

<H>ART is a young and fast-growing Belgian print magazine for contemporary art. It wants to keep up with the contemporary expressive art scene in an alert and accessible way. Now in its third year, <H>ART starts working more internationally. That's why we offer a <H>ART International section, with contributions in English or French. Therefore we selected some good international writers and/or critics, who use their expertise to report about the contemporary expressive art in their region or country. It wouldn't be only the reviewing of a certain artist or exhibition (although it is allowed when it is particularly interesting), but the critical pointing to new artistic trends and evolutions in the art scene the critic likes, linked to social, political and economical context. On the other hand, Belgian photographer Jean-Pierre Stoop pictures the most relevant and interesting contemporary art events of the Belgian contemporary art scene.

Performing words as artistic strategy

TELL AND SHOW

In the past years, theatricality in visual artworks has been one of the hotter topics of the exhibition making business. Artists such as Ulla von Brandenburg, Keren Cytter, Victor Alimpiev, Ana Torfs or Magdalena von Rudy – to name just a few – work decidedly with performative and theatrical strategies and use them in their time-based works, that is video, performances, lectures or audio plays. And very often it is the spoken word which makes the center of the respective piece.



ANA TORFS, 'THE INTRUDER', 2004, INSTALLATION WITH SLIDE PROJECTION © ANA TORFS

Situated as they are between disciplinary boundaries, texts in the visual arts tend to be treated 'en passant'. Indeed, it is rare for the methods of literary criticism at our disposal to be applied to the analysis of linguistic elements in visual artworks – in comparison with images, texts are apt to be treated as marginal. Yet a conscious and advanced approach to language is characteristic of current theatrical time-based visual art such that a script, for the most part composed especially for the piece in question, often forms the point of departure for the creative process.

KEREN CYTTER

One might think of the disturbing video works by artist Keren Cytter (born 1977 in Tel Aviv, lives and works in Berlin) who was nominated for last year's Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst and whose works have been shown in many European exhibitions in the last years, e.g. in 'Talking Pictures' (K21, Düsseldorf 2007) or 'World as a stage' (Tate Modern, London 2008) or currently in 'The Malady of Writing. A project on text and speculative imagination' (MACBA, Barcelona). The artist writes the texts for her videos, plays, novel, short stories and feature films herself and engages friends and actors to perform the texts under her direction. For example Cytter's 9-minute video piece 'o.T.' which was shown on the Venice Biennial 2009 in Daniel Birnbaum's Arsenale exhibition featured several characters of various age in a theatre backstage setting who talk to each other (in German with English subtitles) in a rather emotionless manner. What they say is seemingly taken out of context but still disturbingly aggressive and meaningful enough to

evoke the feel of a classical drama among members of a family.

Drama, as classical narratology would have it, is a non-narrative genre since the story is not actually told by a narrator but rather shown by actors. Narratology differentiates and denotes the possibilities of distancing in literature as reporting narrative or scenographic representation, both of which have been around since Plato. In narrative theory as practised in the anglophone world, the pair of terms simple narration and scenic presentation finds frequent use, as does the opposition of telling and showing. Irrespective of the terminology, however, all of the terms name differing degrees of indirectness.

MAGDALENA VON RUDY

For contemporary artists, one appeal of the theatrical approach lies in its potential to narrate a story in images. The connection between the two can also be rendered in narratological terms: the autonomous direct speech of characters which is constitutive for the theatre and applied not only by Keren Cytter, but also by many other contemporary artists. Among them Magdalena von Rudy (born 1973 in Racibórz, Poland, lives and works in Wuppertal, Germany) is one of the particularly interesting. In her video 'Persona Syndrom' (2005), which won the renowned German Marler Video-Kunst-Preis in 2006, von Rudy plays a complex and ambiguous game with direct speech on the one hand and role-playing on the other: two women watch Ingmar Bergman's film 'Persona' (1966). The film is shown in the Swedish original version and being translated simultaneously by one of the women. Formal-

ly very reduced – the image is mostly a close-up on the faces of the two women – the video focuses on the facial expression of the speaking woman and on the text which is a mixture between a fixed script and spontaneously spoken word, describing an erotic scene. The tension between the sexual nature of what the woman says and the clinical atmosphere of the setting makes the whole scene captivatingly oscillating between the cool and the steamy.

ANA TORFS

The diversity of possibilities available for incorporating direct speech into a staged happening ranges from modes of spontaneous expression in monologue or interview form to the delivery of an especially scripted text, whether it be a monologue, a dialogue or even a voice off-screen, to the restaging of a historical dramatic text as an audio play with slide projection. An example for the latter is Belgian artist Ana Torfs (born 1963 in Mortsels, lives and works in Brussels). The artist's approach to image and word is unique and haunting: in her black and white slide installations the spoken is detached from its speaker and transferred into the space. 'The Intruder' (2004), based on Maurice Maeterlinck's play 'L'Intruse' (1890), adheres to the principal demand of Aristotelian drama: the unity of place, time and action. The artist commissioned a new translation of the play into English, adapted it and changed the setting to a modern villa. The play, performed by professional actors, is shown in black and white slides, projected on a black wall. From offstage, speakers accompany the slide pictures with stereotypical intonation. This emphatically anti-naturalistic

delivery of text places emphasis on the stylization of the piece and leaves the viewer fascinated and bewildered at the same time. The newest example for this intriguing strategy is Ana Torfs' work 'Displacement' (2009), the outcome of a production-in-residence in Gotland in the Baltic Sea, which refers to Roberto Rossellini's film 'Journey to Italy' (1954). This piece will be, among others, presented in her first comprehensive museum survey 'Album/Tracks A' at K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, from 27 February until 18 July.

Similar to the way we read texts – and in contrast to the way we experience a play performed live on stage – as viewers of theatrical or narrative videos and films, we do something apparently paradoxical by registering the events portrayed as being open and present and yet simultaneously as complete and past. Events appear to be past insofar as they are perceived from the very beginning to constitute a completed whole, a chronological form in which the beginning already refers to the end in respect of meaning. The reader perceives events to be present and open insofar as he or she regards characters as being figures caught up in the events of the narrated world and understands their perspective as agents. Even though the events must necessarily belong to the past by the very fact of their being captured on a supporting medium such as film, the viewing process nevertheless incorporates the very same events into the viewer's present. Video and film share this property with the medium of photography, though the former have the advantage of time, of temporality, on their side. It is a property that serves to distinguish them from the classical theatre performance whose presentness is constitutive. And it is precisely this particularity of the medium of video/film that renders the foray into the realms of theatre and narrative so extraordinarily fruitful for the visual arts.

VICTOR ALIMPIEV

It is not only narrativity and theatricality which regained importance in the visual arts in the past years – young artists rediscover the art of performance in general, that is also dancing resp. choreographed motion and singing. This interest sometimes leads to captivatingly peculiar results, also in regards to the use of language. One example is Victor Alimpiev (born 1973 in Moscow, lives and works there) who in his work frequently reflects elements of other artistic disciplines, such as theatre, dance and painting. His two-channel video installation 'Wie heißt dieser Platz?' (What is the name of this place?, 2006) is the first of his works to use text, and moreover text written by the artist himself. Positioned in a group of fifteen people one of the performers engage the audience in a dialogue. Yet the nature of her presentation resembles less a speech than a

kind of spoken song. Here Alimpiev aligns himself with the avantgardist form of the 'sprechgesang' after Arnold Schönberg's 'Pierrot Lunaire' (1912). The group is encircled by cameras: gestures are isolated in close-up shots in much the same way that sentences and words in the peculiar rendering of text are singled out. Through exaggerating and isolating words and gestures, Alimpiev empties them of their function as expressions of emotion. They become 'pathos formulae' in the Warburgian sense, culturally inflected and encoded stagings of affects and passions. And thus a dramaturgically extreme play emerges just through the renunciation of dramatic narrative.

ULLA VON BRANDENBURG

Alimpiev shares his interest in adapting poses and gestures of theatrical conventions of presentation and thus examining the relationship of appearance and reality in an abstract manner with Ulla von Brandenburg (born 1974 in Karlsruhe, Germany, lives and works in Paris) – doubtless currently one of the hottest tips among theatrically working visual artists. Most of her work centers on the exploration of theatre as a construct, and the relation between audience and actors, subject and object, reality and illusion. Von Brandenburg's 16mm-film installation 'Singspiel' (2009), which the viewer had to enter through a winding passage made of curtains, was definitely one of the most exciting new works in Birnbaum's Arsenale parcours in Venice 2009 – atmospherically charged, disquietingly unfamiliar and highly compelling at the same time. The artists achieves this effect by using space, material, the moved image, staging and language in an impressively precise, yet free artistic way. Filmed in a single shot at Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye (1928-31), close to Paris, 'Singspiel' is centered around a group of ten people, professional actors, who appear to be a family. Their actions – a woman tries to open a door, a man carries a box into a room, a boy lies in bed – remain unclear. At some point they all gather around a table, at another they participate in a play in the garden, both as actors and performers. As acoustic layer over the mysterious actions one hears a female, in fact the artist's, voice singing (in German without subtitles) to which the actors mime. Like the images the text of the song is not easily to decode; it deploys its effect primarily through its poetic and hermetic beauty. Long after leaving the installation the beguiling refrain stays with the visitor: "Gestern war nicht morgen / Und heute ist nicht hier / Ich will's nicht gewesen sein / Niemand hat gefragt." – "Yesterday was not tomorrow / And today is not here / I don't want to be it / Nobody asked."

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Free labour is increasing in the art world during recession time

UNPAID WORK OR UNLEASHED ASPIRATIONS?

On the 15th of September 2008 bids at the Sotheby's London auction of Damien Hirst's works reached unprecedented highs. The art market was at its peak, before starting a phenomenal fall. On the other side of the Atlantic, in the very moments when bids were placed on Hirst's masterpieces, the investment bank Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. Despite the financial turmoil, art dealers pretended that business was as usual; sales continued and the art sector proved resilient – profits, sponsorships, and museums' donations remained high amid the incipient of the financial meltdown. Signs of weakness suddenly materialized when global demand plummeted and lay offs started in the autumn 2008. From then onwards the art sector would change.

The deterioration of global demand has left art dealers short of clients, and has wiped out numerous opportunities for art professionals. Nowadays the job market for art professional has become overcrowded, and contractual conditions of qualified jobs have worsened. The economic downturn had a serious impact on volunteer works and unpaid internships, whose number increased exponentially without a similar surge in paid jobs at entry levels. Typically, unpaid work involves a mix of responsibilities such as acting as a receptionist or covering temporary absences and providing support to the day-to-day functioning of the hosting institutions. In principle, such experiences may lead to a more settled job in the sector. Many aspiring art professionals embrace enthusiastically this route to outset a career after graduation or to try a career change. Unfortunately, nowadays quite often an internship doesn't necessarily lead to a permanent job and employers use it to benefit from free labour rather than scouting around for new talents.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

Sabine Kohler, a qualified Sales & Marketing professional, aspiring to a career change in the art sector, comments on her recent internship at Zoo Art Fair 2009 in London: "My experi-

ence with internships left me with a feeling of free labour but also intensive training. In principle, I am not a fan of working for free, because it is only for people who can afford it and when something is for free, people often do not value it that much. However, I had a very good experience with Zoo Art Enterprises. They stage their art fair with around 50 interns and they depend heavily on them. They put a lot of thought into the internship programme and have dedicated personnel handling it throughout. The training includes presentations on the background and history of Zoo, gallery tours, and learning sessions at partner organisations. At the end of the experience they facilitate internship opportunities at their partner organisations and set up informal get-together meetings with the Zoo Team. All these initiatives made for a good learning experience and an opportunity to build career-lasting contacts. Moreover, their continuous on-the-job training and constant dedication helped me to fully appreciate their aims, develop a strong commitment to the job and create an overall sense of being valuable for the organization".

In her search for opportunities in the art sector, she also experienced less fruitful internship programs as one with a well-known art foundation that she declines to name: "I did not have

the feeling I learned as much as I could have during my other internship in London. I was not able to contribute as much as I could have. I think this was mainly due to lack of planning and objectives from the organisations side – so I felt that the experience may be labelled 'free labour' in the sense of just using interns to fill gaps, with no training or tangible opportunities".

PUBLIC SCRUTINY

The conditions of internships and unpaid work are undergoing serious public scrutiny. A recent parliamentary report on social mobility suggestively named 'Unleashing Aspiration' by MP Alan Milburn's analyses the regulations and lays out practices for internships and unpaid work. A complete chapter of the report is devoted to potential opportunities to enter the art profession. According to the report, opportunities to undertake internships are yet not fairly distributed. The report casts concerns about the variable quality of internships: "The Panel have heard evidence that some companies use interns as a low cost way to cover positions that would otherwise be filled by a permanent full time member of staff" and the chapter concludes stating that "a radical change is needed".

Public scrutiny is gaining momentum as the London scene is becoming more

and more active with several independent groups engaging with the public in discussing issues and uncovering unfair treatments. The Carrot Workers Collective (CWC hereafter) is an open group initiated by the members of the 'Micro Politics Research Group' of the Goldsmith College which aims to investigate the underlying causes of the unprecedented increase in internships and unpaid jobs in the UK. The CWC comprises of students, artists, art teachers as well as established professionals. In May 2009 they organised 'The Creative Jobs Survival Fair' led by Janna Graham, Education Project Curator at the Serpentine Gallery and member of the CWC, as part of the exhibition 'At Your Service' at the David Roberts Foundation space in London. They produced videos and supportive material for prospective professionals with the aim of making job hunting more effective but also with the intention of raising awareness on the issues at the entrance of the profession.

The fair was hosted by Christie's Education and attracted a great deal of public attention according to Gaia Tedone, Assistant Curator at the David Roberts' Foundation. Other independent groups organized similar events.

In September 2009 the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rutland Gate hold 'MAKING A LIVING: artistic survival in 2009' as a follow-up event to the 'FUNding FACTORY', a project initiated by Sophie Hope at Open Space Zentrum für Kunstprojekte in Vienna in May 2009. According to the organizer, the event was an occasion to share different approaches and ideas to outset and develop a successful art career in the aftermath of the recession. Their manifesto says it all: "MAKING A LIVING aims to highlight and discuss diverse ideologies underlying how we support and sustain 'critical art practices'. How do our conceptual and pragmatic assertions impact on the way we choose to make a living and vice versa? We will investigate and invent a range of economic and conceptual models of artistic survival that move beyond the knee-jerk reaction to become 'culturpreneurs' in the creative industries. As well as the issue of aiming to make a living through art we will ask ourselves what are the side-effects of such a career path, what are the alternatives and how do we negotiate the cultural production line we are inevitably a part of?"

Other noticeable initiatives include the website 'Interns Anonymous' which was established by two art graduates currently working as unpaid interns, with the aim of creating a forum to share experiences and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of unpaid employment. The project aims to gather evidence on real experiences and raise awareness on the issues that aspiring art professional would encounter at the start of a career. In the words of the founders: "We aim not just to be a discussion forum, but also a research base and a first port of call for anyone applying for an internship. Of course, as current interns ourselves, we know that an internship is all about experience and references for future employment. So, if you are willing to speak your mind we will keep your identity and that of your employer a secret. Like us, you will be interns anonymous".

THE WAY AHEAD

Foundations, museums and private galleries employ interns to help with basic administrative works and routine tasks often without offering real training and job opportunities within the same organization. What aspiring art professionals regard as valuable work experience and practical training that might lead to a permanent job is quite often considered free labour for employers who strive to survive in the aftermath of the global recession. To rectify this mismatch, many call for clearer regulation, which would align private and public interests. To achieve this, the Ministry of Culture and associations of art dealers need to work on common guidelines in order to raise standards on unpaid work with the aim of achieving social fairness as well as attract talented people in the profession. Regulation is under way: Her Majesty's Custom and Revenue is finalising guidelines to give internships the entitlement to the minimum wage. In the view of many, this is a first measure into the right direction.

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A new Arts complex in Cluj, Romania

4 STOREYS OF QUALITY ART: FABRICADEPENSULE.RO

Wizzair flight 6772 from London Luton to Cluj-Napoca has landed. It is Friday, 23 October 2009, 1:00 pm EET. Low-cost flights are cheaper if you travel light, so I exit the airport quickly. I am looking for an exchange office to convert some pounds into lei for a cab to the city. Although Cluj airport is international, there are none. I find a cash machine, the only one, I work out the money issue and go to the taxi rank. The first driver refuses to take me, the hotel is too close he says. The second takes the risk, even if he does not know where King Ferdinand Street is. After a second thought he remembers: the street has been renamed after the 90s, as well as the Transylvania hotel. We leave. On the way we discuss politics, without seat belts: three weeks ago the Romanian government collapsed, sending the country's currency into decline and more than half of the 1.4 million state employees on strike. The signs of the crisis are everywhere: out of business stores, deserted construction sites, slapdash architecture and roads. Time appears here to be a prisoner of its allegory, space. A coloured space, however, particularly as we get closer to the centre: from dusty con-

crete to shiny long steel, from overground yellow gas pipes to black criss-crossed cables in the air, all luxuriantly freshened by an 'everything is possible' type of signalling.

FACTORY

Cluj is the place to be these days if you are in the art business in this part of the world. Tonight it is the opening of the Paintbrush Factory (Fabrica de Pensule), the first disused industrial building to be reborn as arts complex in post-communist Romania. The project is initiated by a group of artists, curators, cultural managers and producers, determined to challenge the local community and to underpin the city's place on the international art map. The centre gathers 29 independent art spaces on a surface of 2000 sqm: artists' studios, galleries, contemporary dance, concert and theatre halls. The factory is owned by a local young businessman who let out the space for five years, at an affordable price.

At the beginning of spring, artists moved in and started to work with bricks and mortar, their own logistics



PAINTBRUSH FACTORY / FABRICA DE PENSULE, PHOTO SERBAN SAVU, COURTESY FABRICA DE PENSULE

and financial resources. The result is 4 storeys quality art: Sabot, Cluj Est, Plan b, Laika and Zmart artist-run galleries; independent cultural organizations AltArt, ArtLink, GroundFloor Group, ART-HOC, Grupa Mica, Arta Capoeira and Pillar Association; artists' studios: Radu Comsa, Cristina Gagiu & Attila Gräff, Ciprian Muresan, Serban Savu, Cristian Rusu, Miklós Szilárd & Miklósi Dénes, Maria Brudasca, Bogdan Rakolca, Adi Cimpoesu, Ciprian Bogdan Adrian, Mihai Radu Gui & Raluca Onti, Adrian Ghenie, Marius Bercea & Smaranda Almasan,

Denisa Curte, Jennifer Delplanque & Marius Nedelcu, Irina Dumitrascu, Claudiu Iurescu, Belenyi Szabolcs, Atelier Robert Bosio & Sabot, Atelier Quadro Portfolio.

The space keeps the raw appearance of the former factory, echoing the surroundings and the ideas of work-in-progress and history in the making. Hundreds of people, most of them students at the ten universities in Cluj, pack the space during the opening night and I can tell this place is their long-awaited Mecca. In a context in which the art infrastructure, public and private, is

sublime but totally missing, the Factory indeed makes a difference. It is the first multi-functional and multi-disciplinary centre designed to propose discourses addressing recent history and community issues, to update knowledge, and secure continuity with what is happening on the international scene.

HIGHLIGHTS

To count just the highlights of the projects going on, I would mention Alex Mirutziu's 'Manifest of Flaw' at Sabot Gallery – an exhibition that reflects on the physical, political and social body in connection with the prohibition of gender issues in Romania; Ciprian Muresan's exhibition Luv at Plan B gallery, which addresses the flow of art history and its mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion; Tom Chamberlain's 'Clockwise From the Left' at Laika Gallery – a sequence of mono prints and abstract watercolours exploring the slow process of revealing the image; 'Who am I / Where do I come from? / Where do I go?' show at Zmart Gallery, with fashion design and photography artists Lucian Broscatean, Ramona Gliga, Rinad Muti and Stefana Zdrengha questioning their identity in the global village; Mircea Florian's performance 'Origin' – an improvised music reading of Tao Te Ching classic text; 'Message', a multi-reality-dance-show at the GroundFloor, concept and choreography by Sinkó Ferenc; 'A Soul for Europe – Forum Cluj. Culture and Urban Development debate' on the

UNE HYDRE NOMMÉE MUMBAI



INSTALLATION RIYAS KOMU FOR THE EXHIBITION 'THE DARK SCIENCE OF FIVE CONTINENTS' IN GALLERY BMB, MUMBAI, PHOTO SHANKAR NATARAJAN, COURTESY GALLERY BMB

La mésaventure de Bodhi Art n'empêche pas Tushar Jiwarajka et Bose Krishnamachari, créateurs respectifs des galeries Volte et BMB, ouvertes en septembre et octobre 2009, de regarder le futur avec confiance: leurs concepts et leur désir de faire des galeries un nouveau lieu de sociabilité avec cafétéria et librairie les y incitent. Ces deux nouveaux acteurs du marché de l'art se déclarent par ailleurs convaincus des mérites du dynamisme et du cosmopolitisme de la capitale économique indienne... alors même que les journaux multiplient les articles vantant l'effervescence de la scène artistique à Delhi. Interrogés à ce propos, les responsables de galeries mumbaiennes sourient: délaissés Mumbai pour rejoindre la capitale administrative? Inimaginable! Que les initiatives de collectionneurs privés se multiplient autour de Delhi ne signifie pas une présence massive d'acheteurs potentiels. Et les revenus des hauts fonctionnaires n'atteindront jamais ceux des grands patrons. L'Inde se métamorphose: la distinction entre les productions destinées au marché de l'art et les initiatives artistiques non marchandes fait désormais partie du discours officiel... et chacun tente d'établir son profil au sein du système en éclosion.

BMB

Installée dans un bâtiment du G.T. Marg, au quartier du Fort, Gallery BMB constitue une collaboration entre l'artiste et le commissaire d'exposition Bose Krishnamachari, 46 ans, et les mécènes Avanti Birla, Devaunshi Mehta et Dia Mehta. L'objectif de cet espace ouvert est d'offrir la possibilité

aux amateurs d'art et aux artistes indiens ne pouvant parcourir le monde des grandes biennales et foires internationales de découvrir tout de même les dernières tendances de l'art contemporain. 'The Dark Science of Five Continents', l'exposition inaugurale du curateur d'origine indienne Shaheen Merali, se veut une sorte de bilan de la globalisation, sinistre et non équilibrée. A côté de l'impressionnante installation de l'Indien Riyas Komu, l'exposition inclut les œuvres d'artistes internationaux tels les Anglais Jake et Dinos Chapman, l'Américain Jon Kessler, le Brésilien Tunga, le Nigérien George Osodi et le Chinois Wang Qingsong. Le catalogue présente les œuvres dans un contexte autre que celui de l'exposition. Imposant, il semble publié avec la pleine conscience d'écrire une page nouvelle de l'histoire de l'art et des pratiques artistiques du monde indien. En l'absence d'établissement public disposant des compétences et des moyens de proposer au public (comme le ferait le Wiels) un aperçu de la création internationale, une telle prétention ne peut être blâmée. Krishnamachari se déclare d'ailleurs pertinemment conscient de l'impossible rentabilité de son espace à l'heure actuelle. Les collectionneurs indiens n'étant pas ou peu habitués aux prix des œuvres sur le marché international, les pièces exposées ne peuvent réellement trouver acquéreur... Une possibilité plus aisée de générer du profit consisterait à proposer à la clientèle occidentale de nouvelles pièces des artistes les plus prisés sur le marché, ce qui devrait précisément être réalisé cet été! Amateurs d'art et d'échecs pourront en effet dès juillet 2010 se tourner vers BMB pour

potential of contemporary culture to influence education, social and economic development, organised by AltArt & A Soul for Europe; and 'TEMPS D'IMAGES' theatre, dance and video Festival, organised by ArtLink. The diversity of the programme proves that the member organizations of the Paintbrush Factory pay close attention to new forms of artistic expression, helping out with the emergence and professionalisation of young artists who are motivated by and utilise the new skills and technologies of the current cultural production.

In Western Europe in the early eighties, centres of this type, established at the heart of former industrial or commercial spaces whose original functions have been redirected towards artistic creativity, were still only unusual experiments, often considered

marginal. After the nineties, similar approaches began to multiply and are still multiplying all over Europe, in answer to the growing demand which younger generations have expressed for intermediate, flexible, liveable spaces. Factories, warehouses, covered markets, dairies, slaughterhouses or barracks are remodelled into open spaces. 'Fabrica de Pensule' is the first Romanian initiative that joins the network, defying the local economic constraints and providing an alternative to existing moribund art institutions. And I am 100 per cent positive that next time their sign will welcome me at Cluj airport, hopefully next to a brand new exchange office.

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Une galerie ferme: la crise a-t-elle encore sévi? Bien au contraire! Deux nouvelles ouvrent leurs portes. Le capitalisme, processus de destruction-création, s'accorde à merveille avec la conception indienne du samsara. Création, conservation, destruction: ainsi se doit d'aller l'éternel cycle des existences. Bodhi Art, la galerie qui porta l'art indien aux plus hauts sommets des marchés primaires et secondaires de l'art contemporain international, n'existe plus à Mumbai que sous la forme d'un espace de stockage. S'y retrouve une gigantesque collection accumulée au cours de cinq années d'existence où se côtoient ceux dont les noms sont aujourd'hui connus de tous: Atul Dodiya, Subodh Gupta, Jitish Kallat, Sudarshan Shetty. Allez à Mumbai, demandez aux galeristes des informations concernant Bodhi Art, ils vous regarderont l'œil malicieux et se tairont. Bodhi Art restera la sublime victime d'une crise qui pourtant n'effraie guère les défenseurs de l'art contemporain dans la richissime capitale du Maharashtra.



INSTALLATION JAKE AND DINOS CHAPMAN FOR THE EXHIBITION 'THE DARK SCIENCE OF FIVE CONTINENTS' IN GALLERY BMB, MUMBAI, PHOTO SHANKAR NATARAJAN, COURTESY GALLERY BMB

acquérir les tours, fous et cavaliers dessinés par Maurizio Cattelan, Tom Friedman ou Damien Hirst.

VOLTE

Implanté à Colaba, Tushar Jiwarajka, 31 ans, fondateur et directeur de la Galerie Volte, affiche lui aussi haut ses ambitions: l'ouverture de sa première exposition le 26 septembre 2009, 'The Gallery is Dead. Long Live the Gallery', fut précédée par la publication d'un manifeste dans le document destiné à localiser les lieux de l'art contemporain dans les différentes grandes villes indiennes. Une réclame nationale donc! Pour sa deuxième exposition, 'BREAK', Jiwarajka convie l'artiste Mukul Deora pour un show dont le vernissage satisfait journalistes et invités. Convoyés en bus depuis la galerie vers un terrain vague, Mukul les exhorte à détruire, masse en main, une auto. Ballet joyeux, bruyant et dangereux contre une icône de la modernité. Aujourd'hui, dans la galerie, rien n'empêche le visiteur de prolonger l'évènement sauvage: une masse est là, la carcasse aussi. Alors n'hésitez pas: frappez! L'art participatif, clef du succès? D'estime sûrement, mais pas commercial. Ce qui importe finalement peu à Tushar Jiwarajka: son véritable objectif, c'est le développement dans le sous-continent indien d'un art 'non traditionnel', expression par laquelle il entend désigner certaines pratiques artistiques occidentales déjà anciennes mais encore inexistantes en Inde comme les nouveaux médias et les performances (songez au coulage d'une automobile dans le béton par Mass Moving en 1974). Le choix du nom de la galerie en référence au Cabaret Voltaire zurichois semble cohérent et l'ensemble mené professionnellement. Il ne reste qu'à achever la cafétéria et ramener les dernières dizaines d'ouvrages d'occasion dans la librairie pour que la galerie s'inscrive fièrement dans le sillage des sites aussi proprets que provocateurs que Tushar Jiwarajka fréquente assidûment à New York, Londres, Singapour ou Boston.

VOISINS

Installée dans un immeuble voisin de Volte, la galerie Chatterjee & Lal a ouvert le 17 novembre 'Simple Tales',

une exposition dont l'acerochage juxtapose chefs-d'œuvre de l'art indien classique issus de collections privées et créations contemporaines, dessins et vidéos. À en croire la propriétaire du lieu, cette confrontation pacifique constitue une première magistrale en Inde. Elle suscite en tout cas l'admiration du voisin Tushar Jiwarajka, par ailleurs fasciné par l'exposition décorativo-synchrétique d'Axel Vervoordt au Palazzo Fortuny à Venise. À bien y regarder, l'évènement de Chatterjee & Lal constitue une belle incitation à la consommation d'art contemporain par les collectionneurs d'art classique. Une manière comme une autre de concilier l'Inde éternelle avec sa version moderne marquée par les disparités sociales croissantes.

Fidèles à leurs artistes et leur programmation, les galeries Sakshi et Chemould profitent de l'essor économique de manière moins tapageuse mais néanmoins aussi efficace. Sakshi Gallery, ayant récemment résolu ses problèmes de stockage auxquels sont également confrontées ses homologues mumbaiennes, présentait en novembre 2009 les derniers travaux du jeune peintre Uday Shanbhag. Apprécié de Marlène Dumas qui en possède une œuvre, Uday Shanbhag fait partie de cette nouvelle génération de jeunes artistes ayant l'opportunité de poursuivre tout ou partie de leur apprentissage dans le monde occidental. De retour dans son Karnataka natal (Inde centrale) après des études aux Pays-Bas, il dénonce dans ses toiles le destin cruel réservé dans l'Inde actuelle aux agriculteurs en recourant parfois aux contes et récits de l'Inde rurale traditionnelle. Gallery Chemould, l'un des premiers et des plus anciens fleurons de l'art contemporain indien, dont de nombreux artistes avaient été récupérés par Bodhi Art, a quant à elle quitté l'exiguïté de ses anciens locaux pour un vaste étage dans le même bâtiment que BMB. Elle y présentait en ce début d'hiver les travaux parisiens de l'artiste indienne Pushpamala. Souvent trop rapidement comparée et assimilée à celle de l'américaine Cindy Sherman, l'œuvre de la photographe et cinéaste indienne s'en distingue cependant par un intérêt approfondi d'étude et de réappropriation d'images majeures de l'Histoire de l'Art.

La découverte des productions récentes d'artistes indiens par les amateurs occidentaux ne peut généralement s'effectuer que par la visite des grandes expositions de groupe qu'organisent à leur tour les institutions publiques. Si l'invitation de certaines galeries de Mumbai aux grands-messes du marché de l'art (comme Project 88 à la Frieze Art Fair de Londres en 2009) constitue une alternative certaine à ce véritable problème, le procédé révèle cependant aussi toutes les limites de cette intégration. Plus vaste que New York, Mumbai ne compte pas encore autant de galeries mais le rêve indien existe autant que l'américain. Alors avis aux amateurs, quelque soit votre budget, n'hésitez pas: Mumbai vaut mieux que Dubai!

Simon DELOBEL
Valerie VERHACK

Pour plus d'informations sur les galeries de Mumbai:
www.volte.in
www.sakshigallery.com
www.gallerychemould.com
www.gallerybmb.com
www.project88.in
www.chatterjeeandlal.com
www.galeriems.com

Lynda Benglis retrospective at the IMMA in Dublin

FIFTY YEARS OF CREATION

Painter, video-artist, sculptor, and photographer, American-born artist Lynda Benglis's (born in Louisiana in 1941) first solo exhibition in Europe, opened at Dublin's Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) on November 4th this year and runs until January 24th 2010. In a struggling Irish economy, this hard hitting exhibition draws a crowd. Benglis's 'Fallen Paintings', pleated metal forms, towering wax 'Graces', metal knots, intimate videos, and spectacular cantilevered sculptures form an exhibition without the usual straight lines established by paintings, frames and glass boxes. The result is relief. The viewer weaves through corridors of art that look sturdy enough to be touched, if it were allowed. The established rigidity of The Museum is abandoned as the visitor walks around, and through the works. It is immediately intimate and engaging.



LYNDA BENGLIS, 'PANHARD', 1989, COPPER OVER STAINLESS STEEL MESH, 182.9 X 99.1 X 45.7 CM, COURTESY CHEIM & READ, NEW YORK, © LYNDA BENGLIS. DACS, LONDON / VAGA, NEW YORK 2009

The extensive creative output by Benglis can, to some extent, be broken down chronologically; her early wax reliefs and poured latex sculptures of the 1960s; cantilevered installations, videos, advertisements, and other photo media pieces of the 1970s; metallic pleats of the 1980s and 90s; followed by more large-scale and notably ambitious pieces such as her organic fountains and 'Hot Spots' series in the 2000s.

By 1964, when Benglis moved to New York and began reacting to the current art scene that was dominated by the likes of Donald Judd, Dan Flavin and Frank Stella, she was 23 years of age. It was during these years that Benglis's utter disregard for the constraints of painting enabled her to push the boundaries of form when she developed her groundbreaking 'Fallen Paintings'. 'Blatt' (1969) a piece consisting of multi-coloured latex poured directly onto the ground, and 'Untitled' (c.1970) brightly coloured polyurethane foam that oozes sensuality, both broke free from the established labels within the art forms, combining painting with sculpture. The artist's indomitable attitude challenged giants like Jackson Pollock of whom Benglis said: "Pollock had the need to get off the canvas, off the wall, on the floor, onto the ceiling, to wrestle with the paint". (Interview with Lynda Benglis by Ned

Rifkin in 'Early Work', The New Museum, New York, 1982).

FREE OF COMPROMISES

It might be concluded that these achievements – that questioned not only the content of great and very much established art, but how art was being developed – could only have come from a young and gutsy artist who had not yet acknowledged what she or he was 'expected' to do.

Drawing from fifty odd years of creation, and still working, Benglis's work in this retrospective represents the last five decades of artistic movements, and she therefore draws crowds from all age groups. Specifically, it is noticeable at this exhibition that other working artists are interested in her work. Of her early work, it is hard not to draw parallels between the young Benglis and the young Irish art students who view her creations, imagining that their approach and attitudes might be similar to that of Benglis when she took on the art establishment.

Irish Art students are a readily identifiable group of people at major exhibitions like these: hair is often dyed a primary colour, footwear is usually bright, flimsy and always casual, skirts are billowy and trousers are too short, both of which reveal brightly coloured, clashing stockings. Tops are retro 80's T-shirts and jumpers, quite often rejuvenated from a pre-existing 1980s child's wardrobe. They are distinguishable for their relaxed and generally content nature and are all still relatively confident and happy about their future artistic careers having just come from encouraging tutorial sessions. These artists are quite often full of energy and they wear their heart on their multi-coloured sleeves. Their work is unique; it is free of the pressures of a deeply compromising, financially-driven artistic world. Like Benglis's belief that paintings could drop like melted forms from the walls upon which they are supposed to hang, some of these artists will break new ground in artistic development.

SELF MOCKERY

From 1972 -1976, Benglis developed 'Sexual Mockeries', a series of photographic gestures and videos with the artist in various self-mocking sexual poses, in a cheeky attempt to advertise her work in a male-dominated art world. The most famous of these was advertised in a centre fold in the magazine 'Artform' in 1974, where Benglis posed naked, her body greased up, wearing only a pair of sun glasses and holding an over-sized



LYNDA BENGLIS, 'EAT MEAT', 1969-75, BRONZE, 61 X 203 X 137 CM, COURTESY CHEIM & READ, NEW YORK, © LYNDA BENGLIS. DACS, LONDON/VAGA, NEW YORK 2009

plastic dildo between her legs. At this stage in her career, Benglis was fully aware of and perhaps bruised by the 'soliciting' that emerges in the commercial art world. Her exaggerated display of machismo combined with the overly suggestive naked female body, demonstrated a disdain for the male-dominated art world as well as the idea that an artist would sell, in any way, to promote their work. By placing herself as the central figure, this was all entirely self-mocking but received by many as insulting to women and artists, crass and common and even resulted in the resignation of several of 'Artform's' associate editors. Whatever the interpretation of this much debated piece, Benglis, then aged 33, was undoubtedly disillusioned, hurt, and angry with the compromising nature of the commercial art sector. That said, her images continued to rock the art world.

The 'Sexual Mockeries' creations represent a distinctly different artist from the one who merged painting and sculpture. She was older, and certainly more cynical. If art students can associate with her early work, maybe Fine Art Graduates can claim this tougher, self-deprecating era. Irish art graduates quite often use exhibition opening nights to catch up with each other. Less hopeful and innocent, they've hardened somewhat, having experienced some of the reality that many artists face trying to make a living through creation. However, Ireland, the land of great writers and artists, relies on various levels of misery to develop dark and beautiful work. Like Benglis, these graduates might be developing works that will incite the world, if ever they see the light of day.

MATURITY

In the 1980s and through to the 90s, Benglis displayed the full extent of her talents as a sculptor, and her knowledge of materials and their tactile abilities was unequalled in the art world. Pieces displayed at IMMA such as 'Panhard' (1989) and 'Raptor' (1995 - 6) display a level of maturity, and growth. Named her 'Pleat' series, these creations refer to the car manufacturing industry and fighter jets. Benglis made complicated folds, pleats and shapes in stainless steel meshes which she then sprayed with bronze and gold toned metals. Though the pieces are heavy and metallic

the result is graceful and incredibly light. The viewer is reminded of elaborate cuffs and collars that might have adorned a royal cloak, or delicate sea creatures with shells, as opposed to the industrial materials these pieces are created from. These works are that of a mature and well established artist. By this stage she was recognized throughout the art world - conceptual American-born artist John Baldessari said: "I consider Benglis to be one of the most innovative living sculptors in the United States". (Lynda Benglis, IMMA, 2009)

Benglis's most recent works, from her 'Hot Spots' series are often produced in groups of 3 or a series. 'Ghost Shadows I, II and III' developed in 2007, when Benglis was 66 years of age, display a deeply explorative and inquisitive side of the artist's creative talents. While she still focuses intently on the form of her pieces and the process involved in their creation, they derive from notions of reproduction, birth, and growth, and therefore paradoxically she cannot avoid questioning her own mortality. 'Ghost Shadows' are very dark in contrast to Benglis's usual vibrantly coloured pieces. Using grey rubberized foam over chicken wire she twists these three 'Ghosts' into forms that remind the viewer of floating DNA strands or coral reefs deep in the sea. Though they are dark and twisty they are strongly suggestive of the potentials of the circle of life. 'Chiron' (2009) in contrast pulsates like a beating heart from the wall. Deep, blood-red it could be an egg or a germ throbbing in front of the viewer, ready to multiply in front of our eyes. With worm-like forms stretched across its surface it is both repulsive and mesmerizing.

This retrospective fantastically spans the life of an artist that rose up in the 60s as a young provocative woman and ends with contemplative series addressing the age-old debate: birth, life, and death. There is nothing more satisfying than noticing the development of an artist's work, especially a famous artist's work, from youthful expression to older more worldly experienced work. It reminds us of that naive exuberance and enthusiasm we were all guilty of and viewing this in a major art museum is utterly charming.

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