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Interruption, incoherence, surprise are the ordinary conditions of our life.
Paul Valéry

Many experimental, processual, and so-called "non-representative" procedures, most commonly associated with conceptual artistic strategies, use photography as their typical feature. One should recall the ontological research that seeks to find out what photography is, approaches that cultivate an analytical attitude towards the medium, practices that result from the wish to name the essence of the medium as such (*noema*), artworks that emphasise the tautological nature of photography, transformations from two-dimensional surfaces into bodies—objects and books—radical rebellions against the photographic canon, and eventually the non-photographed, elementary photography created by direct interventions on photo paper. Since the 1960s, the medium has proven suitable for transmitting thoughts and ideas, whereby theory and criticism have been increasingly using terms such as generative, non-representational, performative, and even inadequate photography.

Photography has become an exceptionally important element in understanding the nature of artworks that involve text, as well as various types of "constructions" and "enactments". In this way, the focus has been shifted beyond the common, representative character of the medium, while its extension to the processes of thought has contributed to achieving important change in the perception of photography. The aspect of meaning could not be retained within the actual photographic frame. In the gap between the seen and the understood, photography could no longer maintain its nature of visual evidence. Thus, changes brought about by the emergence of conceptual art, which to a certain extent "liberated" photography and allowed it to evolve independently

Attempting a Survey

as an artistic genre, are still considered as an important stage in its evolution, and it is to its recent echoes that we have dedicated the exhibition *Archives, Re-Assemblances, and Surveys*. The starting point for our research are not documents that serve as records of events, but photography as a separate element of an artwork,[1] something that has become a challenge to the "illiterate" (Walter Benjamin), who must prepare for understanding the future: photography as an autonomous work of art, as its own subject.[2]

New and innovative working strategies—self-representation, processuality, personal manifestoes, body art, happenings; experiments aiming at analytically exploring the medium, detachment from the representative status of the artwork, and the use of anonymous photographs appropriated from the printed media, from private or public archives—characterise many of these artistic strategies that have emerged in recent decades. Their "final result" has been, among other things, photography whose task is no longer to draw attention on something that someone has seen, but which operates as a specific way of activating other and different aspects of the *remnants* of its aesthetic value. Based on the conceptual impetus that first emerged in the 1960s, contemporary practice does not consist in *creating objects*, but in liberating itself from them. The artists' interest is now directed at meanings behind the objects, as they no longer focus primarily on materialisation. Artistic procedure can also consist in providing instructions on how to create the artwork, information on what it is comprised of and what happened to it during and after the performance. Establishing the image has become a challenge in the era of innovations characteristic of the "history of the present."[3] The role of the observer has changed as well: the introduction of sequence has activated the viewing mode, which now explores the similarities unhindered, comparing what has been seen, and creating possible

links.[4] The viewer can thereby accept the offered instructions, but need not necessarily follow them.

Photography has become a sort of *coordinate* that functions like an echo of some event or an absent artwork, like a *channel* [5] used to mediate the conceptualisation and realisation of a specific idea. According to Peter Weibel, it exists divided into four major groups: photographs as evidence of irritation, as liberation of the photographic mechanism, as appropriation, and as triggers of associations.[6] They motivate the viewer to extend his or her view and to develop critical awareness, with an eventual impact in the form of an acceleration of the cognitive process.

Owing to the many years of Camera Austria's activity, it is now possible to explore and continue the photographic concepts that rest on the constitutive foundations of conceptual art, among which one may include analytical actions, research on positions, meanings, and relations, subjective statements, conceptual registers, and archives of indirect references. The "meaningless" and seemingly absurd information becomes part of complex artistic statements that subtract or transform the identity of the reality. From a serious, well-guarded building as the repository of what has been written, spoken, or created, whose structure testifies (also) of the status of the community that has established it, to individual "collections" whose structures cannot be clearly defined as they depend on various individual decisions, often inaccessible to the users—archives have become subject to numerous re-assemblances and surveys. Without their existence, it would be impossible to understand events, memory, and even history; and yet, their practice is disturbing. The archival material offered for consultation to the users can be seemingly organised as a permanent form, but can one really trust the narrative encountered there? Are the archives genuine, or are they subject to manipulation? Exploring and discovering,

documenting and organising—the form of the archive shows itself pliable in the hands of an artist. Sometimes it is a repository of personal decisions, the organisation of which destabilises the foundations on which the usual understanding of the content relies. Can we find our way in these, often parallel events, and understand the decisions that preceded their arrangement? Fluid passage through time is a feature of contemporary art, "disloyal to the sanctities" of earlier times, which used to obstruct and prevent movement. But modern times are characterised by another sort of inertia, which depends on the economic situation that blocks many choices. The new systems are rigid precisely owing to the "loose breaks" and the exaggerated fluidity or liquidity (Zygmunt Bauman); the buildings are missing in which the control desks of the system were once lodged.[7] Can one find comfort in individual archives, is it possible and desirable? And how is visual content classified there with regard to all other content?

Constructing Memory

Are historical situations constructed firmly enough, or does their fluid nature make it easier to "spill out" their content within time? Is the knowledge we have of the past inert and insensitive to movement, and does the stability of events from previous periods make us change things in order to understand and adapt them, in order to reach the stage of *lasting solidity that one could trust and rely upon*?[8] May we conclude that the past was, or has been, here around us—owing to nothing else but archiving? Is it possible to achieve that in the future as well, depending on the relocation of content that will be preserved (or re-assembled) in some of the future archives?

Three photographs found on a flea market feature in the series *Stills* by Tatiana Lecomte.[9] A young man dressed in a Wehrmacht uniform stands in the middle of a scene: the sequence starts with a dimmed, almost indiscernible

image, followed by a landscape covered in snow, with a one-storey house in the background. Its wide, two-winged door is painted white and the windows to the right are four-fold, divided into a series of small frames, whereas to the left their form is different. A small, yet imposing chimney rises above the house: it seems uncanny. I do not feel comfortable while watching the scene: I dislike staged scenes from World War II, that appearance of normal life, in the background of which, behind the closed door, there is a pulsating feeling of fear, hopelessness, the Final Solution. For whom?

The sequence continues with an almost identical scene, and yet, it seems that the hand of the cameraman trembled seriously, thus making it inadequate, while in the next frame an older and obviously more experienced soldier steps before the young man. He is seen only from the back, while he energetically yet tenderly adjusts the hand of the young soldier in order to teach him how to hold his gun properly. The scenes then alternate while simulating the continuity of a negative: sharp then dimmed, out of focus owing to some imaginary detonations or perhaps latent fear, despite the whiteness of the landscape and the young man incapable of holding his gun properly.

The second piece from the same series represents both soldiers—the young one, who is now "finally" holding the gun in an appropriate manner, and the older one, dressed in a darker uniform, with his right hand stuck in his jacket. A dense row of trees in the background has its trunks stripped completely bare; behind them, barely visible, the sky indicates no perspective.

"In order to know, we must imagine ourselves."[10] We learn about the past from the material remnants, including those found in the garbage. The unsolicited knowledge, owing to the intervention of Tatiana Lecomte, *combines what is represented with the medium*

of representation.[11] It explores the relations between *the real and the true* (M. Ammer quoting Peter Geimer) by using the traces of one's memory, "accidentally" discovered by the artist, which can be understood in the recording process. Her record is a photographic sequence, the narrative of which depends on the degree of intervention into the medium. The observed person is in a precarious position; he or she feels the consequences of the photographer's hands, which document the perceived with trembling hands. But that movement is an almost absurd way of creating meaning in the psycho-geographic landscape in which everything seems static.

The archival "method" is even more manifest in the series of slides called *Positions at El Alamein. A Montage* (2012). The starting point was a series of slides that the artist found in a waste container for old paper. The photographs were shot during the 1960s at the beach of El Alamein, which had been the site of two important World War II battles in which the German and Italian troops, joined in the so-called *Panzerarmee Afrika*, fought against the Allies in the Egyptian territory in 1942. The topography of the battle, with shots of airplanes and Rommel with a camera in his hands, as well as maps witnessing war strategies, are combined here with personal holiday photos, created in an erotic atmosphere. In a unified rhythm, the slides alternate scenes — against a green background, there is a hand holding the photograph at its lower right corner. There are only a few photographs lying flat, without being touched.

Two realities combined in an impossible mission? Owing to their visual "frugality", their date is difficult to discern at first, and the thought that someone may have found time for erotic encounters on hot sand between the battles may not be entirely unimaginable. The personal archive has been complemented with shots of soldiers whose suffering alternates with the naked bodies, male and female. In

a way, we seem to look at a danse macabre that took place decades ago, since the sequence merges it all—the discarded and the archived. The historically documented and the irrelevant dance here hand in hand.

The notion of time capsule is usually associated with world exhibitions or space travel, when mankind comes to the idea of sending a selection of data about our civilisation on planet Earth. Occasionally time capsules have been built into the foundations of important buildings, expressing the hope that once they are demolished, the inhabitants (or perhaps space travellers) may find some interesting information there. One tends to interpret the capsules in terms of archaeology of knowledge, as archives that would once help reconstruct knowledge on the past. However, they consist merely of selected information, same as any other archive, and outline only a segment of reality. The rest has "disappeared" or has been left to interpretation, which functions as a combination of historiography and storytelling.

For his series *Putting in Time* (2014), Christian Mayer has collected objects from flea markets, searching for newspaper photographs that show motives related to the notion of time capsule. The structure of his research has thus been thoroughly defined, guided by systems and values that form part of our social relations. This has made it possible for him to write his own version of history, which hardly allows for any conclusions. He has chosen newspaper photographs such as the one showing three women holding a drawing in their hands that has meanwhile been buried under an assembly hall in the United States. The photograph is provided with a note made by the archivist and glued to the reverse, with several keywords, while a short newspaper text explains the somewhat irrational decision that someone once made in circumstances that remain obscure to us.

Time is a category that shapes Mayer's artworks, although it may be difficult to say precisely what

it actually means as one of the seven fundamental categories. His interpretation of history is an autonomous organism in which biological and historical data, accompanied by spatial depictions of real space, coexist in space-time. They are elements in the strategy of preservation that functioned in some previous time, but in this isolated and displaced selection confirm the precarious position of the person who has dared to introduce them into our own time. More than a thousand-years old organisms that scientists use to cultivate plants today, trunks preserved in peat bogs for hundreds and thousands of years, an almost extinct language that reminds of bird calls and is spoken only by a few persons on one of the Canary Islands, beautiful fabric wallpapers from the nineteenth century with the pattern of *Les Vues du Brésil* (*Scenes from Brazil*) all belong to Mayer's *poeticism of waste*, that particular burden destined to be sunk in specific cases.[12] The "noble savages" from the Brazilian forests surrounded by Biedermeier furniture, are gracious and colouristically impressive hints at the colonial relations and our "being there." It gives us the feeling of security as we, armed with knowledge, are those who are here, abandoned to the synchronising experiences transmitted by Mayer's procedures of archivation and personal mapping.

Vienna's Werkbundsiedlung is a product of a *real utopia, an articulation of hope*, although its foundations were seriously threatened at the time of its construction. It was built not as a sign of the times, but primarily with the intention of achieving detachment from the "naïve pathos of Viennese communal housing."[13] Thereby it should be noted that its initiator, Josef Frank—about whom one of the collocutors of Heidrun Holzfeind, the author of *forms in relation to life. Filmische Fragmente über die Wiener Werkbundsiedlung*, said that he would be "turning in his grave" if he could see what his housing development has been

reduced to—accused the Viennese on the one hand of snobbism, while on the other, as a convinced socialist humanist, he attached too much significance to pure form. For Frank, form was a gesture that could serve to reveal complex human interactions in a simple way. Eighty years later, the tenants speak about the buildings, referring from their personal perspectives to the expected harmony between nature and the geometrical forms of architecture.

The film lasts an hour and has the unique quality of a long, almost uninterrupted sequence, although scenes shot in various buildings alternate with interviews made with several of the tenants. Without attempting to reinterpret the well-known facts about this interesting architectural exhibition, one of those that were organised in various European cities during the 1930s (Stuttgart, Berlin, Prague, etc.), where a distant land plot belonging to the city was used to build new projects by architects such as Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, André Lurçat, Richard Neutra, Gerrit Rietveld, and Margarethe Schütte-Lihotzky as the only woman among them, this video speaks about the advantages and disadvantages of a housing development whose "poverty" was considered manifest in the fact that the buildings had flat roofs. In the meantime, this minimised living space has been somewhat embellished by green surfaces, which have softened the rigidity of its prismatic forms, while interventions by some of the tenants testify of their lack of understanding for an architecture that Josef Frank, the settlement's designer, did not consider to be merely symbolic. The camera of Heidrun Holzfeind is perfectly discrete; her shots are long and somewhat inert, without revealing too much information about the space. The artist documents an isolated position without insisting on narration, building up the structure of her video like a photographic sequence. The documentary character of her approach results from the wish to show what the decision

of one person can do to another, and may be eventually seen in the context of her multiple surveys of space. Thus, she has explored the idealised yet also minimised spatial proportions by filming her body in various yoga positions in a house built by Rudolph Schindler in Los Angeles in the late 1930s, paying homage to the art of Valie Export (*Körperkonfigurationen*). By inscribing the body (her own as well as those of her interlocutors) into space, Heidrun Holzfeind has tackled various forms of remembrance, creating an archive of positions that cannot be repeated, a database of circumstances that have influenced other people's lives, their material remnants now serving as containers for her artistic archive (in her piece *Strictly Private*, she has intervened into the interiors designed by Ernst Schwadron, who was forced to emigrate to the United States because of his Jewish origins). As in many other cases, these interiors seem laden with questions that render the archive's structure precarious.

Translating the Experience

Several years ago, there was a major student protest in Croatia, with the basic demand of ensuring free education. Even though the authorities claimed that university education was free and accessible to all, the changes that we witnessed proved that the conditions under which the Croats lived and obtained their education were completely different. If one adds the implementation of the Bologna Process in education, where knowledge production has largely been supplemented by quick seminars, often to the detriment of the students, whereas the faculty, including the teaching assistants, has become an assembly line where competences are acquired in an inadequate way, it is no wonder that the struggle for student rights has been so persistent and joined by many academic workers as well. These "unrests" were not a Croatian specificity. Vancouver, Vienna, Kuala Lumpur, Zurich—the list is rather long and speaks of the

current discourse on the politics of education, which has provoked reactions that cannot be dismissed as a series of isolated events.

The two series by Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber primarily function as a framework for the remnants of a happening. *Events Are Always Original* (2010) and *The Templeton Five Affair, March 1967* (2010) are dedicated to a schism caused by the differences between university education and the so-called professional training, with an emphasis on the fact that it is the latter that brings economic prosperity and enables one to gain competences needed for the neoliberal economy and the labour market.
The series *Events Are Always Original* consists of photographs showing empty rooms after the debates that took place at the Simon Fraser University in Vancouver; these are documents of the 1968 occupation, when the students voiced their demand to appropriate the university rooms in order to self-organise and use them for their specific needs. The photographs have been "archived" together with the numeral data on contact copies and a brief note written in the typeset of an old typewriter. The scene is dominated by the remnants of a meeting—discarded clothes and scattered papers describing the specific activation of that space. The more or less recognisable modernist architecture is not essential for the events, although the rooms are—in the manner of many universities built in various parts of the world—conceived as free and open, often interconnected in order to satisfy the vision of providing unhindered and accessible flow of knowledge, at least in one of its segments.
The large, movable panels placed in the atrium of Klovićevi dvori Gallery belong to the installation *The Templeton Five Affair, March 1967*. Protagonists of the events in question have been reduced to white silhouettes, which additionally emphasise the austere rhythm of the modernist buildings. In the second case, the swarming students form groups whose arrangement

depends on architectural structure, which has, however, been erased. The seemingly firm institutional framework has thus disappeared, which is additionally emphasised by the mobility of the exhibition panels.
The authors' interventions in these artworks are not merely a re-visualisation of events, supported by the development of the medium. Their research is complex and based on experience rather than mere archivation of spatial and other elements testifying of a particular event. They are far more than that—signifiers of the *binary machines* [14] determining our existence, although we may not have necessarily agreed to that. Bitter / Weber perceive architecture as a site of *social interaction* (Henri Lefebvre), while the procedures of erasing the firm traces of architecture redirect our attention to the agents of events. With the disappearance of the common rooms of the university, to which we attribute the feature of being public, they direct our attention to the construction of private relations. The representative architecture is gone, shifting the focus to the constellation of circumstances that has brought together people of similar worldviews and interests.

The two roles of photo paper, placed at the same height and of identical proportions, contain black square fields. The left one bears several lines, with diagonals that create the central square; to the right, their more or less regular arrangement, slightly reminiscent of some room in perspective, turns into four parables whose tops meet with an unidentified object, "extending" into space. The visual language in the artwork called *Altering Conditions* (2009) by Doris Krüger and Walter Pardeller is based on the experience of Frei Otto, a young man who was interned in France after World War II, where he began to explore cheap and easily accessible materials that could serve to build temporary shelters. The intriguing fate of the German architect who has invented expansible membrane structures, such as those spanning

over the Munich Olympic Stadium or the Multihalle in Mannheim (an experience that is still important in structural mathematics), served as a starting point for the formally restrained work of the artist duo Krüger & Pardeller. Even though containing references to social interactions—*balance, fragility, tension*[15]—it also contains echoes of rational and constructivist structures that emerged in art during the 1960s.
That coexistence is specific for the period of a firmly defined theoretical framework of modernism, to which Krüger & Pardeller also refer in their other artworks, often exploring scientific experiences. It is the period that gave birth to the information theory and assigned a progressive role to science in the society. Three-dimensional phenomena and visual research originating in the climate of pro-scientific work, which also contain a spiritual dimension, expressed primarily through achromatism and "movable configurations," has been complemented in their work by references to societal processes. Spatial events interpreted in the medium of photography (one should note that Frei Otto developed the photographic procedure in order to document his experiences and insights) react to various types of impetus; these are concepts whose abstractness is a methodological rather than a visual fact. The series of information processed by Krüger & Pardeller has been subjected to structural changes (in colour, surface, sound, elements of performative and participative procedures) that are very difficult to categorise. Their practice consists in translating and interpreting an object that is essentially instable. The activity of that object, depending on one's wish—of the artist, the architect, the scientist, and even the society—results in a particular consequence. This, again, results in a tensed structure that accepts that consequence, simulating complex social relations at least on the conceptual level.

While being an artist in residence in New York a few years ago, Michael

Strasser worked at a studio that would be renovated soon afterwards. In that abandoned space, he gradually removed the layers of the floor until a materic black-and-white surface appeared under the mosaic panels. Scraps of material that served as a base for many years suddenly changed the character of the room. In its centre, there are the former mosaic panels, arranged around the chair that is barely visible in the photographic series—the only "document" witnessing the author's intervention—as it is completely buried under the heap that eventually reached up to the ceiling. Illuminated by fresh sunlight, it is a materialisation of time in space; an empirical archive with segments that do not tell us anything important. We perceive this space in its bareness; it is no longer a place, as a place is always linked to events. But the traces of these events are gone; they are—if at all existing—arranged in a "database" to which we have no access.

In a specific way, it is accessed only by the artist (which is implied by the lucid subtitle *Mapping and Visualization of the Foreign* [16]), who explores the allegedly *foreign* features of the setting in which he is temporarily active. The experience that he has gathered in the so-called exotic lands (whereby this characterisation is primarily due to the Western dominance) is not directed at "people who look strange."[17] Among other things, they have served his site-specific project realised in the context of this exhibition.

The empirical method of Michael Strasser was activated at the moment he entered the space of the gallery, trying to shift the borders, to see beyond, where all was neglected, dirty, and partly burned, spaces that had existed for years enveloped in that notorious stance of "cannot be done." The working title of his intervention was *A group show with the past*. Whose past? The place that was foreign or rather unfamiliar to him triggered some processes which suddenly involved all of us who had

to do something with the exhibition. One of the rare and controversial interpolations in the historical Upper Town (and to be honest, most interpolations in Zagreb are more or less controversial) was perceived as a possibility, an excuse for "it can" and "it should". The fact that this space was neglected is rather symptomatic; after all, Zagreb has given up even more valuable spaces and left them to rot, some of which have survived as if by miracle. For Strasser, spaces where he temporarily stays, exploring them for his projects, are human and at the same time historical. These are places which make one change one's attitude, as their displacement (which is in some cases only mental) does not mean their disappearance. They are not necessarily sites of historical traumas, but rather potential urban archives that can be redistributed (regardless of how short-lived the project is). Thereby the method used is not supposed to be healing; it neither offers comfort nor abolishes the actual state. Strasser merely creates a path that marks the distance between before and now, a continued direction of the *crisis of remembrance* (Benjamin Buchloh) by which he separates (and also links) subjects and objects.

Do We Know What the Void Looks Like?

How should we reach the distance and inaccessibility, "translate" them and decode them for the viewers? Is it possible to visualise the void that emerges when setting one's foot into a distant, rarely visited field? The photographic sequences of Michael Höpfner have been accumulating for years, and a fleeting glance may give the impression they resembled each other. The voids of the landscape may seem similar to an untrained eye as they continue in an almost uninterrupted cinematic gaze that mediates neither event nor content. Henri Michaux's verse "Movements of quartering and of inner exasperation more than the movements of walking," borrowed for the title of one of the photographic series based on walking, serves to keep detachment, as what is seen while walking

cannot be narrated anyway. The interior monologue is part of the artist's nature, sensitive towards the perceived—the contours of a non-existing dwelling between whose shreds, disentangled by wind, there are said to be ghosts of a Far-Eastern people. Left in the form of contact copies, their dimensions making it difficult to discern the details, these photographs function as a note on the inner restlessness that forces the artist to keep moving. Even though we may want to reach for a glossary of cinematic terms (and a magnifying glass) in order to understand them, primarily owing to the feeling of movement, enhanced by the exhibition of numerous contact copies bound into sheets or slides laid in light boxes, one should see them as artworks on the borderline between photography and film, taking into account all the similarities and differences between these two media.

Is there a stable feeling of place in case of Höpfner, as everything has been subjected to movement? The longing to reach the horizon equals an attempt at understanding the life of the nomads. Both are unfeasible, and his photographs are primarily perceived as a continued series of viewpoints. For one should not see these photographs as an archive of places that the artist has visited; instead, he is in constant movement and, in a way, staying in one place makes no sense for him. Instead of speaking a language, he communicates by recognising scents and feeling the distance,[18] and these categories are fluid, evasive. In the landscapes he traverses, traces of human interventions are rare; photographs of people whom he occasionally stumbles upon primarily speak of interpersonal detachment.

The photographed landscapes belong to the artist's mental map and an identity based on difference and its preservation. Exhibited in large numbers, his photographs and slides do not merely document the fact that he was in a particular place at a particular moment. For him, what matters is there and

then. All subsequent information necessarily introduces new interpretations. Faced with the traces of ecological catastrophes, which are in distant places probably experienced much more drastically than in densely populated urban environments, Höpfner shares a certain level of utopism with Henry David Thoreau, author of an essay on *Walking*, likewise guided by the idea that the world remains preserved in wilderness and that all living is in the present. Walking is here a metaphor for real time, the need of movement. Between the horizon and a state of precariousness, Höpfner marks various points in the landscape; their topographic arrangement is arbitrary, appropriated only in isolated moments of orientation that the author has subjected to his photographic gaze.

The archive implies, among other things, appropriation; its procedures are sometimes accidental, while at other times they depend on complex events, and their "preliminary work" is often inaccessible to the viewer. The artistic practice of Nicole Six & Paul Petritsch is poetic and radical at the same time; it consists of the procedures of surveying space in relation to their bodies, as well as in "occupying" the exhibition room with a whole assortment of objects they use in their private lives, neatly ordered and archived in the form of a catalogue. Their intervention, performed in the magazine *Camera Austria International* in 2013, consisted of shooting at the pages intended for their work: they both shot a bullet each, from opposite sides, into the empty sheets of paper. Each copy was therefore a unique work of art. The magazine served them to explore the *politics of representation* (Reinhard Braun), while the weapon, as an ideologically motivated tool, was used to create a performative event with complex implications.

The enterprise with the seemingly simple title *Atlas* (2010) consists in multiplied movement. With an intention to cover the whole planet by travelling (or rather by moving),

the artists transformed the action into a drive on a moped along a deserted racing course located in Spain, on the Zero Meridian. The course shaped as a Möbius loop sustained their numerous rounds that lasted for weeks, documented in photographs and notes used to mark the number of circles until they have reached the number of kilometres equal to the length of the equator—around 40,070. They had divided the racing course in twelve segments, marking the spots where to place the camera. By using a 24-hour exposure, they documented optical sensations and condensed each day into a single photograph, many times in a row. Some of the bleaker days resulted in darker images, dutifully supplied with ordinal numbers. For everything has been documented: each round, each change of drivers, who had to use three mopeds to cover the distance (it should be noted that they had purposefully chosen the weakest vehicles in order to make the drive as long and exhausting as possible). This journey "around the world" may have been originally conceived as a wish to travel through cities, wastelands, deserts, and seas, to reach places that no human eye has ever seen. But like in Paul Auster's poetry,[19] that sort of inaccessibility eventually lost its meaning, or perhaps the initial enthusiasm. Finally it was reduced to incessant and exhausting driving until Six / Petritsch reached the desired number of kilometres. A notebook with scribbled "documentation" on the covered distances speaks of the existential structure of unified rhythm, made of driving, rain, sunshine, and the smell of gasoline: a structure that depends on the built and then disused construction, a place that used to function according to the rules of surveillance and control, its "abstractness" of today largely due to its emptiness. But even this sort of condition depends on existence, even if confirmed by mere "notches" made by pencil in passing, as there was no time to add a comment on the experience or anything else. Merely duration.

Perspectives of the Visible

Many things that define a place are determined by a meaning that can have huge impact on the environment, regardless of whether a particular image shows precisely what the artist wanted to indicate with his or her work. Photographs of urban places, as well as those that "merely" remind of them, often rely on complex and well-known insights on social spaces, including the way they intertwine, multiply, and thus generate new meanings.
The series *Index of Livability* (2011) by Karina Nimmerfall speaks of a project of modernist urban renewal. Unlike the urban planning based on industrialisation as one of the main drives of progress after World War II, which determined the evolution of cities in economic, social, communicational, and aesthetical terms, the artist has focused here on a less renowned project of Richard Neutra in Los Angeles. The Austrian architect emigrated to the United States in 1923 and is mostly remembered as the author of brilliant modernist villas in which he achieved a perfect combination of spatiality and conciseness. He explored the features of Californian architecture and used these insights in order to design houses that would show a perfect fusion of interior and exterior space. Socially engaged, he also endorsed *healthy* housing, introducing to the US certain ideas that were characteristic of European architecture and urban planning between the two World Wars. This was the basis on which the Californian housing estates were designed. They were intended for poorer populations, as Neutra did not want them to be deprived of good and healthy housing because of their material standing. These are mostly housing estates consisting of one-storey and two-storey houses surrounded by gardens, orthogonally arranged between pedestrian lanes, even though in some cases he also designed apartment towers. Communal spaces and facilities, including a school, a nursery, a supermarket, and a cultural centre, did not meet with enthusiasm at the times of

corporate urbanism, especially during McCarthyism, and the present state of the housing estate testifies of the public attitude towards this socially engaged concept, which has been gradually devastated. The utopian attempts to change the world by means of architecture have resulted in a derelict housing estate, as the socially deprived tenants did not invest in it or generate new housing options, at their disposal at least in theory.

As in some of her earlier series, Nimmerfall has treated the photographs as a visually unified set of data, complemented with information on the construction and the present-day condition of the estate, as well as a list of references that may serve as a basis for further research. The colour chart on the left margin is a sort of link between the archivistically treated, almost documentary black-and-white photographs and that which we expect to see. It functions as the stabile part of the archive/album, almost hinting at the procedure of cataloguing that helps structure the viewing experience. It may be interpreted as a remnant of the montage procedure, which the artist often uses in her work, "complicating" the process of seeing and understanding by constructing architectural models and spatial installations that help achieve the perspective of the visible.

Squeezed between the archival data and the colour chart, the actual scene brings a touch of mistrust in what we see. Perhaps it is because of knowing her photographs from one of the previous series, *Substitute Locations*, which she treated as an "'objective' documentation"[20] of something non-existent, a mere stage set offering an appearance of life, place, and space. Both cases are potential (spatial) aporias, whose status may at first seem autonomous, yet actually depends on other people's interests. Nimmerfall's photographs document parallel spaces that, like heterotopias, function simultaneously, both questioning

and confirming each other.

Many of the hallucinating scenes presented by Anita Witek cannot be unambiguously linked to reality. Her spatial installation *Surface Treatment* consists of posters that the artist has been collecting for quite a while. They are mostly advertising campaigns of famous brands, but the specific and imposing colour gamut will hardly allow the viewer to discern any recognisable details. The artist has, namely, used the "surrounding space" of the poster, the non-advertising zone, the colour of which has been carefully selected by marketing experts after exhaustive research. Intended for large surfaces, the potential scenes are often pixelated, which makes it additionally difficult to relate them in any way to the "real" world. And that world is changeable, fickle; it wants to satisfy everyone and to be progressive, different yet casual. In this utterly chaotic setting (which we may recall without any problem if we think of the indescribable quantity of "promises" lined along the traffic routes and above the handrails in trams), Witek expresses herself in a way that few would relate to the images that preceded her interventions.

A step out into space is necessary to convince the viewer about the role of the social body, which one is doomed to play, often without even being aware of it. Or is it about detaching oneself from that role? It is not easy to orientate in Witek's montages. However, the multitude of elements she builds into her installations and collages is not associated with the surrealist current. Witek complicates and multiplies the gazes; she defines places as manifold, simultaneous spaces that, among other things, reflect her reading experience, her setting books aside and taking them up again. That experience has helped her construct her artwork like a text, in which, same as in reading, she inserts concepts such as everyday life, dialogue, another read or heard narrative.

In one of these dialogues,[21] she refers to *Aminadab* by Maurice Blanchot. She has experienced the text as a sort of deconstruction and reconstruction in which the author guides the protagonist through various simultaneous spaces. Using the method of reassembling the found material, which she then appropriated and transformed (often by using rather simple "techniques"), Witek has opted for the strategy of "becoming visible."[22] In her created and emerging spaces, she perceives the ways in which the body reacts—depending on the place where it is creative, as well as its role in the historical, cultural, and even economic context. She has merged various procedures into a unique archive, which has thus been activated as a unique experience.

By transforming the two-dimensional medium activated in space, whereby she has achieved its materialisation, the artist explores complex processes in social space. Thereby she also transforms the medium as such, since it cannot be experienced merely in its function as mediating the visual content. Traces of tearing, cutting with a knife, constituting a three-dimensional body, understanding the viewing process (active or passive), continuing the "scene" in a sort of cinematic excerpt, are only some of the procedures included in her approach. Even though it may seem to the viewer that Witek's gaze simply wanders about, and that her introduction of numerous details and tonal layers implies a sort of uncertainty in the final construction, all is carefully planned and has a specific meaning. Her archive consists of a multitude of simultaneous elements, and their synchronisation creates not only the feeling of space, but also that of time.

[1] Peter Weibel, "Zur Geschichte der Künstlerfotografie als ein Motor der Fotografiegeschichte — II. Teil: (Bildende) Kunst und Fotografie," *Camera Austria* 6 (1981), 59.

[2] Ibid., p. 60.

[3] A thesis of M. Foucault; cf. Douglas Fogle, "The Last Picture Show," in idem (ed.), *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography 1960-1982* (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003), p. 11.

[4] Weibel quoting Georg F. Schwarzbauer in "Zur Geschichte der Künstlerfotografie" (as in n. 1), p. 60.

[5] Terminology of Max Bense quoted in Lawrence Alloway, "Artists and Photographs (1970)" in Fogle, *The Last Picture* (as in n. 3), p. 20.

[6] Weibel, "Zur Geschichte der Künstlerfotografie" (as in n. 1), p. 60.

[7] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 5.

[8] Ibid., p. 3.

[9] The series consists of six photographs.

[10] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), I.

[11] Manuela Ammer, "Entzugs-Erscheinungen — Zu den fotografischen Investigationen Tatiana Lecomtes," in *Tatiana Lecomte: Dissolution* (Graz: Camera Austria, 2011), unpaginated.

[12] I am referring here to the title of the series and to the publication of the same name: *flotsam and jetsam*.

[13] Adolf Krischanitz and Otto Kapfinger, *Die Wiener Werkbundsiedlung. Dokumentation einer Erneuerung* (Düsseldorf: Beton Verlag, 1989), p. 7.

[14] Reference to the quotation of Gilles Deleuze in Reinhard Braun, "Machines of Transparency," in *Sabine Bitter / Helmut Weber. Right, to the City* (Salzburg: Fotohof, 2009), p. 51.

[15] Quoted from: Johan Frederik Hartle, "Reflection and Permeable System: Reflections of the Social in Krüger & Pardeller's Work," in Krüger & Pardeller (eds.), *Aesthetic Basic Chronicle*, Vol. 1 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).

[16] Christian Reder, "'In other times and different spaces' — Kartografieren und Visualisieren von Fremden," in *Michael Strasser. Exotic Strings a Compilation* (Nuremberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2010), pp. 20-33.

[17] Ibid., p. 32.

[18] "News from no-mans-land / Nachrichten aus dem Niemandsland," in *Michael Höpfner: Unsettled Conditions* (Vienna: Kunstraum Niederösterreich, 2008), unpaginated.

[19] Quoted from the artist booklet *Atlas*, 2010, private publication, p. 16.

[20] Raimar Stange, "Preface," in *Karina Nimmerfall: Cinematic Maps* (Graz: Camera Austria, 2007), unpaginated.

[21] http://anitawitek.net/AnitaWitek_publications.pdf (last accessed on February 12, 2014).

[22] "Anita Witek. Ein Gespräch mit / a conversation with Barbara Clause," *Camera Austria* 94 (2006), p. 37.