

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

### **Guy Ben-Ner**

#### ***Moby Dick***

Video, transferred to DVD, 12:35min., colour, silent, 2000

In Guy Ben-Ner's version of Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*, the artist's home kitchen becomes the stage for this legendary adventure on the high seas. Everything that his kitchen contains Ben-Ner includes in his adventurous hunt for the legendary white whale. Kitchen cupboards become cabins, and baby baths are turned into lifeboats. Even his family is not spared – they are cast as actors. It is especially this home-made character of the work, which uses tricks from early silent movies, that makes this amazingly simple film so irritatingly funny.

Melville's novel, which was published in 1851, tells the story of the fateful journey of the whaling ship Pequod. Driven by blind hate, its captain, one-legged Ahab, hunts the white sperm whale. Similar to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, the rough outline of the story of *Moby Dick* is still familiar to many people, although not so many have actually read the original book. *Moby Dick* has been imprinted in the collective memory of society as a legend, and various generations have used it as a projection screen for their ideas of freedom, hunting, and adventure. For example, *Moby Dick* played an important role for the German RAF terrorist group, which recognised itself in the tale's struggle of a small group against the mighty whale – for them, the all-powerful state – and they named their members after the story's heroes: Ahab stood for Baader, and Starbuck, the first helmsman, for Holger Meins.

Ben-Ner, too, only takes the rough outline of the novel's story, which most people remember. By really getting into the story, and relocating it to his home, he examines what meaning the legend of the white whale can have nowadays as a projection screen – even for the fantasies of freedom and adventure of a family guy. KF

### **Walter Benjamin**

#### ***Mondrian '63–'96***

Video, transferred to DVD, 25min., English with Serbo-Croatian subtitles, 1987

In 1986, one could go to remarkable lectures and visit astounding exhibitions in Ljubljana and Belgrade, for example, the Last Futuristic Exhibition 0,10 by Kasimir Malevich, and in the autumn the comprehensive International Exhibition of Modern Art: The Armory Show. These two exhibitions were held in very different locations before or during World War I: 1913 in New York and 1915/1916 in St. Petersburg. Further, in June 1986 a certain Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) held a lecture titled *Mondrian '63–'96*. The works on show by Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) carried the dates '63, '79, '83, '86, '92, and '96.

In his lecture, which functions as a meta-commentary on the entire exhibition *History Will Repeat Itself*, Walter Benjamin speaks about copies (repetitions) and their epistemological value. Benjamin comes to the conclusion that the copies of works by Mondrian are much more “multi-layered and more complex with regard to its meanings, than the original”. Through the process of copying, the original is not merely repeated; additionally, meanings are activated that in the meantime have been assigned to the original.

In this way the copy becomes an immaterial palimpsest, which accumulates all the other meanings that have been created – including the idea of the copy itself.<sup>1</sup>

Walter Benjamin's lecture belongs to a series of artistic projects, which have contributed to the development of a specific artistic praxis that is based on anonymity and copying. These projects focus on authors, artists, exhibitions, and institutions, which are of seminal importance for twentieth-century art (historiography) and they re-and deconstruct specific art-historical events and the narratives they contain with the aid of copies.<sup>2</sup> Some of these projects, whose roots lie in the (south-eastern) European art scene of the 1970s and 1980s, became a central element of inspiration for a younger generation of artists. IA

## **Irina Botea**

### ***Auditions for a Revolution***

Video installation, mini-DV and 16mm film on mini-DV, transferred to DVD, 22min., English and Romanian, 2006

In *Auditions for a Revolution*, the Romanian artist Irina Botea engages with the Romanian revolution of December 1989. The images of this revolution, which was the first to be broadcast on television – the famous scene in the besieged TV-studio – have deeply embedded themselves in the collective memory.

In December 2005, exactly 16 years after the revolution, Irina Botea invited young people in Chicago – drama school students – to “auditions for a revolution”. Scene by scene, they go through the television images of 1989, and re-enact the situations and constellations. At first, the gestures of 2005 seem a little robotic and funny, but gradually the actors perform their roles with increasing skill. Botea, who witnessed the events personally, gets the young Americans to speak the original dialogues from the videos and films of 1989. The difficulties that arise from pronouncing the Romanian language, which the actors cannot speak, become an impressive metaphor for the difficulties of reading history.

The artist juxtaposes the original material from 1989 (which were also used by Harun Farocki in *Videogramme einer Revolution*, 1992) with recordings of the re-enactments that she made of precisely the same scenes with the students in December 2005. The new scenes were recorded on video and 16mm film.<sup>3</sup> Through confronting a document with its recreation, a strange alliance of these two time periods develops, while at the same time an immense gap becomes apparent.

Irina Botea's work is an attempt to (re-)inscribe oneself in a sequence of media images that constitutes history. Possibly, it is also an attempt to develop sympathy with the more or less active protagonists of a historical situation to which we now only have access in a strongly media-dependent form. IA

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin's idea of “telescoping through time” is a reference to Jorge Luis Borges' story Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quijote, written in 1935. In this story, a plan as unusual as it is ambitious is described to write Don Quijote again.

<sup>2</sup> See Inke Arns / Walter Benjamin, (eds.): *What Is Modern Art? (Group Show)*, 2 vols., Frankfurt am Main: Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst, 2006, www.whatismodernart.de

<sup>3</sup> The 16 mm film camera, which the artist bought from a Romanian company that specialises in documentaries, was probably the actual camera used to film the revolution in 1989.

## C-Level

### *Waco Resurrection*

Videogame, 2003, www.waco.c-level.cc

*Waco Resurrection* is a video game, which investigates the siege of the Mount Carmel Center of the Branch Davidian sect near Waco, Texas, by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the FBI in 1993. Exactly ten years after the siege, in which 82 members of the sect lost their lives under circumstances that are still unknown – including the leader of the sect David Koresh (his real name was Vernon Wayne Howell) – the artist group C-Level, which has six members, programmed a 3D multiplayer computer and role-playing game that is played from the perspective of the sect's leader Koresh. For this game, the team developed a hard plastic helmet in the shape of the sect leader's head (the so-called "Koresh-skin"), which has an integrated voice-activated interface. The shape of the Koresh helmet looks like a vector graphic from a computer game. When a player wears this helmet, the computer-generated game and the reality surrounding the player mix in a very irritating way – it almost seems as though something from Koresh is transferred to the player. As the game is based on a great deal of authentic material, C-Level describes *Waco Resurrection* as an interactive and "subjective documentary". For example, the players are bombarded with the distorted sound of Nancy Sinatra's song *These Boots Are Made for Walking*, an element of psychological warfare, which the FBI used during the siege of Waco as well as recordings of negotiations between a FBI psychologist and David Koresh – these, too, were played extremely loud towards the property of the Branch Davidians. *Waco Resurrection* aims at the dark side of the American self-image: "The game commemorates the tenth anniversary of the siege at a unique cultural moment in which holy war has become embedded in official government policy. In 2003, the spirit of Koresh has become a paradoxical embodiment of the current political landscape – he is both the besieged religious other and the logical extension of the neo-conservative millennial vision. Waco is a primal scene of American fear: the apocalyptic visionary — an American tradition stretching back to Jonathan Edwards – confronts the heathen 'other' – in *Waco Resurrection*, the roles are anything but fixed."<sup>4</sup> IA

## Daniela Comani

### *Ich war's. Tagebuch 1900–1999*

Installation, Digital print on Net Vinyl, 300 × 600 cm, 2007; Audio-CD, 66 min., German, 2002

As the work's title already suggests, *Ich war's. Tagebuch 1900–1999* (It was me. Diary 1900–1999) is a diary – albeit a very special one. Written in the first person, it reports on important events of the twentieth century in its 365 entries. For example, the fictional narrator (which in the Italian version is feminine) signs the treaty dissolving the Warsaw Pact on 31st March, is killed on 2nd June by police bullets during a demonstration in West Berlin, blocks the path of an army tank on Tiananmen Square, Beijing, two days later, only to attack a Vietnamese street-vendor in Hoyerswerda, Germany, on the 17th of September.

Daniela Comani has written a diary of the twentieth century as though all the events actually happened to her. From one day to the next, from one report to the next, she is a passive witness, then an activist, then victim, then perpetrator. In this way she is seemingly the initiator of these twentieth-century historical events. As in her other works (for example, *A*

<sup>4</sup> www.waco.c-level.cc/, 25. 4. 2007. On the problematic of depicting traumatic historical events in computer games, see Dyske Suematsu, Understanding the medium of video game, in: *Rhizome*, 25. 10. 2003, www.dyske.com/index.php?view\_id=793, 25.4.2007

*Happy Marriage*, photographic series, 2003–2007), here Daniela Comani's command of role-playing is masterful.

The events in *Ich war's* are not in chronological order, nor does the selection follow the criteria of official historiography. "Through of the personally motivated selection of facts, a kind of vortex of events develops. Names and places change, actions repeat themselves: Discoveries, inventions, elections, changes of government, wars, assassinations, new-born babies, kidnappings, etc. ... The first-person narrator runs breathlessly – as perpetrator and victim – through the history of a century, her century."<sup>5</sup> IA

## Jeremy Deller

### *The Battle of Orgreave*

Re-enactment, co-commissioned by Artangel and Channel 4, 2001; Film (directed by Mike Figgis) on DVD, English with German subtitles, 61 min., 2002

Jeremy Deller's project *The Battle of Orgreave*, which is about the conflict between the Thatcher government and the British National Union of Mineworkers in 1984–1985, illustrates Deller's interest in social and especially political relationships. Deller's artistic praxis consists of collecting, archiving, drawing, photographing, filming, and documenting, and he works from very different perspectives – as a curator, art historian, film maker, producer, organiser, and publisher. He is interested in the forms and conditions of solidarity and community, which feed on individual interests, stories, and experiences.

The miners' strike 1984–1985, which was triggered by the threat of pit closures, was the hardest dispute between the British government and the miners' trade union since 1926. In the mid 1980s, Margaret Thatcher was determined to break the power of the trade unions by any means; the conflict climaxed on the 18th of June 1984 in a violent clash near the coking plant of Orgreave in South Yorkshire. Mounted police units dispersed the protesting miners. With this event that heralded the end of the last large-scale miners' strike Margaret Thatcher's victory over the British trade unions began.

In a search for traces of this event that lasted three years, Jeremy Deller revived history in cooperation with former protesters: aided by so-called "re-enactment" groups, miners, and policemen who participated in the historic event, he recreated this "battle" on the 17th of June 2001.<sup>6</sup>

Because the reports in the media about the 1984 strike were strongly influenced by the government, and the workers and trade unions were described as "the enemy within" (Margaret Thatcher), Deller did not use contemporary media reports for his project. Instead, he used the memories of the protagonists – miners and policemen alike – as the basis of the re-enactment. Thus the (distorted) image projected by the media is corrected, and *The Battle of Orgreave* has a strong emancipating function.

The re-enactment and the documentary, which Mike Figgis made for Channel 4 (he combines scenes of the re-enactment of 2001 with photographs of the clashes of 1984)<sup>7</sup>, generate a new and different practice of the historicisation of recent, still sensitive English history, which remains relevant today for existing political and social conflicts. RW

<sup>5</sup> Editorial note in: Daniela Comani, *Ich war's. Tagebuch 1900–1999*, Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst, Frankfurt am Main, 2005

<sup>6</sup> The project was organised by Howard Giles, an expert for historical re-enactments and former head of the English Heritage event programme.

<sup>7</sup> Documented in Jeremy Deller, *The English Civil War: Part II: Personal accounts of the 1984–1985 miners' strike*.

## **Rod Dickinson & Tom McCarthy**

### ***Greenwich Degree Zero***

Installation, including film footage (reconstruction: Royal Observatory, Greenwich Park, London, approx. 4 pm, February 15th, 1894). 15 tables, 15 lamps, 30 chairs, archival materials, photographs, video (interviews with Dr. Ruth Kinna, Lecturer in Political Theory, Loughborough University, and Dr. Sidney Alford, Explosives Engineer, 2005/06), 2006

*Greenwich Degree Zero* (2006), the first collaboration between artist Rod Dickinson and artist/novelist Tom McCarthy, is an exhibition that interrogates the role of media and technology in the construction of public experience and memory.

The artists' starting point is a strange late nineteenth-century event: on the afternoon of February 15th, 1894, a French anarchist named Martial Bourdin was killed when the bomb he was carrying detonated. The explosion took place on the slope beneath the Royal Observatory in London's Greenwich Park, and it was generally assumed that his intention had been to blow up this building – the place from which all time throughout the British Empire and the world was measured, and a prime symbol of science – “the sacrosanct fetish of the day”, as Joseph Conrad wrote in *The Secret Agent* in 1907.

Using the mechanisms of historical representation Dickinson and McCarthy re-imagine the event as a successful attack on the Observatory. They do so by infiltrating and twisting the media of Bourdin's time: creating a film shot on a hand-cranked Victorian cinematic camera depicting the burning Observatory, reprinting existing 1894 newspaper reports and anarchist literature edited to fit their version of events, as well as video interviews with contemporary explosives experts and political historians. The installation reports an event that did not quite happen, blurring the distinction between fact and fiction and relocating the genuine public outrage and hysteria about the threat of anarchist terror that prevailed in the 1890s in the ambiguous space of non-event.

Bourdin's death brought on a plethora of speculative stories in both the mainstream and underground media. Rather than try to establish the 'truth', Dickinson and McCarthy use a form of repetition to reach back to the degree zero of time, mediation and terror. B

## **Rod Dickinson in cooperation with Graeme Edler and Steve Rushton**

### ***The Milgram Re-enactment***

Installation; reconstructed room of the Milgram Experiment; audio recording of the 2002 re-enactment; video, transferred to DVD, 220min., English, 2002, [www.milgramreenactment.org](http://www.milgramreenactment.org)

In 2002, the *Milgram Re-enactment* was shown for the first time at the CCA in Glasgow. It is a re-enactment of one of the most controversial experiments of the twentieth century in social psychology.

In 1961, at the University of Yale, the then 27-year-old assistant professor Stanley Milgram conducted the so-called Milgram Experiment, which aimed to analyse the crimes of National Socialism from a social-psychological perspective. The experiment tested the obedience of individuals towards people in authority and also the willingness of normal people to follow orders, even when the orders contradict their conscience. The participants in the experiment believed they were taking part in a harmless experiment about the connection between successful learning and punishment, but in reality it was their obedience to the leader of the experiment that was being tested. A scientist dressed in white asked the test persons to administer an electric shock to a third person in a different room when they gave a wrong answer. During the course of the experiment the intensity of the electric shocks was continually increased (the shocks ranged from 15 to 450 volts). The goal of the experiment was to test how obedient the test persons were towards orders given by the head of the

experiment. More than a thousand people took part. Although they could hear screams of protest and pain from the next room (the screams were recordings that were played back), two thirds of the participants were quite willing to administer (deadly) shocks up to the maximum of 450 volts.

It appears that many people experience disobedience as such a radical act that they prefer to abandon their moral and ethical convictions temporarily. The Milgram Experiment confirmed in an extremely startling and distressing way Hannah Arendt's thesis of the banality of evil (*Eichmann in Jerusalem*), which was published at the same time.

Rod Dickinson's *Milgram Re-enactment* of 2002 is an exact reconstruction of parts of the original experiment. In exactly reconstructed rooms, actors played the protocols of the experiments as in a stage play. The audience followed the four-hour performance through one-way glass windows, which were set into the walls. In this way the spectators became actual witnesses of a (repeated) historical event. It was easy to construct a reference to their own lives and to themselves: How far would I go if I were in that situation? To what extent does one witness such behaviour in everyday life? IA

## Nikolai Evreinov

### *The Storming of the Winter Palace*

Photograph of the Proletkult mass spectacle, Petrograd, 1920, 500 musicians, 6,000–8,000 participants, 45,000–100,000 spectators, directed by Nikolai Evreinov

In addition to critical re-enactments, which seek to 'enlighten' or 'emancipate' (like for example, the work of Jeremy Deller or Rod Dickinson), there are also most fascinating examples of re-enactments for propaganda purposes that are utilised explicitly to create identification with concrete ideological goals. These re-enactments are "not so much about recalling the past but more about restructuring the past for the needs of (a contemporary) audience"<sup>8</sup>. Perhaps the most famous example in this context is the re-enactment of the storming of the Winter Palace in 1920, the "biggest mass spectacle of all time"<sup>9</sup>, in which at least 6,000 people took part in Petrograd on the third anniversary of the October Revolution.

The Proletkult mass spectacle was organised by Nikolai Evreinov (1879–1953). The director did not attempt to stage an exact copy (because the actual event of 1917 was not really spectacular), but rather an interpretation using theatrical devices – for example, the depiction of the bourgeoisie and the Provisional Government on the 'white stage' was exaggeratedly satirical. The audience of around 100,000 people, which represented at the time a quarter of Petrograd's population, were not just spectators but represented the revolutionary masses. Anatoly Lunacharsky, who at the time was People's Commissar for Enlightenment, that is, for promoting the awareness of these revolutionary masses, formulated the aim of the spectacle thus: "In order to acquire a sense of self the masses must outwardly manifest themselves, and this is possible only when, in Robespierre's words, they become a spectacle unto themselves."<sup>10</sup>

"Festivals like these", wrote Richard Taylor in 2002, "were designed to create a sense of identification between the audience and the event re-enacted through the spectacle itself and the act of collective memory that it both embodied and provoked."<sup>11</sup> The images we associate with the Russian Revolution of 1917 do not show the 'real' event (no photographs

<sup>8</sup> Steve Rushton, Tweedledum and Tweedledee resolved to have a battle (Preface one), in: *Experience, Memory, Re-enactment*, Rotterdam/Frankfurt a.M. 2005, p.6.

<sup>9</sup> Katerina Clark, *Petersburg. Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge (Mass.) / London: Harvard University Press 1996, p. 122.

<sup>10</sup> Anatoly Lunacharsky, cited in Richard Taylor, *October*, London: British Film Institute 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Taylor, op. cit., cited at <http://www.bfi.org.uk/booksvideo/books/catalogue/text.php?bookid=349>.

or film material exist), they are actually from the film *October* (1927) by the Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein, which was shown in cinemas to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution. Because only a few photographs of the 1920 re-enactment existed (one is exhibited in the exhibition), Eisenstein recreated the re-enactment of 1920 seven years later.  
IA

## **Omer Fast**

### ***Spielberg's List***

Two-channel video installation, transferred to DVD, 65min., English/Polish with English subtitles, 2003

For his video *Spielberg's List*, made ten years after Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* filled the cinemas, Omer Fast travelled to Krakow, where the film was made and interviewed inhabitants who were extras in Spielberg's film based on historical events.

In close proximity to the concentration camp of Plaszow, Spielberg had a set constructed, a section of the camp, which was not demolished after film shooting had ended. A few short years later, it is hardly possible to distinguish between the original ruins of the camp and the film set that is slowly falling into disrepair. Today, there are regular so-called "Schindler's List tours" which show tourist groups around the original locations and the film locations.

Just as the difference between the film sets and the real places is hardly discernible in the landscape, it is hard to separate reality and fiction in Omer Fast's video work. In two projections Fast mixes his own film material with excerpts from Spielberg's film – the origin of the film material is often unclear. In the interviews with the film extras, these two levels also show up in a strange way: occasionally, the older people get their memories from the 1940s mixed up with recollections of work on the film. Aided by subtly manipulated subtitles, memories of the media-event mingle with the real historical ones. All at once one can choose between various meanings, and one realises just how much one generally relies on the media's images. Yet Omer Fast's *Spielberg's List* is not intended as a critique of Hollywood. By neutralising the differences between the true story and the later reinterpretation of the events, Fast wants to demonstrate how strongly media images shape and overlie our memories, and that films have assumed the function of monuments for collective memory. KF

## **Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard**

### ***File under Sacred Music***

Video installation, 25min., 2003

## **Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard**

### ***File under Sacred Music (Reverberation)***

Duratrán print in aluminium lightbox, 65 × 90 × 11 cm, 2003/2007

*File under Sacred Music* is the remake of a secretly taped video documentation of the legendary concert by the American punk-rock band *The Cramps* at the Napa Mental Institute in California, which the group performed for the facility's patients on June 13th, 1978. The concert quickly achieved legendary status, strongly supported by the video, which since then fetches very high prices in music forums and on eBay. In 2003, Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard recreated this concert performance at the ICA in London. The script not only stipulates that British musicians Holly Golightly and Alfonso Pinto should play the roles of *The Cramps*

stars, but also that patients from psychiatric units be invited as the audience, who thus play two roles: the fans from 1978 and themselves. After the concert, the footage was edited by hand to give it the aesthetic appearance of the original material: In coarse-grained and shaky black-and-white pictures one sees the band and patients go crazy together.

*File under Sacred Music* achieves its value because of the cult status of the original Cramps concert, which raises certain questions: questions as to its author and originality, artistic identity, pop-cultural legend-building, and last but not least its status as a “live” event. Is that what we see “live”? What is the difference between live-act, live-stream, and live-recording? Since 1996 the artist-duo Forsyth and Pollard work with remakes of “holy moments” of music (and art) history. Their process-based work also focuses on the social contexts in which the original event and the remake take place, and on the relations between the systems of music, art and market, media and politics at the end of the 1970s and in 2003. AH

## **Heike Gallmeier**

### ***War & Peace Show: Normandie 44, Second Battle Group, Minipanzerschlacht, Paratroumeurs, Leibstandarte***

5 photographs, each 110 × 130 cm, 2004

In 2004, Heike Gallmeier visited one of the world’s largest meetings of militaria collectors and re-enactment-groups: the *War & Peace Show*, which is held in Beltring, England. Her series of semi-documentary photographs shows living history arrangements and re-enactments of battles according to plans dating from World War II, the Indo-China War, and also more recent conflicts like the war in former Yugoslavia. Every year, hundreds of enthusiasts gather on farmland in Kent to exhibit collectors’ items, especially vehicles, weapons, and uniforms, to meet war veterans, and to recreate battles; all in front of a broad, family audience. Fear of contact with formerly deadly enemies does not exist here.

The artist’s photographic series allows us to share in this modern adventure-playground with spine-chill factor. The carefully selected scenes of a war-game spectacle shows clearly why there is such fascination with re-enactments. It’s about the longing for authentic experience in a world that is now communicated through media; for a real physical experience that seeks to connect with collective memory, which is now influenced by the media industry’s histo- and militainment. Even though the re-enactments are just another recapitulation, for the actors it means that they actually were in the battle. At Beltring people actively participate and play-act, stage living images located somewhere between imagination and true-to-reality – this is what aroused the artist’s interest: her attention focuses on tableaux vivants, on spaces of illusion and landscapes of a parallel world, which are created in the context of historical reconstructions. This is a theme that for some time now can be found running through Heike Gallmeier’s sculptural, filmic, and photographic works. AH

## **Felix Gmelin**

### ***Farbtest, Die Rote Fahne II, 2002***

### ***After Gerd Conradt’s Farbtest, Die Rote Fahne, 1968***

Two-channel video installation, 16mm film and DV, transferred to two DVDs, each 12min., silent, 2002

Felix Gmelin’s works are about political symbolism in images, language, and utopias. He focuses primarily on the 1960s and 1970s by using his father’s film material (who was a



lecturer at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin from 1967 to 1968), integrating it into his artistic investigations, and making it a basis for new questions. His video installation, *Farbtest, Die Rote Fahne II*, which was premiered at the Venice Biennial in 2003, consists of two projections. One shows Gerd Conradt's film of 1968, in which a group of young men, including Gmelin's father, run in relay through Berlin's streets carrying a red flag; the other is a reconstruction of the original, which Felix Gmelin directed 34 years later in the streets of Stockholm.

Although the appearance of urban streets has changed noticeably in the two films, it is striking that the jeans and parka outfit of demonstrators has survived the decades. The unchanged aesthetics seems to correspond to the still-valid rituals of political activism. Authenticity in political convictions appears to express itself through actions that repeat themselves. If one compares the intentions of the two videos, however, they differ according to the location and the period in which they were made. Conradt's film dates from the time of the 1968 student revolt in Berlin, the original was about a revolutionary symbol and the idea of appropriating the urban space. In the more recent version, shot in 1992 in Stockholm, the emphasis seems more on the ritual-like character of the action. With his remake of the film, Gmelin explores how the young people of 1968 felt when they sent out a political signal. By returning to the old film material, Gmelin makes it possible both to continue dreaming the dreams of those years, and at the same time confronts them with our visual and audio habits of today. MC

## **Pierre Huyghe**

### ***The Third Memory***

Two-channel video installation, Digital Beta, transferred to DVD, 9:46min., 1999

Co-production: Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'art Moderne, Service Nouveaux Médias/The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago. with support by Marian Goodman Gallery/Myriam und Jacques Salomon/Le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains.

Pierre Huyghe's video installation *The Third Memory* is based on a legendary bank robbery, which took place on the 22nd August 1972 in Brooklyn, New York. To finance his friend's sex-change surgery, John Woytowicz robbed a branch of the Chase Manhattan Bank, took several people as hostages, and in the end was caught. This bank robbery was one of the first criminal acts to be broadcast live on television, and was seen by millions of people. Three years later, in 1975, Sidney Lumet's classic movie *Dog Day Afternoon*, in which Al Pacino plays the bank robber Woytowicz, was based on this event.

For *The Third Memory*, Huyghe asked the aging John Woytowicz, if he would be prepared to talk about the event that had had such drastic effects on his life. On a simple set, a counter hall similar to the scene in the film, Woytowicz re-enacts the event with a group of actors; he is as self-confident as the director of a detective film. The two-channel video installation connects this re-enactment to the original recordings by the television channels and scenes taken from the Hollywood film version. Today, the circumstances of the bank robbery in August 1972 are known to many people mainly through the movie starring Al Pacino. When Woytowicz now re-enacts these events, the intention is not to correct a version falsified by the media, and finally to tell the "true story". Instead, with *The Third Memory* Huyghe shows the interplay between how history and recollection are determined by media and fictional images on the one side, and on the other how real life is influenced by fiction. In actual fact Woytowicz modelled his behaviour during the bank robbery on Al Pacino's role in *The Godfather*. KF

## Evil Knievel

### *Think Positive*

postgraduate me, an offer of further education, 2007; installation, mixed media, 2007  
www.perfektewelt.com

His amazing death-defying jumps over cars and canyons and the dangerous accidents that resulted from them in which Evel Knievel narrowly escaped death more than once, laid the foundations for his status as a super-human hero – a daredevil, in Knievel's words – powered by virtues like ambition and dedication plus the conviction that even failure should be seen as a chance. "The people I want to hear about are the people who take risks." In his predominantly white costume with its red and blue trims, Knievel stylised himself as the incarnation of America and embodied – perhaps not least because of this 'white' costume – what it meant to be 'successful'. Not only as a hero of the thrill show genre, which he helped to make so popular, but also as a public figure Knievel was a focus of attention and he was never afraid to use his popularity to serve a good cause.

In an appearance designed especially for the exhibitions in Dortmund and Berlin, Evil Knievel will consider a specific aspect of modern motivation strategies. Goal setting through re-enactment – this is the American catchphrase – serves as a guideline for his appearance. As a special form of re-enactment that is not only practised in American schools and the U.S. Army, Evil Knievel presents a central technique of self-motivation, which also was critical for his own career: identification with a successful idol. "For identification with a successful model can be an important factor in someone breaking out of the confines of their inferiority complexes and fear of failure, which cause them to remain in an enduring negative state of mind. A successful technique for improving your world is identification with a symbol that is an inspiration to make the right decisions." For the exhibition a special new issue of the fanzine Being Evil Knievel (No.3, 2007) will be published. IA

**"Death is a tough competitor, I beat him many times." With these words the American stuntman Evel Knievel describes his career and established the myth of a death defying daredevil. In the mid-1960s he toured under the name Evel Knievel and His Motorcycle Daredevils, and quickly became world-famous through his spectacular motorcycle jumps across parked cars and buses. Not less spectacular were the crashes that followed most of his stunts, such as his attempt to jump over the fountain of Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas with his motorbike or his attempt to jump over the Snake River Canyon with his skycycle, a self-constructed rocket bolid. He is said to have had more than 35 broken bones during his career. This is an ultimate record which did not only secure him a listing in the Guinness Book of Records but laid the foundation for his fame as a man who never surrenders. IA**

## Korpys/ Löffler

### *The Nuclear Football*

Film, DV, transferred to DVD, 30:30 min., 2004

## Korpys/ Löffler

### *The Last American*

Slides, Ultraviolet ink on black-lite film, 260 × 135 cm (three-part), 2004

Starting point of the film *The Nuclear Football*, on which the installation by Korpys/Löffler centres, is the state visit of the American President George W. Bush to Berlin in May 2002. As they were accredited journalists it was possible for the two artists to document the event, from Bush's arrival at Tegel Airport to his visit to Schloss Bellevue. The film's main focus, however, is not the president, but an unobtrusive bag called *The Nuclear Football*, which is

always kept within an American president's reach and allows him to declare nuclear war at any time in the event of an attack on the USA.

In their work, the artist duo Korpys/Löffler analyse the border zones of official versions of history and focus attention on the aspects that normally go unnoticed – such as the furnishings in conspirative apartments used by the terrorist group Red Army Fraction (RAF). Similarly *The Nuclear Football* also tracks the events surrounding Bush's state visit that lie outside the attention of journalists: the organisational and logistic preparations of protocol and security officers. The theatricality with which these preparations are carried out is unsettling, and one often has the feeling of watching patterns in the way the people behave that derive from spy movies and political thrillers. The emotive soundtrack and a mysterious voiceover whisper that comments on the events contribute to the impression that everything is fictional play-acting. However, if one primarily sees the state visit as a stage production for the media, which it actually is, then 'real' security operatives and employees become actors in this play. Confronted with this stage-managed friendly visit, but with the knowledge of that small black suitcase at the back of one's mind, one gets a rather uncomfortable feeling and also realises how small the spectrum of reality is that is normally represented by news programmes.

In the installation, the film is shown together with pages reproduced from the book *The Last American* by J.A. Mitchell, published in 1889. This sciencefiction novel is the fantastic report of an archaeological expedition in the year 2951 to the remains of a vanished culture: the ruins of America, which has been completely destroyed. KF

## **Robert Longo**

### ***Seeing the Elephant:***

#### ***Untitled (First Day – Buford's Cavalry) Untitled (Third Day – The Center)***

#### ***Untitled (Engagement)***

Untitled (First Day – Buford's Cavalry), Iris Print, 50,8 × 67,3 cm, 2002 Untitled (Third Day – The Center), Iris Print, 29,2 × 67,3 cm, 2002 Untitled (Engagement), Iris Print, 24,1 × 67,3 cm, 2002

The series of photographic works, *Seeing the Elephant*, by the multi-disciplinary artist Robert Longo is based upon documentary photographs of re-enactments of the American Civil War (1861–1865). Since the 1960s, this American war, which caused the greatest number of casualties and took place on home ground, is one of the most popular militaria remakes in the USA. On historical anniversaries of particular battles, lavish performances are organised in which several hundred, sometimes even up to 25,000 people take part. In these re-enactments the actors use their bodies as a medium to reconstruct the past, and to experience history individually and authentically. The title 'Seeing the Elephant' that Longo selected refers precisely to this experience: this expression, which dates from the Civil War, referred to young soldiers who went to war for the first time and meant 'to lose one's innocence'.

Longo's photographs of the anniversary battles are not merely documentary pictures, he creates a historical paradox in them: because of their graininess, colour, and aesthetic, they actually look like contemporary photographs from the era they depict, but at the same time Longo uses the cinemascope format and framing that is very similar to film stills. With this artistic method, Longo visualises one of the most famous sentences from Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*: "Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation".<sup>12</sup> In addition, the time intervals, in which the entertainment industry takes

<sup>12</sup> Guy Debord: *Die Gesellschaft des Spektakels*. Berlin 1996, p. 13 (*The Society of the Spectacle*, New York 1994)

historical and especially tragic and war events and makes Hollywood films or computer games out of them, are getting increasingly shorter.

The aim of Longo's works is a critical appraisal of America's world of symbolism as the mirror-image of war rhetoric and nationalist emotionalism. AH

## **Frédéric Moser & Philippe Schwinger**

### ***Unexpected Rules***

Video installation; 35mm film, transferred to HD, 16:06 min., colour, stereo, English, 2004; Room, 6 × 3,3 × 4,2 m, wood, metal, lighting & video system, 1,300 colored light bulbs, backprojection

The video installation *Unexpected Rules* by Frédéric Moser and Philippe Schwinger takes us to see a play in the White House. On an empty stage, illuminated in changing colours by coloured light bulbs, seven actors perform "The Clinton-Lewinsky Affair": from 1995 to 1996, the former U.S. President and the intern Monica Lewinsky had an affair with *inappropriate intimate contacts* – the words Clinton used in a later television speech to the nation correcting the false testimony he had given to the investigating committee. The affair sparked immense media interest and led to impeachment proceedings based on the report of the Republican investigator Kenneth Starr. The scandal ended with the public apology of Clinton for lying.

The re-enactment's script begins with the spreading of an intrigue and ends with the whispering of a lie, both by the character of the lawyer (Starr). In between, the story about sex and power in the Oval Office unfolds between Amanda (Monica) and Roy (Clinton), the lawyer, the President's family, and a secretary (Linda Tripp). Roy is shown as a susceptible victim of a deliberate intrigue out of political calculation, who only decides to perjure himself on the lawyer's advice. The retelling of this historical event by Moser and Schwinger reveals the impossibility of arriving at a truthful analysis amidst the various interests surrounding the affair and their representation in the media.

By using historical models, the artists engage in their work with the utopian vision of American society and its traumas about truth, guilt, and self-representation. Through the formal precision of their works, their critical commentaries and interrogations are a convincing mixture of theatrical dramaturgy, film-directing, and stage installation. AH

## **Collier Schorr**

### ***Mach die Wunde Sauber (Study 1)***

16 black-and-white and Colour xeroxes, each approx. 28 × 41 cm, 2007

The New York photo artist Collier Schorr, who is the daughter of an American soldier, was raised in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany. Since childhood she regularly spends her summers there; Schwäbisch Gmünd is also the place where she started taking pictures and began her Germany photographic series that she continues to work on. Schorr follows the people she portrays over a period of several years, focusing on her own relationship as a Jewish artist to "Germany, the German landscape, the German citizen, the German soldier"<sup>13</sup> and the relationship of German people to their history.

The young men in her photographs look childish and fragile in their SS or Wehrmacht uniforms which were hired from a costume agency. Although the images are in glamorous

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<sup>13</sup> Quotation by Collier Schorr from an interview with Michael Wang for the *Harvard Photography Journal*, vol. 9, 2003

black and white – and look almost like historical photos – they nevertheless remain definitely contemporary. Whether the pose is that of a provokingly relaxed teenager with a serious expression, or whether the model is naked, Schorr's subjects pose as modern people that are completely different to their grandfathers, whose dashing manner and pathos from back then looks passé and contrived nowadays. The artist subtly underlines the vulnerability of her models with irritating nuances of aggressiveness, virility, and innocence, and presents them as an intimate reflection on the shifting boundaries of past and present. Schorr looks beyond the clothing that has such negative historical associations and offers an undistorted view of young, male corporeality and the motif of innocence against the background of history.

With her aestheticised photos, Collier Schorr interrogates the limits of taboos, and connects German patriotism and nationalism with the darkest chapter of German history – World War II. In this way she confronts contradictory historic myths and symbols of masculinity with suppressed, reactivated memories. AR

## **Kerry Tribe**

### ***Here & Elsewhere***

Two-channel video installation, transferred to DVD, synchronised rear-screen projection, 10:30min., 2002

In Kerry Tribe's two-channel video installation *Here & Elsewhere*, a serious-looking young girl answers the questions of an older man, who always remains out of frame. The two people are the British film critic and theorist Peter Wollen and his ten-year-old daughter Audrey. Their conversation is about history and memory; they touch upon subjects such as intersubjectivity, temporality, epistemology, and photography – all subjects that do not really belong to the everyday life of a ten-year-old girl. She answers all the questions with astonishing wisdom, yet without sounding at all precocious. Michael Wollen's questions are inspired from *France tour détour deux enfants* (1977/1978), a twelve-part experimental video series<sup>14</sup>, which Jean Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville made for television in the 1970s. In the pauses in their conversation one sees the girl at home as she goes about her everyday activities (brushing her teeth, etc.), views of Los Angeles or its environs.

The video installation consists of two synchronised videos projected in parallel. In the centre, where the frames of the two videos meet, a vertical border is created, which is more visible at some points than others. The two images often show the same room, but are slightly staggered. This double image, which is slightly altered temporally and spatially, underlines the subjects about which the man and the girl are speaking. The gaps, but also the continuity, the friction and overlapping that result from the simultaneity of the two images emphasise the girl's efforts to find coherent formulations for concepts such as time, space, image, and identity. (IA, based partly on a text by the artist)

## **T.R. Uthco & Ant Farm: Doug Hall, Chip Lord, Doug Michels, Jody Procter**

### ***The Eternal Frame***

Video, transferred to DVD, 23:50min., colour and black-and-white, English, 1975

*The Eternal Frame* by the artists' collectives Ant Farm\* and T.R.Uthco\*\* is a very early video work and because of its self-reflective use of media is regarded as an exemplary artistic critique of media.

<sup>14</sup> See [www.newmedia-art.org](http://www.newmedia-art.org) for more information.

The main focus of the work is a re-enactment, which reconstructs the assassination of the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy in 1963 in Dallas in the way in which it engraved itself on our collective image-memory. In 1975, the artists staged the scene in which J.F.K. was hit by the fatal shots at exactly the same place in Dallas where it actually happened. Starting point and model for the re-enactment were the only existing ‘authentic’ images of the tragedy: coarse-grained super-8 footage, recorded by an onlooker on the street.

For T.R.Uthco and Ant Farm, the structures of the historic formation of myths, political power, and western media reporting converge in this iconographic event. The formal, many-faceted characteristics of this work demonstrate this: at the same time we see a live performance, a ‘making of’, a social experiment, and a filmic simulation. Apart from the reproduction of the historic event (and of the super-8 material), a random selection of people have their say, who can scarcely hide their emotions. Their reactions reveal the mechanisms, the mode of action of media transformations of real events, thus interrogating the manipulative strategies of media images. When Doug Hall alias J.F.K. says, “I am in reality only an image on your TV screen”, it can be read as a foresightful look at contemporary everyday media coverage: images of the Gulf War, Osama Bin Laden, Pope John Paul or Lady Di make it clear that the media-controlled formation of myths is an integral part of post-modern political and quasi-political systems. AH

\* Ant Farm: 1968–1978; members included Chip Lord and Doug Michels

\*\* T.R.Uthco: 1970–1978; members included Doug Hall and Jody Procter

## Artur Żmijewski

### *80064*

Video, transferred to DVD, 11 min., colour, Polish with English subtitles, 2004

To the Holocaust survivor, Józef Tarnawa, the number 80064 is not just any number. In 1943, this number was tattooed on the forearm of the 92-year-old man in the film, a former prisoner in the concentration camp of Auschwitz – the number has become a part of his body.

In the video *80064*, the old man tells the artist Artur Żmijewski in a tattoo studio about the dreadful time in Auschwitz. As if to prove what he is saying, he shows a photograph of himself as a young man in prisoners’ clothing with the concentration camp number on his skin. In the meantime the number has faded a little. When the artist asks if he tried to resist, Józef Tarnawa replies that the only way to survive was to submit and adapt to the circumstances, and avoid any kind of revolt. Mercilessly, the artist persuades the old man to have the number on his arm renewed with black ink. Although the old man fears that the authenticity of the number will be destroyed, he agrees and stoically bears the renewal of that terrible, historic sign, which stigmatises and makes him a victim all over again.

Żmijewski manipulates and stages this video as actor and director. He makes the audience his accomplice by again ascribing the role of Holocaust survivor to the man Józef Tarnawa: history repeating itself is a disturbing experience for the ostensibly uninvolved observer.

Human bodies often play a role in Żmijewski’s artistic work as carriers of signs of power and standardization, like in his probably most famous work, *Repetition* (2005), where he recreated the legendary Stanford Prison Experiment of 1971 for the 51st Biennale in Venice. Lots were drawn to assign roles as either warden or prisoner to the participants, who played their parts as perpetrator or victim to the point of self-abnegation. AR