowing them to express their distaste for what has happened. (synopsis by Site staff)

In a very personal documentary film Eugenia Loguinova Huenemoerder describes the search for her history in the Altai and west Sayan area in the heart of Asia. With subjective camera it explores this large area and creates an intensive contact between humans there and the spectators. The film succeeds in a subtle play on proximity and distance, far from media clichés of the exotic. Particular sensitivity and continuity in its cinematic attitude provides a convincing picture of people and their living space within an inconspicuous dramaturgy.

(http://www.infomediash.de/aktuell/0202/hhp_jury.html)

Monteith Mccollum,

Hybrid, 2002, 92 Mins. **38**

With a blend of poetic cinematography, animation, and an evocative soundtrack, *HYBRID* is a film about a 100-year old Iowa farmer, his troubled relations with his family and his life-long obsession with hybrid seed corn. Milford Beeghly began his seed company in the 1930s, experimenting with hybrids in secret, peddling his seed to skeptical farmers at a time when intervening in the natural process was seen by some as an oddity, hoax, and sin. The filmmaker, Milford's grandson, reveals a family's resentment towards the stoic, unemotional man who doesn't know how to communicate with his family, but finds companionship in the whispers of rustling cornfields.

Humorously playing on a theme of sexuality, the film describes the promiscuity of corn in comparison to other crops. It regales with the mating ritual of corn and the evil inbreeding and pimping for pollen which man partakes to create a hybrid. The film captures Milford's changes over a six-year period, revealing his philosophies and eccentricities, his remarriage at 94, and his battle with pneumonia at 99. It was some 70 years ago that Milford Beeghly first began experimenting with hybridization, in the birthplace of today's biotechnological revolution in agriculture. *Film review - Slamdance Festival*

Farhad Moshiri

Teheran TV Disoriented, 2003, 10 Mins. **63**

Farhad Moshiri was born in 1963 in Shiraz, Iran and, from 1981-84, studied Art and Film at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. Since then, his work has mainly concentrated on painting and video art, using both of these media as a means to give voice to his critical and astute observations on present-day culture in Iran. He tackles themes ranging from Iranian urban everyday reality to the culture of consumerism and architecture in the post-revolutionary period. Farhad Moshiri lives and works in Tehran. *House of World Cultures*

Rosalind Nashashibi

Midwest, 2002, 11mins. **53**

Midwest: Field 2002, 4 Mins. **53**

Dahiet Al Hareed (District Of The Post Office) 6 Mins. **53**

The motives in Rosalind Nashashibi's films tend to be outspokenly mundane: street scenes and no mans land spotted with occasional people, interiors of a café and a male hairdresser's. The film *Midwest* was filmed in Omaha, Nebraska, where the artist had a residency and therefore plenty of time away from her own regular routine. It is 11 minutes long and lacks a narrative structure, other than that it starts in the morning and ends in the evening. *Dahiet Al Bareed: District of the Post Office* sets up a structural parallel to *Midwest* but replacing Omaha with the Westbank. In *Midwest: Field* she uses another method: letting a continuous conversation between a group of men who share a passion: flying radio controlled model airplanes; carry the narration. Her most recent film *Humaniora* was inspired by Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, and shows British state hospitals from the different ideological eras of Victorian and post-war Britain.

In these works Rosalind Nashashibi registers inactivity and rest in different cultural contexts, in the UK and the US as well as in the Middle East. On each occasion the 16 mm film camera and the artist are palpably present, clearly signaling to those around that a recording is taking place. The camera often pans the cityscape, making shots which are longer than regular TV-shots but not long enough to become boring. This careful calibration creates a slow and contemplative pace and makes the atmosphere in the film feel slightly uncanny. Her work is also an example of a contemporary practical condition: although she works with film for the sake of its specific visual qualities and particular form of production she eventually shows her work as video. KM

Tanja Nellesmann

Fremmedsyn, Wordgame, Between Foreigner View And Future View, 1999, 43 Mins. **5**

How do you experience Denmark and the danes? 15 different people from 15 different countries, settled in Denmark, speak about Danes and Denmark. The project is made to a TV context, where every single essay is made to be an insert in the TV flow. Every interview has a length as a commercial spot, about 2-3 minutes. *Fremmedsyn* is a TV project, which questions Danish nationality. A way to discuss, the way we create the pictures of "the others". A way to talk back to a very unambiguous way the medias shows "new Danes"/the newcomers. Tanja Nellesmann

Jesper Nordahl

Crazy Girls, 2001, 8 Mins. **37**

The *Crazy Girls*, Annija, Katrina and Agnese dance through neglected streets singing songs you'll be familiar with. Oblivious to their surroundings, they try to concentrate on the beat and tempo of the music as they dance towards the camera. But the *Crazy Girls* are not the latest girl band, but three ten year olds from Karosta, a port suburb of Liepaja, Latvia. The interview and film by Swedish artist Jesper Nordahl adds to their armoury of girl band accoutrements – they have the group, the music, the choreographer - the dream is once more reaffirmed. They are passing their time playing-out the same harmless dream that occupies many children their age, to be like the famous people most similar to them, in this case Britney Spears and A-teens, a Swedish Abba cover band. ... One can surmise something of their lives from what surrounds them, a mixture of broken Russia and broken USSR, the modern and the orthodox equally neglected within a damaged Latvia. Between 1890 and 1994 Karosta fell under the rule of Russia, the Soviet Union, Germany and Latvia; each leaving their mark on the architecture and people. In the film the girls dance past 1980s housing, Stalinist era buildings and the Orthodox cathedral built by Tsar Nicolai II. When Latvia gained it's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and the Latvian nation was re-established, ninety percent of Karosta's population became aliens (non-citizen inhabitants) as they were considered, even if Latvian born, ethnic Russians.

The film is now three years old, and one wonders if the trio are still together. Now teenagers, Annija, Katrina and Agnese should be one of the first generations to experience the mixed blessings of Latvia being a full-member of the European Union, yet if they are aliens in their country of birth what will the future hold for them then? *Lesley Young*

Audrius Novickas

VIP Sightseeing Tour Of Vilnius, 2002, 16 Mins. **16**

"V.I.P. Sightseeing Tour of Vilnius" is based on pre-edited footage found at the press office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania. In this footage the President appears together with German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, Norwegian King Harald and his wife Sonja, NATO Secretary-General Lord George Robertson, French President Jacques Chirac during their promenades in Vilnius Old Town. Only the episodes taking place in the public space (the streets) were selected and used, while the fragments filmed inside the institutional space were left out. The images of doors and gates (they might be considered as symbols of division of interior and exterior spaces) serve as connecting the separate fragments in this film. The footage depicts the city as a hierarchical space and shows the procession as a theatrical ritual of power mapping. The "Presidential Route" does not vary a lot on different occasions. The V.I.P. guests see same small fragment of Vilnius that can be considered as a representational, ceremonial image of the town. The ceremonial space allows only the staged spectacle, not the spontaneous sight, thus every movement of one or another V.I.P. becomes an ideological gesture (for instance you can see Mr. Gerhard Schröder giving pittance to a beggar, but as one of my acquaintances put the question, the situation is improbable, because why should the chancellor have cash in his pocket?). On another hand the spectacle is not only a predominant scene itself but also a background that reveals some forms of the local culture which indicates certain tolerance for democracy, freedom, safety and unexpected situations. At last the fact that kids in Vilnius incidentally can run into one or another leader of the most powerful country or organisation in the world and entertain him with a handful of popcorn speaks of a global village... *Audrius Novickas*

Suzanne Ofteringer,

Die Entscheider, 1992, 20 Mins. (Ger) **64**

Suzanne Ofteringer is best known for her film *Nico Icon*, 1995. As the stone-faced chanteuse of the Velvet Underground, Nico was the embodiment of Warholian beauty and apathy. Suzanne Ofteringer's inventive documentary culls archival footage from Nico's early modeling days and performances in films such as *La Dolce Vita* and *The Chelsea Girls* as well as rare performance footage from her work with the Velvets and her eerie, heroin-fueled solo gigs. This newer video is in German, unfortunately without subtitles.

Lisl Ponger

Déjà Vu, 1999, 23 Mins. **73**

Somewhere in sub-tropical country white visitors crowd around dark-skinned plantation workers emptying their harvest baskets. They look curious, as if wanting to test the quality of the tea leaves. Everywhere tourists take out their cameras – whether in front of large animals in the wild or camel riders, whether in the face of decorated human bodies or daily work routines. Now and again they look into the camera themselves. For later, for when they will proudly show their 'exotic' finds at home. This posing contains a model of western travels and picture making which is over a century old. The fascinated gaze on the foreigners fixes them in pre-formed frames. Lisl Ponger follows the trail of that gaze by taking amateur found footage material and linking it together in new ways. She summons up atmospheric background sounds and adds a series of voices. With a subtle distance to the visual foreground, those people who are pictured in the west as much more homogenous than they have the work – in the diverse languages of the 'other'. They tell, untranslated, of their experiences with various forms of colonialism – whether as subjects in their own countries or as the expelled and transformed 'foreigner'... The voices are not allowed to dominate the images but *déjà vu* takes a risk by letting the multiplicity of languages speak for themselves. It is a film which does not impart security but poses questions. *Christa Blümlinger*

Pttl,

Participation, 2001, 20 Mins. **51**

PTTL started up a base in the unemployment office at Sint-Joost in 1998. Sint-Joost is coloured red on every map I look at. This Brussels borough is near a station, has a red-light district and suffered riots in 1998. It's also red because of its socialist mayors, and because there are as many Turks as Moroccans, and French and Italians, Spaniards, Congolese, Portuguese, British, Algerians and Dutch. The unemployment office, where PTTL based its radical office, became the recording studio and also the base for video workshops in the neighbourhood. Fifteen, mainly white, residents gave their ideas free rein during the weekends. Two ex-organisers of Mission Locale (an important social employment office institution), the mayor, an architect and a fresh, new local politician. Two property owners told of their experiences with the urban renovation subsidy systems. At the end of May we rushed together twelve rough edits sorted by topic, and these aroused plenty of comment when shown in the evening at the radical office. Access was made to more than 20 hours of recorded interviews. Certain subjects opened right up. Strangely it appears meetings are not the place to exchange ideas. Floods of talk full of enthusiastic plans, philosophical views and statements... Watching the interviews together became an alternative event. Words bubbled up that had for too long remained unspoken. Invisible hierarchies that had developed in the course of many meetings, as a result of some people being more outspoken, now ceased to work, were levelled down and made more horizontal in this impetuous, non-preconceived collective zone. Very gradually a space took shape where people listen and everyone can have their say. Diagnosis: A camera is an excellent 'power detector'. Judicious use of the camera will draw out the power energy of a particular location; 'You can't film here'. 'You need permission', etc. Without a camera to prick the surface you could pass through a zone all your life while blissfully unaware of how it is infected by power and regulation. *Axel Claes PTTL / Mark Saunders*, Saint-Josse, January 2002

Mark Raidpere

Father, 2002, 3 Mins. **25**

Mark Raidpere is an Estonian former fashion photographer and artist. This film takes the viewer on a tour, presumably of the flat of the 'father' in question. The soundtrack is made up of two speakers' voices spliced together to form a sinister and ambiguous adjunct to the visuals. As the artist's camera pans over walls or advances down corridors our attention is drawn to details, which seem to offer us an unnerving insight into the man's life.

text: Site staff

Marko Raat

For Aesthetic Reasons, 1999, 28 Mins. **24**

The film portrays the young Estonian art historian Andres Kurg who goes to Denmark and, at the director's instigation, turns to all kinds of institutions with an attempt to seek permission to settle down in Denmark because he likes the environment. For purely aesthetic reasons, as he claims. ... Instead of the usual ethical reasons for emigration (political persecution, war, economic depression, right to humane treatment) the film emphasises the aesthetic aspects (the protagonist loves Danish post-war modernism, he would like to settle down in the house of the famous Danish architect Arne Jacobsen and to use the wonderful design of Bang&Olufsen). Marko Raat's film burst upon the stale and stuffy Estonian documentary film scene with its unusually sharp focus. Above all, this is a critique of the society. Social commitment is not new in Estonian documentary, but what we do not find here are humanist stereotypes, leftist virtuous moaning, naturalistic descriptions and hollow pathos, which are all, for some unknown reason, associated with social awareness. This film is a joyful experiment, a sociological plunge in the spirit of Jean Rouch, executed in the provocative techniques of Nick Broomfield. Andres Maimik

Isabel Reiß

Schöner Leben (Beautiful Life), 2002, 18 Mins. **3**

Using still images of the interiors of flats and houses, the artist examines the relationships between a group of young people and their living spaces. The inhabitants talk about their homes and their alternative lifestyles and contemplate issues of material culture. How much more than a room and a bed does one really need?

Text: Site staff

Oliver Ressler

Nachhaltige Propaganda, 2000, 44 Mins. (Ger) **11**

Rote Zero, 2001, 28 Mins. **13**

Disobbedienti, 2003, 54 Mins. **14**

This Is What Democracy Looks Like! 2003, 54 Mins. **14**

Oliver Ressler's work should be viewed in connection with his political activities. Politics is always a struggle about the means and modes of representation. The term "media competence" has become a guiding principle for politicians in industrialized, democratic nations: gaining public attention through the media, giving live interviews, convincing the public by being charismatic in front of the camera - representation techniques necessitate content and ideas. Ressler's videos engage in the debate on particular political ideas as much as they do in the techniques of representation. On a formal level, his videos are similar to a television feature report. They show interviews, present facts, documentation, data, portray events, and show found footage taken from the realm of entertainment and information. They play with the clichés common in the world of television, or with suspense-builders such as the presentation of a "secret," when, for instance, people providing information on television want to remain anonymous. Or, Ressler's videos employ the moment of "revelation" - when people are recorded on camera and confronted with unpleasant questions which they try to skirt around. At the same time, the formal use of perspective, colour, frames and other means of image composition underscore the subtly persuasive nature of the "feature report," which is never "objective". In contrast to most television reportage, however, Ressler's videos do not hide this aspect. On the one hand, he shows how a feature report shapes opinion; on the other, he addresses topics atypical of television. He produced, for example, a feature on "Rote Zora" - a militant women's group responsible for over 20 attacks in Germany during the 1980's. Another example is his video "Border Crossing Services"- which depicts the phenomena of so-called illegal border crossings. Ressler's most recent video "This is what democracy looks like!" thematizes the events of 1 July 2001 which took place surrounding a demonstration against the World Economic Forum - a private lobbying organization of major capital - which was meeting in Salzburg at the time. While all these works make it possible to address current political topics on one level, they also facilitate a discussion on a different level about the modes of media representation by presenting the genre of television reporting in an unusual manner. KM

Oliver Ressler and Martin Krenn

Dienstleistung: Fluchthilfe, 2001, 51 Mins. **12**

Oliver Ressler and Martin Krenn's working method begins at this point: to what extent is an artistic practice coupled with conditions in society as a whole? In the 1990s, art service carried over primarily quotidian experiences into the aesthetic realm and there, solidified into gestures, attempted to portray the newly acquired social competence. For Ressler/Krenn, political interests collide with artistic ones. Whether genetic technology, free schools, the practice of deportation in Austria and Germany or the way that major companies deal with neoliberalism and globalization - it is about artistic critique narrowing down the power formations of the late modern era and transferring this to the public realm. What changes when talks about reforming the school system are carried out on the radio, or when pupils are invited into the artistic space? And what happens when the critique of deportation prisons are taken away from the usual media and put into the urban space - in the middle of the tourist mile in front of the Viennese state opera at Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz? From text by By Harald Fricke and Marina Grzinic, Ljubljana

Almut Rink

Past Perfect, 2003, 27 Mins. **71**

In this film Almut Rink investigates the 'Hammer and Sickle' walking tour of Budapest. It was set up by an American entrepreneur to capitalise on the recent communist history of the city. Rink's documentary examines the complex relationship of the people of Budapest with their past lives under the Communist regime. The film also raises issues surrounding the authenticity of touristic experience.

Text: Site staff

Isa Rosenberger

Don't Stop – A Short Preview To Life, 1996, 28 Mins. **56**

Sarajevo Guided Tours, A Journey To A Real & Imagined Place, 2002, 30 Mins. **44**

Schöne Aussicht, 2003, 32 Mins. (Ger) **58**

Isa Rosenberger is interested in examining the extent to which documentary techniques, as an artistic practice, can open up new areas of experience and action, and in how these techniques can gain access to the perspectives of various social groups.

In her film, *Sarajevo Guided Tours* - a journey to a real and imagined place (2002), she approaches the city of Sarajevo as a tourist, including all the unmistakeable traces of war. She asks eight young people whom she met during her stay and who have very personal stories to relate about their experiences of the war, to show her places that have a personal meaning for each of them. Rosenberger filmed the protagonists in front of sites they themselves chose. Their stories comprise eight completely different reports that are related very privately and without bitterness. A wheel-chair-bound person shot down during the war, who has been a paraplegic ever since, talks about the media attention he received when his injuries were filmed by a TV camera. A girl shows her favourite refuge with a view over the city, which she and her friends discovered after the war was over - a place where they could contemplate, laugh and cry. "This social cartography of the city is marked by the perspectives of the inhabitants of Sarajevo in which their experiences during the war are also reflected upon - as is my 'tourist view' as visitor". (Isa Rosenberger).

For Isa Rosenberger, what is important in her examination of the documentary is to avoid "speaking for others" and instead to try to establish an equal exchange. Thus, for her, a central question is the position she takes up as an artist. Katharina Schlieben

Faruk Sabanovic

Endangered Species, 2002, 3 Mins. **70**

Faruk Sabanovic is a 26 year old graphic artist and music video producer who was born in Sarajevo. He was 17 years old when the war began in 1992 and Sarajevo came under siege from Serbs fighters in the hills surrounding the city. Faruk and his friends tried to have as normal a life as possible despite the lack of money and the danger of moving around Sarajevo. They would get together in basement clubs that gave them protection from the snipers above ground to listen to music and dance.

One day in 1995, during the final days of the war, Faruk was walking home from the city centre after visiting friends. He was just around the corner from his home when he was hit by a sniper's bullet. The bullet went into his chest and through his spine. Faruk remembers hearing the bullet hit the pavement behind him as it exited his back, before he became unconscious. He woke up in the hospital unable to move his legs.

The odd thing about Faruk's wounding is that it was recorded by a television news camera. A doctor in New York who saw the news story called Faruk and offered to examine and perhaps operate on him to get him walking again. Eight months after being wounded Faruk found himself in New York city -- as he puts it, he went from the 'the city of candles to the city of lights'. But within 24 hours he was given the dark news that the damage to his spine could not be repaired and Faruk returned to Sarajevo in a wheelchair.

Back home, when Faruk discovered that Sarajevo was not wheelchair friendly he started an organization to fight for wheelchair accessible streets and buildings. He was successful enough that today he and others like him can travel around the centre of the city with some ease. However Faruk didn't dwell on his disability. He went back to school and

studied graphic arts and today works in both animation and film. He has produced video commercials for the accessibility organization. He also produces music videos for a local band, "Adi Lukovac".
<http://radio.cbc.ca/news/w6docs/sarajevo/mvideo.html>

Natascha Sadr Haghighian

Present But Not Yet Active, 2002, 12 Mins. **65**

Present but not yet Active is an attempt to participate in a big group exhibition without displaying anything. Instead it is an attempt to 'diffuse' into the exhibition through a shared experience with the curators before the opening. The curators receive a documentation after the end of the show.

Occasion: manifesta 4, frankfurt , main location: frankfurt zoo, time: four weeks before the opening

Venue: the zoo in Frankfurt - directed by Bernhard Grzimek from 1945-1974. He was famous for his films and TV programs about endangered species. He was also famous for developing new strategies of displaying animals at the zoo. Grzimek firmly believed that in order to protect something you have to show it. The modern home for endangered species tries to imitate the natural environment as good as possible. The challenge is to still provide visibility. that's where the dilemma starts.

The dilemma of visibility and authenticity. The questions are:

- do things vanish when they get real?
- has the concept of display failed?
- how can we leave representational space and have some real experiences?

Present but not yet Active tries to multiply the dilemma through a collective performance. The display is multiplied, Grzimek is multiplied, and everybody is looking for the tiger...

Anri Sala

Nocturnes, 1999, 11 Mins. **30**

In Anri Sala's films, personal stories are intertwined with larger political and social narratives. Many of the artist's works make reference to his family while referring to past and present conditions in Albania, where he grew up. For *Intervista—Finding the Words* (1998), Sala, with the help of a lipreader, re-created the lost audio portion of a filmed interview his mother had given in the late 1970s as a member of the Communist Youth Party in Albania. In Sala's film mother and son are seen viewing the original tape together. As his mother is confronted with the past and her words, she wonders with astonishment at how she could so earnestly spout party rhetoric. Although the film depicts a moment of nostalgic reassessment more than culpability or disavowal, it makes a powerful comment on the lines between fact and fiction, and the intermingling of family and country.

Although many of Sala's works address personal histories—his own and those of others—their themes of trauma, loss, and recovery are universal. Using tropes of both documentary and fictional filmmaking, *Nocturnes* (1999) approaches these themes in an uneasy exploration of insomnia and personal isolation. The film offers a brief but telling glimpse into the lives and psyches of two men Sala met while studying art in Turcoing, France: Jacques, who collects and obsessively cares for thousands of fish, and Denis, who copes with disturbing memories of his service as a United Nations peacekeeper in Bosnia by playing violent video games.

The film cuts between shots of Turcoing's streets at night and the two men as they describe their nighttime activities. With his face dimly lit by the artificial glow of purplish aquarium lights, Jacques speaks of his fish population as if it were a metaphor for the darker side of human society. When you introduce a new fish into a tank, he explains, you must do it gently and slowly, so the others won't kill the newcomer. As Denis describes his terrifying wartime experiences, we never see his face, only his hands. After killing people, "You can't live normally," he says. At the controls of his Sony PlayStation, Denis immerses himself in a still violent but fictional activity that fills hour after sleepless hour. As the film progresses, Jacques's and Denis's stories, and thus their identities, become less distinct from one another. These young men, outsiders both, derive a sense of power and purpose by controlling artificial situations, but their lives remain touched by anxiety and loneliness.

www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_work_md_208_1.html

Solmaz Shahbazi and Tirdad Zolghadr

Tehran 1380, 2002, 44 Mins. **52**

In the documentary film *Tehran 1380* (2002), Solmaz Shahbazi and Tirdad Zolghadr look at the social aspects and historical background of the urban development of the city of Tehran. Tehran has experienced four revolutions in the 20th century and in the last two decades the population has grown from 3 to 12 million people. Through interviews with both locals and temporary visitors, urbanists as well as non-professionals, and through a variety of images from the city itself, they trace the growth and change of the Iranian capital into a place with a heterogeneous population and a multitude of lifestyles. It is shown as brimming with the problems and fascinations of a contemporary metropolis, but also as full of pertinent questions about globalisation and urbanism. At a time when in the West there is a growing desire to understand and grasp the Middle East, it is ever more relevant to analyze these mechanisms. One of the filmmakers' most important ambitions with their film is to problematize the kind discourses emanating from the West which have

focused on third world urban chaos as a means of discrediting Euro-American modernist paradigms, represented by for instance Rem Koolhaas. The film also discusses how this approach has been appropriated by many local residents, thereby once more re-inscribing a master discourse on a local level. A major issue in the film is exactly this: who has the "right" to represent the situation at hand? What does it mean when natives do it, or when the authors of master discourses do it? Solmaz Shahbazi and Tirdad Zolghadr were both born in Tehran but grew abroad up in Germany.
Maria Lind

Solmaz Shahbazi

Good Times, Bad Times, 2003, 31 Mins. **60**

The title of the documentary **Good Times/Bad Times** refers to the title of the German Daily Soap "Gute Zeiten / Schlechte Zeiten", about young people's everyday life in Cologne/Germany

Today Iran's population is twice as big as it was before the revolution of 1978. Over 70% of the population is younger than 25. About 80% of the society can read and write. Before the revolution only 40% of the Iranians could do so. Young people are self-confident. They are on their way to change the society, although slowly but certainly. Through these changes, conflicts between the generations obviously grow. One effect is the increasing number of young people, who run away from their homes. Most of them are girls between 15 and 18 years. The documentary is about five young people, each as a representative of a certain group in the Iranian society, whereas the so called „Run away Girls“ are absent. This is because although they are visible in the city, in the society they mainly seem to be invisible. And, as they have decided to leave their homes, I do not see the right to 'present' them in front of the camera. So I decided to mention them, but not to make a sensational subject out of them for the video. The opinions of the other four about the reasons, why the girls run away from their homes are fairly close to each other, although they come from completely different social origins.. Solmaz Shahbazi

Spacecampaign

Danish Elections, 2001, 5 Mins. **67**

Alem, an Eritrean woman in a yellow dress, waits on the stairs of the Danish Parliament building. It is election night, and security guards follow her every move. Then right-wing MP Pia Kjaersgaard appears, and Alem bursts into song, singing the beautiful Danish national anthem in a loud, clear voice. Pia the Iron Lady rushes past, and the speaker "does not understand the symbolism". It is quite magnificent. "In SPACECAMPAIGN the media have been turned into a tool rather than the object of investigation; they constitute a performative exhibition space for counter-narratives. Like an activist virus, SPACECAMPAIGN penetrates the images and modes of delivery favoured by the media – without, however, delivering the product they expect. Quite the contrary: another reality appears here." Lars Bang Cataloge: Nordic Fundamentalism

Hito Steyerl

Die Leere Mitte (The Empty Centre), 1999, 62 Mins. **57**

In the film essay *Die leere Mitte (The empty centre)* from 1998, Steyerl confronts the present and past of the Potsdamer Platz with the transformation of Berlin (again) into Germany's capital. Following the unification of East and West Germany, the square has again become of symbolic political relevance. As an object of investment for transnational companies, the once empty place has now returned as Berlin's new centre. The film shows how the formerly visible boundaries have been replaced "by less visible boundaries" (Steyerl). The development of the square bears the signature of gentrification; it is now occupied by the main offices of companies, shopping centres and centres of political power, and ways of life that do not fit into this picture are suppressed.

Through fade-overs and over-layering the film becomes a collage into which different images and times are woven. Shots of the current scene are linked with historical footage. The changes in municipal construction become visible as the assertion of political developments. Mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are visualised against the backdrop of political and economic interests and as the effects of racist resentments and cultural prejudices. Felix Mendelsohn's variations on the question "Is it true" serve as a musical leitmotif that influences the film's pictorial rhetoric and poses an unavoidable question to every historical account. By emphasising its own aesthetic construction, which the viewer perceives as an associative and politically engaged montage, the film exhibits the perspectivity of all history. Against the official idea of the new capital city, it holds up a complex and self-critical document that gives evidence for the re-inscription of old myths on newly-built facades.

Alexander Vaindorf

Kids (Group D), 2003, 58 Mins. **74**

"Kids (group D)" is a film with and about Chernobyl kids, reflecting on reality from a teenage perspective, the reality forced upon them by the events they never experienced. It is filmed in Ukraine during summer of 1999 in a sanatorium where I lived for one month with the kids who have a Chernobyl status ID, group D (D stands for "child"). Their families lived in the areas around the Chernobyl Power Plant and after the explosion were evacuated to various different cities.

All of the 13 kids in the film were born right before or after the accident and their memory is a construction of the

information from their families, media and school. The story shows "their" idea about the events after the disaster and how it has affected their generation. In contrast to the media-image, the kids look like any other teenagers and talk about their thoughts for the future, as well as the response of society towards them

Gitte Villesen

Willy Goes For A Drive, 1995, 7 Mins. **54**

Who Gets The Food?, 1995, 4 Mins. **54**

Since the early Nineties Villesen has incorporated the spontaneous and raw aesthetic of the home video into her work. She always works with people whose personality, work, and life are of particular interest to her for a variety of reasons. The people in her videos are sometimes older and could be described as "original" in character. Such as with the three different videos of "Willy," an older man who, among other things, presents his record collection to us, talks about his relationship to his cat, or shows us his car. In this way, the videos also consciously play with a moment of the spectacular and have a certain "show" element about them. The works depict various types of behavior in connection with the presence of the camera. During some of the videos, Villesen frequently asks the people portrayed questions, while in others the people present themselves in an intense way. Generally, the videos flow in a chaotically entertaining fashion with abrupt changes in images and with the camera following the spontaneous movements of those being portrayed. Gitte Villesen applies the video technique as a direct means of encountering people and, for a brief moment, ostensibly shares in their hobbies, concerns, and passions. The aesthetics of the home video undoubtedly always has the appeal of authenticity. The globally distributed visual language of a universal "visual culture" becomes strangely evident in the generally sovereign performances of Villesen's actors. Whether or not this is due to their own skill or is more of a performance resulting from the representational characteristics of video camera technology remains unanswered. What becomes particularly obvious, however, is that the format of the home video and video technology are here mutually inscribed. KM

Klaus Vom Bruch

Schleyerband I, 1977, (Ger) 60 Mins. **76**

Schleyerband II, 1977, (Ger) 60 Mins. **84**

German artist Klaus vom Bruch engages in a powerful and provocative analysis of personal and national identity in relation to cultural mythology and history. Vom Bruch constructs rhythmic, repetitive confrontations between the self and collective memory, presented as a theater of appropriated media images -- television advertising, Hollywood cinema, military archival films.

<http://www.eai.org/eai/artist.jsp?artistID=278>

Marion Von Osten

Geld Oder Liebe (Money or Life) 2002, 19 Mins. **77**

Nordreise – Sudreise 2002, 30 Mins. **78/79**

Schoneggstrasse 2002, 60 Mins. **80/81**

The chief interests of Marion von Osten's projects are the changed conditions of the production of cultural work in neo-liberal societies and economic culture. Among her latest projects was the exhibition: *Be Creative! The Creative Imperative*. This project included the production of a video in which young Swiss graphic designers related their c.v.s, based on previous discussions with von Osten. Von Osten used this medium as an instrument to carry out an enquiry into the conditions of work and into the lives of young people working in the creative sector. By deliberately renouncing the mode of the interview and instead requesting a c.v. read by the designers themselves, the video shows how they relate to their work. In the business world, it has long been common to speak of the "performance" that one gives and the importance of the first impression that one makes, which should be as convincing as possible. In the individual performances of the designers, both a general social trend and one of Marion von Osten's principal subjects becomes visible: the connection between the theatricalisation of work and the neo-liberal conditions of production on the one hand, and the demand and the desire for flexible, self-designed conditions of work and life on the other.

From text by Søren Grammel

Laura Waddington

Cargo, 2002, 10 Mins. **26**

" CARGO " is the personal report of a trip that Laura Waddington made on board an international freighter. The trip with the Middle East as destination, has been set down in poetical images : impressionistic, alternately slowed down and stationary. A woman reads aloud the letters she wrote to a friend when she came home which recounts her travel experience. She lists details of their itinerary and adds personal observations of the daily events on the ship. Although the images are of a semi-documentary nature, a technique the filmmaker uses to record the situation on board in an apparently neutral way as if she were an outsider with a tourist view, the letter tells another story. " CARGO " is no ordinary travelogue relating a traveller's discoveries and experiences in images. A trip on a freighter is a totally different experience to the one the ordinary traveller will make, " You seemed to be always be travelling without getting anywhere " reflects the writer on the circumstances on board.

Nicole Wermers

Palisades, 1998, 9 Mins. **10**

Nicole Wermer's video, *Palisades* takes a futuristic stroll through a German disco upside-down, creating an apparently artificial landscape. She challenges the way that we use space and the pedestal on which we place architecture and our surroundings. Previous work has included a series of sculptures which brought an ashtray into the gallery to be seen as an object which is both useful and aesthetically pleasing. Wermers created hermetically sealed wooden boxes which could only be looked into from above - spaces which were a consideration of form and content.

<http://www.artnet.com/aq/fineartthumbnails.asp?G=8&cid=15021>

<http://www.basis-wien.at/avdt/htm/131/00051843.htm>

The Yes Men

The Horribly Stupid Stunt, 2001, 28 Mins. **17**

In the film *The Horribly Stupid Stunt* The Yes Men are giving a lecture to a group of lawyers who think they are listening to the World Trade Organization. Here they deliver their own very special brand of WTO public address.

Would you like for a start to present the concept of the Yes Men?

We are your standard-issue revolutionaries. We would hope that our impostures so shame Messrs. Bush and Cheney that they crumble into regime dust along with their motley assortment of thugs.

In the film "The horribly stupid stunt" The Yes Men are giving a lecture to a group of lawyers who think they are listening to the World Trade Organization. What makes them think, that you are the WTO in the first place? In that I mean, how do you disguise yourselves to appear to be the WTO to gain access to the inner sanctum that gives you the opportunity to do lectures for a highly motivated professional audience?

They came to our website, www.GATT.org, thinking it was the real thing.

I see what you mean. Your website www.gatt.org is a mirror image of the official homepage for the World Trade Organization, where you actually use the WTO logo. How do you avoid copyright infringements?

We don't.

<http://www.kopenhagen.dk/netkunst/articles/yesmen0404.htm>

Olivier Zabat

Miguel Et Les Mines, 2002, 55 Mins. **55**

Zona Oeste, 1999, 42 Mins. **50**

Like *Zona Oeste* (1999), Olivier Zabat's later video from 2002, *Miguel et les Mines* (Miguel und die Mienen), is composed of individual parts which stand next to each other like a series of autonomous short films and are each furnished with a title. These "modules", as Zabat calls them, illuminate his method of work, which resembles a process of research. Beginning with a certain fascination, Zabat pursues his material and the cross-connections arising from it. In *Zona Oeste*, Zabat's interest in the contrast between the body-cult and the everyday violence in Brazilian society formed the starting-point that led him, almost as if by accident, from the beach to the Favelas and by that towards a trilogy in which people appeared before his camera who had, for different reasons, become bandits and murderers. *Miguel et les Mines* is composed of six modules. At the beginning of the video is a conversation with Miguel, whose life story Zabat hears in a boxing club where he regularly films training and fights. About 15 years ago, Miguel walked through a minefield between Angola and Zaire and as if by a miracle, survived. Beginning here, Zabat got in touch with various people who, as soldiers, worked on defusing mines. In the sequence PMN2, for example, a mine collector describes his tricks for defusing while, on the floral tablecloth of his living-room table, he coolly displays various types of mines. In return Zabat offered to make an instructional film about de-mining and the proper behaviour in mined areas *for the collector's independent organisation. Part of the material that arose from this work became another sequence in *Miguel et les Mines* which shows amateurs training at a French training-ground. The part entitled No Fish presents the poetry writing mine expert Chris North, whose wife is a Tiger-Puzzle fan. The reddish orange tiger heads which are pinned all over the walls of their living-room stir, through their puzzle component/pixel aesthetic, associations with a field of mine explosions. Søren Grammel

Jasmila Zbanic

Images From The Corner, 2003, 39 Mins. **85**

Jasmila Zbanic began making films during the Bosnian War (1992-1995). Her films are a rich mosaic of personal accounts that she pieces together to offer us a new set of images to recall. Zbanic presents *Images from the Corner*, a moving film that traces the fate of Bilja, a young woman wounded at the start of the war.