

Camera Austria

Out Now

Book presentation

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Camera Austria, Graz

Performative reading followed by a conversation with Karina Nimmerfall (artist), Reinhard Braun (publisher), and Nicole Six (designer)

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With contributions by the artist (eng.).
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Karina Nimmerfall: Unintentional Monument [The Matrix Code]

Dear Sir or Madam,
Dear Friends of Camera Austria,

We are pleased to present the latest publication released by the Edition Camera Austria: *Karina Nimmerfall: Unintentional Monument [The Matrix Code]*. It unfolds from the history of the innovative research culture of the RAND Corporation (the controversial Cold War think tank, founded in 1948), reflected in its largely unknown, now demolished modernist headquarters building in Santa Monica, California. The book presents a search of the lost building within a network of time, history, events, and locations, blurring the boundaries between the documentary and the speculative. Following the think tank's influence on contemporary debates about technology, architecture, and interdisciplinary research settings, it interweaves computer-generated images and narrated research notes generated from historical and contemporary sources, thus inviting a rereading of the complex entanglement between visual arts, science, politics, and economics within current knowledge production.

For years now, we have enjoyed a multifaceted collaborative relationship with Karina Nimmerfall. Camera Austria has already published three artist books with her: *Cinematic Maps* (2007), *1953: Possible Scenarios of a Discontinued Future* (2015), and *Indirect Interviews with Women* (2018), the latter realized on the occasion of her eponymous solo exhibition at Camera Austria. Also, her works were presented in the group exhibitions *You Are Here* (2007) in Graz and *Archives, Re-Assemblances, and Surveys* (2014) in Zagreb and Osijek. In 2020, Lisa Stuckey wrote the text accompanying Nimmerfall's contribution to the issue no 152 of *Camera Austria International*.

We hope you thoroughly enjoy our latest publication, and we extend our thanks in advance for its editorial consideration in your medium!

With best wishes,
The Team of Camera Austria

Excerpt from: Karina Nimmerfall "UNINTENTIONAL MONUMENT"

Buildings change over time, deteriorate, and die. They have a very complex relationship to time and memory, since they cannot be isolated from their context. In the ruin, history physically merges into the setting. In the process of decay, and in it alone, the events of history shrivel up and become absorbed in the setting. The researcher's interest is in buildings that have become monuments unexpectedly, in particular sites with "historical value," where a sense of historical continuity persists. The building in question does not commemorate a person or a specific historical event. With the passage of time, however, it has acquired a documentary significance that stands as a witness to the time of its origin and life. It recalls the activity of men and women, yet it was not meant to do so. Only our perception evokes this second notion. Bound up with social and political actions, its design revolves around respective symptoms current at the moment of its creation; architecture entering into negotiations with the powers that causally define it. A space of knowledge at the heart of Cold War idea production, organized to stimulate creative thinking. Networked, systems-based, feedback-driven, a node in a communications network within and between disciplines and regimes of knowledge. This also applies to the supposedly emancipatory project of open-ended flexibility emerging from the unpredictability of open-ended scientific research.

Yet what happens when a building no longer exists? The construction of a physical space is certainly the site of a "battle." That such a battle is not totalizing, that it leaves behind borders, remains, residues, is also an indisputable fact. A vast field of investigation is opened up. What if the building itself, as a cultural form, opens up a possibility for historical reflection? We may be able to live without architecture, but can we remember without it? And what is the difference between history and memory? Far from being synonymous, they seem to be in fundamental opposition. Memory, as a historian once said, is life. It remains in permanent evolution. History, on the other hand, is a reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what no longer exists. Yet isn't it time to challenge the dominant



ing juxtaposition of memory and history? What about those who “remember differently”?

Thinking about time, distance, and location. Entropic time is recursive and infinite and the present a momentary pause in that vast continuum. Monuments are links in a vast chain of human actions and events that they prompt us to remember. Instead of making us remember the past like old monuments, new monuments seem to make us forget the future. How can we address the problem so as to present history as if we were traveling back in time and watching it unfold? The researcher is interested in the specificity of a time and place, including the present, in leading the past in order to put the present in a critical condition, in active creation rather than the passive enterprise of recounting the past “as it really was.” The possibility of constructing the history of a formal language arises only through destroying, step by step, the linearity of that history and its autonomy: what remains are thus only traces, fluctuating signs, and unhealed rifts. Escaping linear time, evoking an intercrossed future and past. Isn't it time to move away from canonizing memorable events, monuments, and objects, and towards a space of not knowing, of being open to what other possibilities might arise? To discover through the process of engaging, interacting, and enacting? And, most importantly, “not knowing” opens one up to the “imaginary” as well. The word becomes (or better, once again becomes) magical. It fills the empty space of thought, much like the “unconscious” and “culture.” After all, since two terms are not sufficient, it becomes necessary to initiate a third. This is the “other,” with everything the term implies.

What if we were to subject original binaries to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from two opposing categories toward a dialectically open logic of both and/or also? To initiate an endless sequence of theoretical and practical approximations, a critical and inquisitive nomadism in which the journeying to new ground never ceases? To break down and disorder a rigid dichotomy and create a space of radical openness and critical exchange—that perpetually expands to include an other? A space where everything comes together: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history.

Excerpt above based on writings by: Alois Riegl, Michael Guggenheim, Walter Benjamin, Greg Goldin, Andreas Rumpfhuber, Michael Kubo, Reinhold Martin, Stanford Anderson, John Ruskin, Pierre Nora, Renée Green, Robert Smithson, Manfredo Tafuri, Reinhard Bernbeck, Grace Paley & Donald Barthelme, Edward Soja.

Karina Nimmerfall is a visual artist based in Berlin (DE). In her work she explores processes of urban transformation and the multi-layered construction of space within the context of cultural and socio-political representation. She has exhibited internationally including at Camera Austria, Graz (AT, 2018), MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles (US, 2016), BAWAG Contemporary, Vienna (2009), the Bucharest Biennale 3 (RO, 2008), Francisco Carolinum, Linz (AT, 2007), and the 8th Havana Biennale (CU, 2003). Her work has received numerous awards, such as the fellowship for contemporary German photography from the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Foundation (2018).