

Artistic
Johannes Dialogues
Paul
Raether
 One of her
 sisters
 12.05-01.07.2012

Appearance:
 11.05.2012, 6 PM

Setting # 1:
 12.06.2012, 6 PM

Setting # 2:
 30.06.2012, 6 PM

constructed. By picturing, criticising and commenting the work of the State and market authorities whilst simultaneously putting my own authority under pressure, I want to overturn societal conventions. If I use authoritarian characters at the same moment who are not at all credible, I am attempting to create a moment where authority itself is brought into question.

AY: Our conversations started with an interest in working in the public space, and later we were convinced about the fact that public space today is not only outside of the institution. This brought a need for a new work, and you came up with a poster, which would/could be seen in the city environment and linking you to the internet at the same time. How is your experience?

JPR: I am convinced that all my characters have to go out into the public sphere at a certain time – like children, who have to grow up and are confronted with the requirement of being “valuable members” of this society. However, there are some problems with the appearance of my characters on the street or in what we normally call a “public domain”.

Firstly, the public domain is itself an institution, or as Marx said, “a solidification of political sentiment”. Secondly, the conditions of this institution are very constrictive, particularly nowadays and – in contrast to Berlin – particularly so in Stuttgart. Consumption and entertainment are the cultural exchange processes that are legitimate in the public sphere, yet basic information and some forms of education do not occur in public spaces. If you consider that the desire of my characters is to politically inspire other people, to engage and productively unsettle, then it must be said that the institution of the public domain is initially a hostile place for my characters.

Instead of a simple invocation of the public space in the form of a performance, I have therefore concentrated on the exchange processes between the institutions: the appearance of the “public sphere” in the precarious institution first takes the form of a riddle. The poster, which we produced for each of the sisters, can respectively lead to other sisters by means of the printed online barcode. For most people this will be either too time-consuming, fancy, nerdy or just plain stupid. Here also the moment of meeting one of the sisters is a conditioned, artificial process, which is not simply done by passing by or consumption.

AY: Your practice is also based on continuous editing of the texts, which are developed through different performances. What is the role of text in your practice?

JPR: I use text in its specific form as the spoken word. For me, the aspect of text from which speech comes has the greatest interest. The texts I use are therefore more like headings – theoretical figures, fragments of political standpoints and their interrelationships – thus not really ‘complete’ texts. I accuse a great deal of ‘political art’ of ‘textualism’: it doesn’t take the text itself seriously as a physical instrument, namely as an instrument of political action, but puts it simply as a positivist leaflet.

AY: What is your expectation from the audience in Stuttgart?

JPR: I am convinced that the term “public” is one of the most useless constructions of the cultural industry. “Performer” and “public” seem to me like mere decals – terms for subject and object forms, which I perceive as idealised and displaced. For me, this is important to note, because in my work – speaking in terms of theatre – it’s the fourth wall, the apparent fiction of an insurmountable barrier between the character and audience which you get in naturalistic theatre, simply isn’t there. Indeed, my work functions in the opposite way: the characters are kind of other-worldly, obviously fictitious and offensively different in appearance and features, yet they form an offensive “we” – a unity between those present. Their existence doesn’t work without those present, so that the illusionary moment of a sharp separation, such as in theatre, is reversed by my art pieces through a moment of constructed solidarity.

edited by: Marlene Laube

English

Interview with Johannes Paul Raether



Johannes Paul Raether: „Transformella - Königin der Trümmer“, Performance-Ansicht/Setting #3, Basso Berlin, 2011

Adnan Yildiz: For me, one of the most challenging questions in our discussion process was about how to develop an installation and a program with such a performance based practice. So, instead of an opening, we decided that we will have three event based structures that activate the exhibition process?

Johannes Paul Raether: I like to view my own work as in between visual art and theatre. Theatre interests me because of the action of bodies, an exhibition due to the materialisation of action in objects. I would describe my method as a “context-cut-up”: from the respective production fields, I take the practices which seem the most interesting to me. From theatre come masks and stage props, from visual art comes the fabrication of artefacts.

I perceive the opening as being one stage amongst many - an initial configuration or constellation, which will change many times. This change is especially adapted to the needs of my characters to whom I entitle a form of life, as characters in theatre also frequently develop. At the Künstlerhaus, two of these characters meet, fictionally interact with one another and thus combine their missions together.

The objects, which I organise as artefacts in the exhibition space, also have multiple states. Firstly, they are derived from everyday objects. They become artefacts, then revert back to being everyday objects at the moment of being used by a fictional character, yet only under the conditions of performance. I like to call them ‘performative objects’, because they carry both terms as potential, yet portray only one state when they are viewed. You can imagine those artefacts, which we as colonial masters stole from ritual performers around the world and put in our museums. The practical value is obvious, the aesthetic value undeniable, but our understanding of the actions associated with it is totally absent. In the Künstlerhaus, I like to highlight these states by leaving the objects in a kind of ‘cocooned state’ until they are used. The objects only blossom in the course of their use.

AY: When do you know that a new character is born? Regarding your experience with Transformella and Protektorama, how do the characters find their way of speaking, their mission, skin and identity?

JPR: I could say that I feel the same way about my characters as parents do about their biological children. They are a part of me. Yet at the same time, as the author of their existence, I don’t have full control of their needs.

For me, it is productive to consider my characters as a kind of higher authority. The fictionalisation of authority interests me, because it only that of the author towards his own work, because it puts under pressure the belief in the autonomy of art, the contemporary fetish of creativity and the idealized role of the artist in society. I find it thrilling to portray these processes as involuntary, withdrawn from my control, consciously mystifying and evidently



Johannes Paul Raether: „Protektorama Weltheilungswald“, Performance-Ansicht/Setting #2, 2012

SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, May 15, 2012, 6-9pm
LINIE WEST No. 7
 Tour through the galleries Hauff, Friese, and Parotta as well as Künstlerhaus Stuttgart
6pm: Curatorial Exhibition Tour at Künstlerhaus with Adnan Yildiz
www.liniewest.de

www.kuenstlerhaus.de

Reuchlinstr. 4b
70178 Stuttgart

Exhibition hours:
Wed – Fr 3 – 7pm
Sat/Sun 1 – 5pm

Künstlerische Leitung/
 Artistic Director:
 Adnan Yildiz
 Design:
 Fabian Schewe