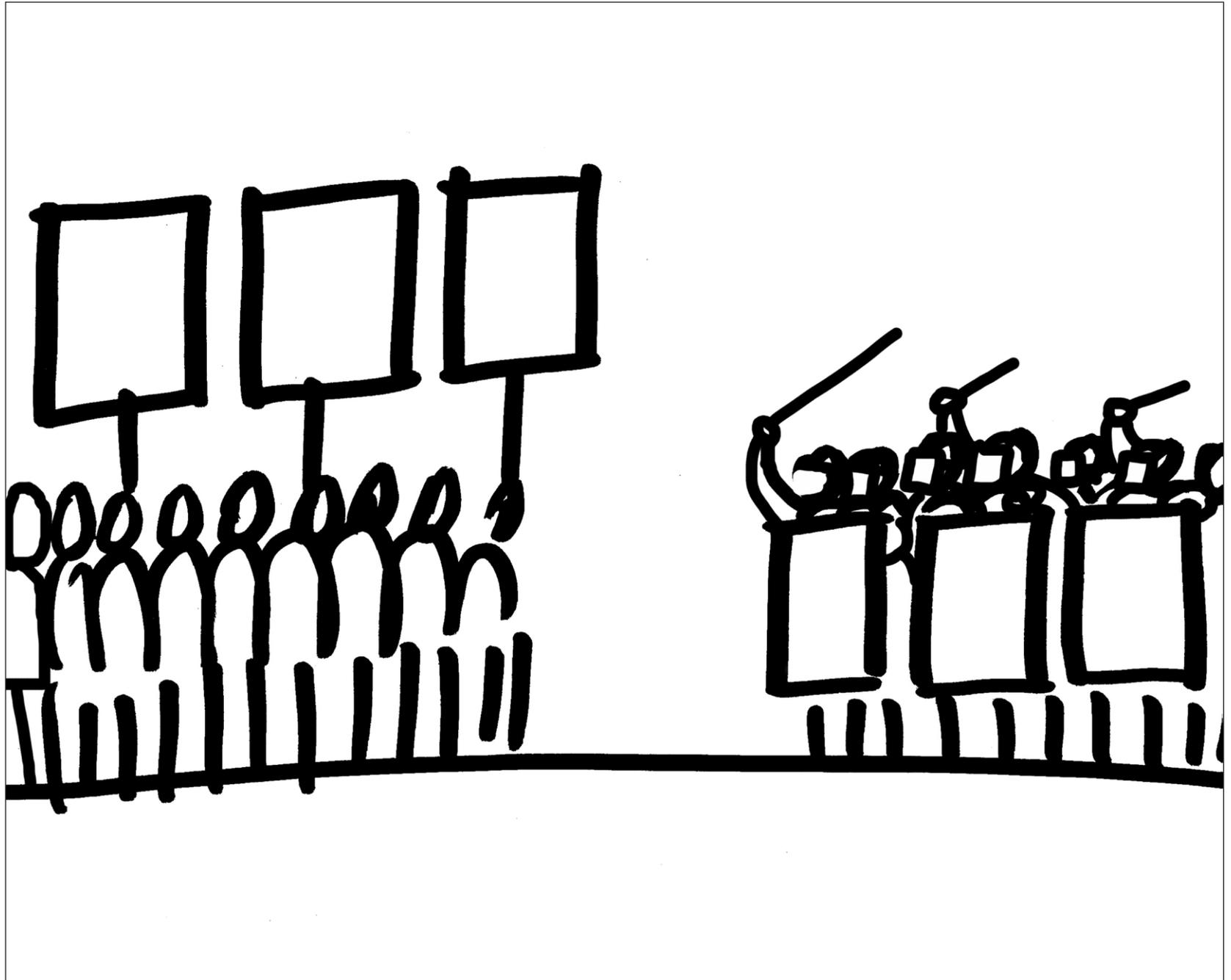


DAN PERJOVSCHI

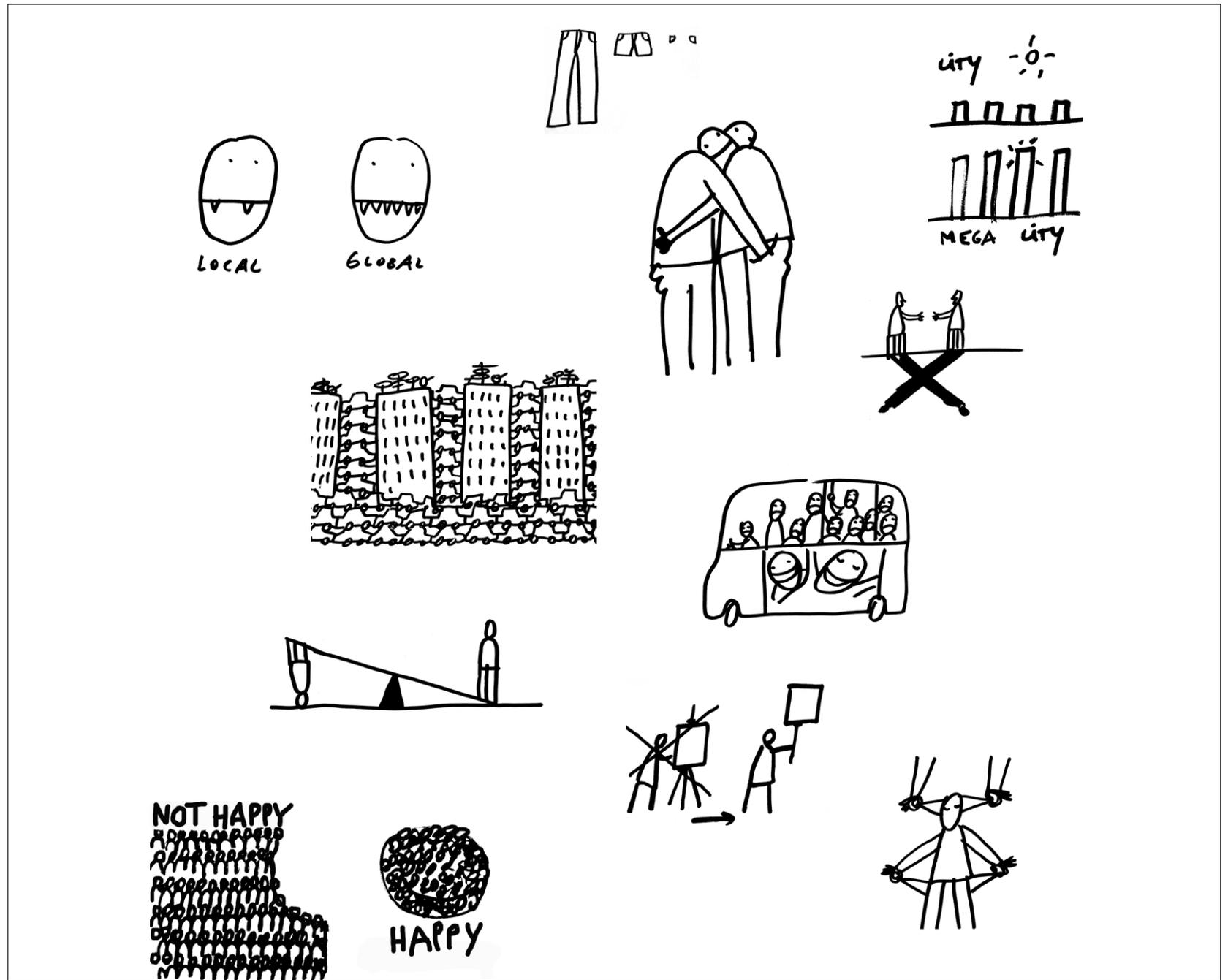
1961, SIBIU, ROMANIA.

LIVES IN BUCHAREST, ROMANIA.



DAN PERJOVSCHI

Repertoire Drawings. 1999-2013.
 Drawings. Various dimensions. Artist's
 collection. *Courtesy:* the artist. © Dan
 Perjovschi Repertoire Drawings
 1999-2013.



DAN PERJOVSCHI

A drawing doesn't have to be on a sheet of paper, on a museum wall or on a page in a book. Dan Perjovschi's projects have traveled the walls of various institutions as well as those of the streets and social networking sites. His simple, quick lines express humorous and critical commentaries both on the artistic context and on political and social issues.

His drawings express the way we live together, the violence of the contemporary world, humor and the relationship between art and politics. They discuss not only conflicts between one nation and another, but also between countries and their citizens. They speak of how institutions can define our way of life, frequently in a dogmatic and very often ridiculous way. Using humor and the juxtaposition of elements, his images establish immediate communication with the public. They seem to reach us through laughter, which is closely followed by reflection.

In this way, the artist's intention is not simply to portray reality, but to comment on it, which he does through contact with the means of communication present in the city or country in which his projects are being carried out. His raw materials are the news, the everyday facts that make their way to us through the media, already filtered by a given ideology and edited in order to reveal a reality in harmony with it. Thus Perjovschi's commentaries use critique, humor and irony to deconstruct this partial narrative. His commentaries expose an opinion. But can opinions transform society?

His projects also end up criticizing the artistic institution itself (museums, cultural centers, galleries and the art market), as they do institutions in general: school, family, church, the army. All are organizations that shape the society in which we live and decide which behaviors are acceptable and which ones are not. As the artist shows us, often times these rules make no sense, are arbitrary and function only as a mechanism of control.

Drawn straight onto the walls, floors and windows of museums and cultural centers with marking pens, his projects tend to become gradually erased. In most instances, this happens as a consequence of a given institution's routine processes – painting the walls after the end of a temporary exhibition, for example. However, on other

occasions his works may be erased by the public itself, as was the case at the 1999 Venice Biennial, when the drawings he had made on the floor gradually vanished as a result of the visitors walking over them.

The ephemeral quality of his works means that they are not the property of the institution, the artist or the few people who might be able to afford them. The images are reproduced and disseminated on various different scales – the scale of the wall, that of paper, that of the sketchpad, which can be held in one's hand, or on that of digital images, made to be seen and shared on social networking sites. They are available to the public, who may take them (in photographs) as windows, to help us read mediated reality, and as messages that can circulate and be shared.

The artist's politically conscious action, as a way of expressing concern about the world around him or being committed to critical thinking about his surroundings, opens up possibilities for action and continuity. His drawings may be used by many on other battlefields. They may, finally, be tools to understand – and interfere in – the world around us.

DANICA DAKIĆ

1962, SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA.
LIVES IN DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY,
AND SARAJEVO.

El Dorado. Giessbergstrasse.
2006-2007. Digital photograph.
© Danica Dakić, El Dorado.
Giessbergstrasse, C-Print,
vG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2013.



DANICA DAKIĆ

Why do people move? Why do they go and live in other cities, in other countries? What do we carry with us when we leave the place where we were born and grew up? When this change takes place because of the expectation of a better place, how does what we desire blend with what we already are? Can our voice and our body change when we move from one place to another?

The artist Danica Dakić lives in her hometown, Sarajevo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Düsseldorf, Germany, where she studied arts and works. As a result of being in different places, she says that her idea of home has changed: “I feel somewhat at home in both cities, but also somewhat of a stranger. My distance from both places has provided me with the position of a critical observer, a position that can be very fruitful for an artist. Learning to live with differences and speaking from within difference: this is the potential of incongruence.” Her words suggest the difficulty of adaptation – a difficulty that is greater when the change involved is forced upon one by political or economic conditions.

Between 2006 and 2007, the artist carried out the project *El Dorado. Giessbergstrasse*, together with a group of teenage immigrants and refugees who were living temporarily on Giessbergstrasse, a street in the German city of Kassel. The teenagers were invited to express their personal histories, expectations and hopes. Dakić registered their voices in a video, using as the background the panoramic wallpaper *El Dorado* (1849), from the German Wallpaper Museum’s collection, and which represents the legend of a paradisiacal, ideal world with exuberant vegetation and exotic fauna.

Without using strategies that generally appear in the documentary format, such as direct interviews or a didactical tone, the artist seeks to access these people’s dreams and hopes by way of elements of performance and theater, such as song and dance. The imagining of new ways of feeling and doing suspends the automatic state of everyday activities and liberates layers of sensibility that normally lie dormant. Processes of self-reinvention and of paths that may be taken are unleashed. In the fragile separation between fiction and reality, there emerges a space in which acting functions as a turning point, allowing for the explosion of something that is held in or hidden in normal everyday life.

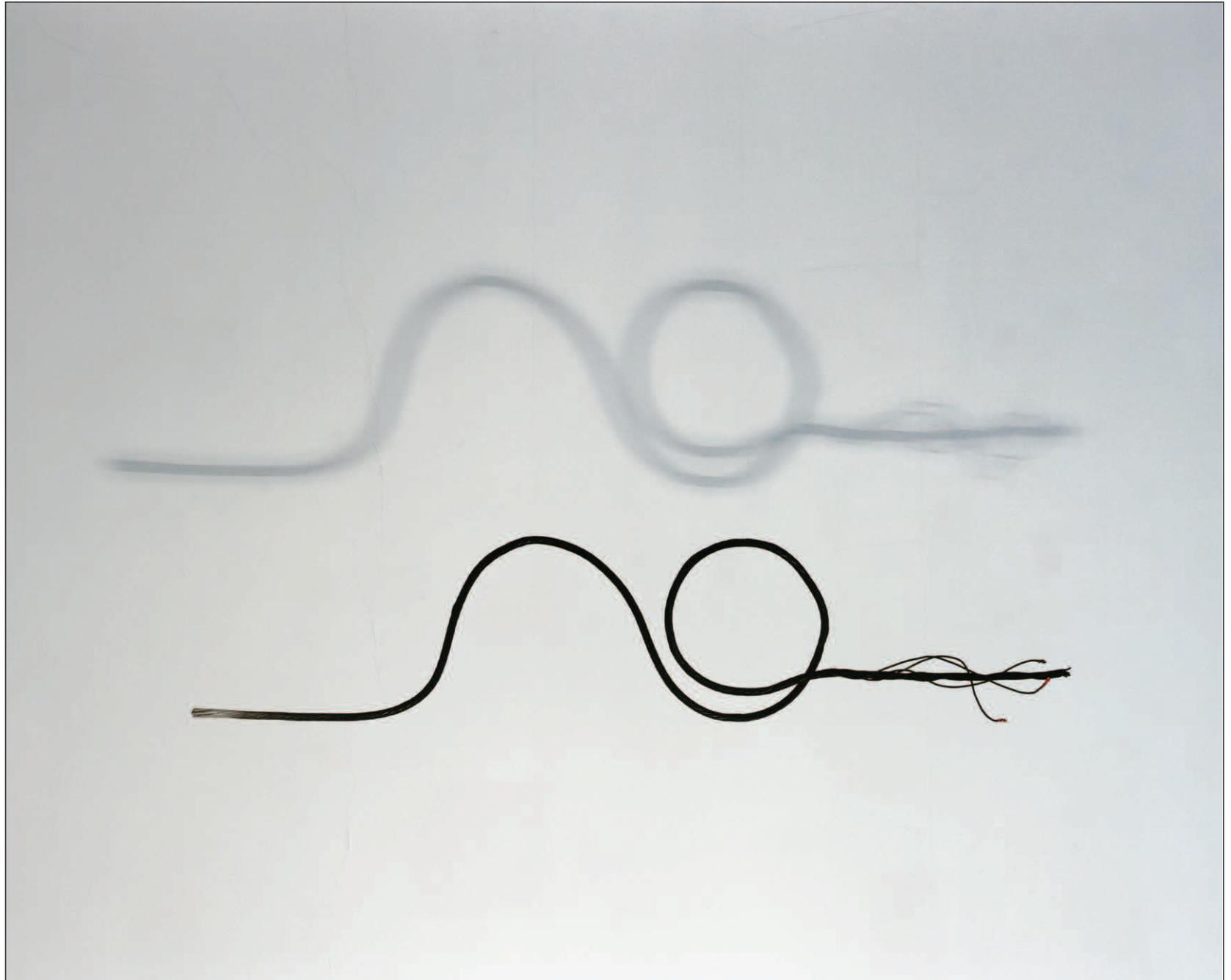
A photo portrait of the group accompanies the project: the young protagonists pose before a photograph of part of the *El Dorado* panel set up in an outdoor setting in Kassel. In this way, the representation of the fictional paradise is brought into the life of the contemporary city, mixing the colors of the sky in both of the spaces, *El Dorado* and Kassel. Between one and the other, it is possible to see a road that indicates the possibility of new displacements. What makes us feel at home? Are there colors, textures and scents that compose this feeling?

We don’t always get the feeling of the comfort of home as soon as we get someplace new. Migrations are often accompanied by processes of normalization, marginalization and repression. In Dakić’s projects, the strength of the body and of words takes on a new dimension within these conflicts. “I have to make a new life. I need to achieve it. This is not an end,” concludes young Samuel Doe in *El Dorado. Giessbergstrasse*.

EDWARD KRASIŃSKI

1925, LUCK, POLAND
(NOW PART OF UKRAINE).
2004, WARSAW, POLAND.

Untitled. 1964. Metal wire with ends painted red and white. 23 × 106 × 5 cm.
Paulina Krasieńka collection, Zalesie.
Courtesy: Paulina Krasieńka and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw. *Photo:* Jan Smaga.



EDWARD KRASIŃSKI

Spear. 1963-1964. 12 pieces of wood painted black and red, metal wire. 320 cm. Paulina Krasieńka collection, Zalesie. *Courtesy:* Paulina Krasieńka and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw. *Photo:* Eustachy Kossakowski – Warsaw Museum of Modern Art archive. © Anka Ptaszkowska.



EDWARD KRASIŃSKI

How do we perceive a place? How can the presence of an object change the feelings we have about a space?

Every day we use objects intended for specific purposes: a pencil to write with, a glass to drink with, a heavy blanket to warm ourselves. However, some have a different nature, such that, when we observe them, we may simply forget their function and see their shapes, characteristics, dimensions and textures. They demand that we look outside or through them, that we use them to alter the way we look at the world. A certain tension is created between the object and its surroundings, which helps us to see the space we're in, the space we live in, the space we travel through, and makes us perceive the fact that things may not be what they seem to at first sight.

Some sculptures, for example, make us look at them as well as beyond them; they function as lights that illuminate their surroundings. In the 1960s, Edward Krasinski produced a series of works made with painted pieces of wood and metal wires. They are sculptures, however, that may, in their subtle passages of color, be associated with painting. They remain suspended, hanging on wires or leaning slightly against the wall or on the ground. They seem not to be content with the flatness of their materials and to want to advance out into space and occupy it.

The works in the Spear series are like lines that take on form, cross dimensions or, finally, penetrate into the cubic and closed atmosphere that exhibition halls can be. Like portals, they suggest the opening of spaces so that the world may enter the gallery, a house or a school.

In addition to laying bare the elements that make up a place (walls, floor and internal volume), these sculptures also seem to freeze movement. The round, square and conical fragments of wood from some of the pieces from 1965 float in the air, broken off from the larger portion of the work, as if something had impelled their separation, and this frozen millisecond could leave the spectator in wonder forever. The works in metal wire for their part, provide another kind of experience with movement. The line is continuity, and its curves and shapes attest to the fact that they have undergone some sort of transformation in order to be hanging there with their colored arrows pointing toward emptiness, toward what is yet to come.

Some of Krasinski's other projects highlight the importance of place and how it is occupied or used by us. Beginning in the mid-1970s and up to the time of his death, he lived in a studio that, in addition to his residence and workplace, was a space for gatherings, in which he would promote exhibitions and installations with Henryk Stazewski. The studio was no longer the artist's internal space, and became part of a social, public circle.

Krasinski was also involved in the Foksal Gallery project, an initiative by Polish critics and artists to develop experimental practices. For the group, the space of the gallery was an environment that considered the exhibition – in other words, the presentation of works organized specifically in a place – part of a public and collective event, a more concrete and powerful experience than that of the work of art in itself (alone, separated from the context for which or for where it was created).

In the artistic scenario, Edward Krasinski became known for the blue adhesive tape he would stick on internal and external spaces, be they public or private, artistic or not, always at a height of 1.3 meters. The tape highlights the presence of the walls, the reach of an action; as the artist himself said, before it becomes art, it's just tape. Spatial relations, the activation of place and its potency as an environment can thus be an extensive subject, showing us that a given problem may be materialized through different mediums.

JUAN DOWNEY

1940, SANTIAGO, CHILE.

1993, NEW YORK, USA.

Map of America. 1975. *Project: Video*

Trans Americas · 1973-1976.

Coloured pencil, pencil and synthetic
polymer paint on map on a board.

86.7 × 51.4 cm. MOMA collection, 2013.

Purchased with funds provided by the
Latin American and Caribbean Fund
and Donald B. Marron. © 2013 Juan
Downey.



JUAN DOWNEY

1-6 Video Trans Americas Project.
1973-1976.

1 **New York / Texas I & II.** 1974.
Black and white video, sound.
8'18" each. © 1974 Juan Downey.

2 **Uros I & II.** Black and white
video, sound. 20' each. © 1975
Juan Downey.

3 **Yucatán.** 1973. Black and white
video, sound. 28'22". © 1973 Juan
Downey.

4 **Guatemala.** 1973. Black and
White video, sound. 28'21".
© 1973 Juan Downey.

5 **Inca I & II.** 1976. Black and
white video, sound. 20' each.
© 1976 Juan Downey.

6 View of the installation **Video
Trans Americas** at the Museo
Tamayo (2013). *Photo:* Daniela
Uribe © Daniela Uribe /
Museo Tamayo.



1



2



3



4



5



6

JUAN DOWNEY

*I want to make
 Art with heavy political implications;
 Art of ritual enjoyment;
 Art with cerebral potentials;
 Art with roots;
 To yank free, emancipate,
 To blind with light,
 To rise up and sing.*
 — JUAN DOWNEY

In communication between people and between peoples, certain types of media – letters, telephones, radio, television, internet – are necessary. Different media permit different modes of communication and possibilities, and all have their own limitations. These limitations often refer to access: whether or not one has a computer; whether or not one masters given languages; having a camera and being able to film; or not having a camera, but being filmed nonetheless.

Chilean artist Juan Downey made various trips through Latin America in search of an invisible architecture made up of the channels of communication within each social group. He traveled to Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia and Chile, and caught the autochthonous cultures of each of these places on video. It was, however, in his contact with the Yanomami people, in the Venezuelan Amazon, that he was able to perceive the immaterial structures behind a society with clarity.

With the technical progress to which Western society had access, Downey believed it possible to conceive of a future in which technology would be a tool that would allow for communication among people by way of brain waves. Understanding himself as a “cultural communicator and an activating aesthetic anthropologist,” he sought to deconstruct a centralizing vision of the world established by Western culture. In seeing the capacity to stimulate new connections (and dialogues) between machines and human beings in technology, he combined technological investigation with phenomena such as telepathy, trance and meditation.

Video Trans Americas

In the series of videos that constitute the work *Video Trans Americas* (1973-1976), Downey edited the images in order to make audiovisual language itself explicit, which allowed the spectator – and the very people being portrayed – access to experiences had at different moments, simultaneously, in a single support (video), space and time. Different places are united and brought together until they are next to one another and establish connections. Thus the map of the Americas, for example, may be redrawn and, with this, reveal that the ties that bind people and countries may be different from (and often the opposite of) the relationships defined by history books or political alliances.

In this same project, Downey showed the videos produced to the peoples which were documented, who until then had been unaware of this technology. In highlighting the medium of production and its characteristics, it is possible to highlight how ideas, institutions and experiences define and alter standpoints for a culture, for the other. In one of his films, we see a Yanomami pointing a camera at the spectator. He takes over the power to film instead of being simply observed. And in this act of looking at the world through an instrument, the machine is transformed into a mirror whose own image, nevertheless, has already been mediated by the device. Perception is altered due to this new form of communication. Before, anyone could be filmed; with *Video Trans Americas*, anyone can film. But this brings with it other responsibilities.

SHEELA GOWDA

1957, BHADRAVATI, INDIA.
LIVES AND WORKS IN
BANGALORE, INDIA.

Gallant Hearts. 1996.

Cow dung, colored kumkum pigment,
string. 365 × 30.5 × 15.2 cm.

Photo: Peter Cox. © Peter Cox,
Eindhoven – Van Abbemuseum.



SHEELA GOWDA

1-6 Installation views of the exhibition *Open Eye Policy* at the Van Abbemuseum (2013). Photo: Peter Cox. © Peter Cox, Eindhoven – Van Abbemuseum.

3 **And Tell Him of My Pain.** 1998-2007. String, glue and colored kumkum pigment. Dimensions variable.

4 **Some Place.** 2005. Tubes, radio monologue. Dimensions variable.

5 **Behold.** 2009. Hair and steel. Dimensions variable.

6 **Kagebangara.** 2007. Tar barrels, mica, yellow and blue plastic tarp. Dimensions variable.



SHEELA GOWDA

Through work, man transforms material and, in handling it, gives it a history. A piece of wood is no longer just a thing, with its physical properties, and takes on all of the possibilities of its purpose, a tradition, a mode of use and a relationship with those who handle it.

The visual arts deal directly with the production processes of some objects, and can, if indeed this is the artist's intention, make the history behind the materials evident. It is possible to use things in such a way as to allow them to express their own meanings.

Sheela Gowda says her work "is about materials speaking for themselves," the fruit of an abstraction that disregards all that is not essential. The artist is aware that she is acting in the field of the visual arts and is interested in the very nature and in the social, regional and political aspects of the materials she uses.

Long red ropes run from the ceiling and down the white walls of an exhibition space, touch the ground and reveal their intense color. In some passages it's possible to note that the ropes are made of a large number of strings, all very well aligned and combed. At the very end of this thick line, sewing needles can be seen. When looking at an installation like this, *And Tell Him of My Pain* (1998-2007), we come in contact with the minutia of form. Our perception reacts to the stimuli that have been captured and each individual may have different sensations, but there is something there that is unique: the materialness of the work.

Even if this may not be visible in a quick glance, the objects carry their mode of production with them, and, in this case, the ropes are the result of an artisanal process carried out by Gowda: the strings are organized and aligned, after which a mixture of glue and red pigment, known as *kumkum* (used in religious ceremonies in India), lends form and resistance to the rope.

In projects such as *Darkroom* (2006) and *Kagebangara* (2007), barrels of tar are the raw material. These objects are used to build temporary housing for laborers working on road construction: they are flattened and joined in order to create a small shelter, the height and width of which are defined by the dimensions of the barrels themselves. What catches the artist's attention is how the material determines laborers' comfort (or lack thereof), rather than the other way around.

With the barrels, the artist produces her installations and, making use of the same method of construction as the laborers, highlights the meanings implicit in the material and the production process implied in it. In addition, she refers to operations from the artistic world itself in dialoguing with modernism, creating modules that are arranged in the exhibition space, intervening and modifying the place through strategies such as the repetition of elements.

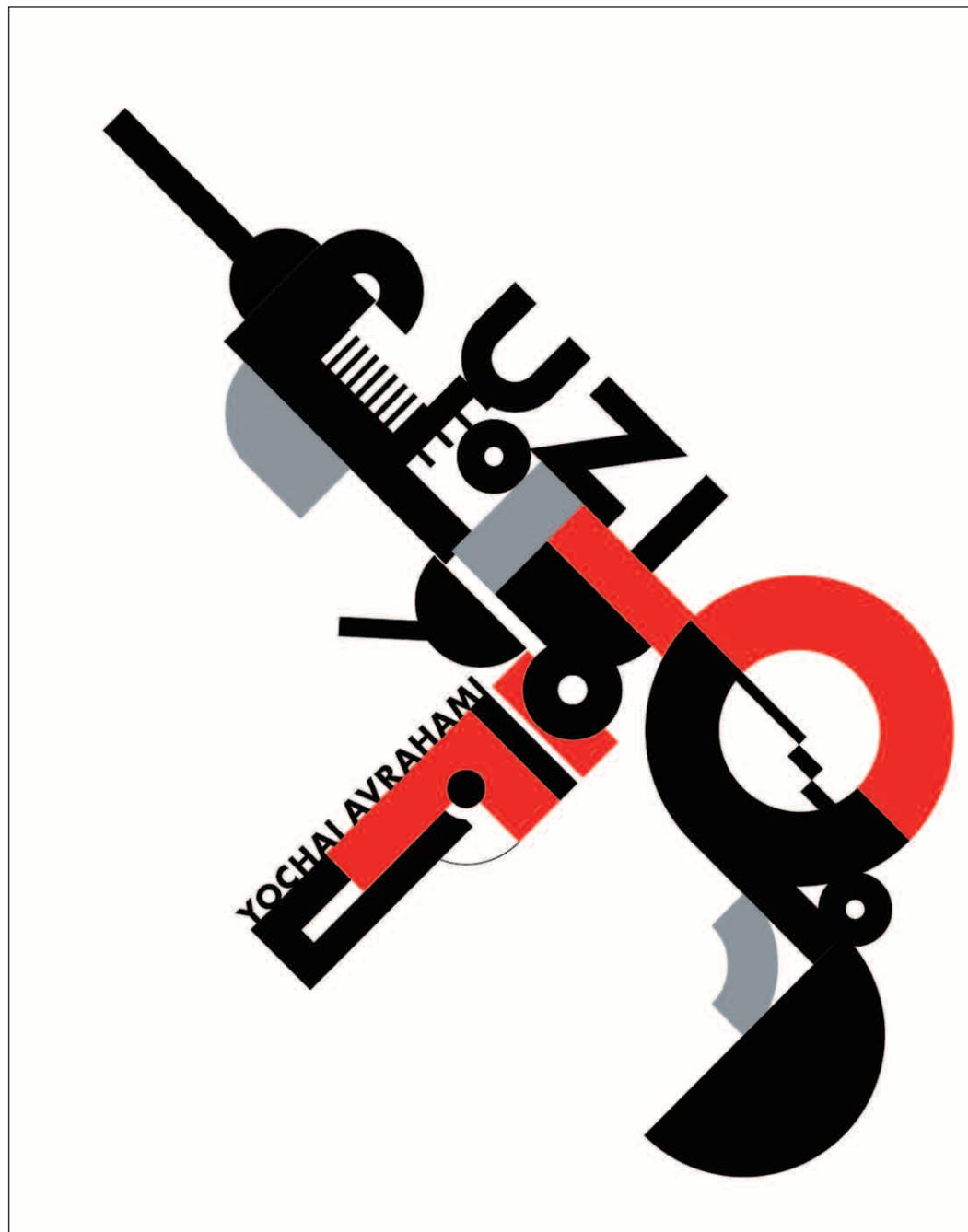
However, more than dialoguing with the material and acting on each individual thing, perhaps Gowda is interested in the political, religious and symbolic connotations that each of the materials chosen evokes. All of her materials are part of an Indian context and may seem strange or exotic to our foreign eyes. They are nevertheless part of the country's everyday experience and are an integral part of local commerce and life.

In transforming exhibition spaces with the arrangement of these forms, ropes, lines and flat surfaces, the artist highlights the material itself, its unevenness, that which is specific to it. She intrigues us and makes us want to know more about what we are seeing and, in this search, find ourselves face to face with contents that have been hidden. The beauty of the forms at times hides the harshness of reality and the critical commentary on the different aspects of life.

YOCHAI AVRAHAMI

1970, AFULA, ISRAEL.
LIVES AND WORKS IN TEL AVIV,
ISRAEL.

Graphic piece, part of the
installation Uzi.



YOCHAI AVRAHAMI

Uzi. 2009. Audiovisual installation.
 Artist's collection. *Courtesy: the artist.*
 © Yochai Avrahami.



Frames from the video in the installation *Uzi* (2009).

Installation views of *Uzi* (2009) at the Center of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2010).



YOCHAI AVRAHAMI

There are numerous ways of telling the same story. You can talk about your family history or an episode in a war by writing a novel, composing a song, producing a documentary film or a play, or even by telling a joke. The way you speak can define the type of relationship your listener will have with the subject. But how much can a subject be transformed when we alter the way it is represented?

The artist Yochai Avrahami, in his artistic practice, tells us stories related to the Jewish people and to the construction of the contemporary State of Israel, permeated by political and territorial conflicts. In his creative process, it is common for him to immerse himself in historical research; however, the focus of his projects is not on the theme or subject itself, but on the choices of how to approach each one of them and on the way this is materialized.

Avrahami doesn't hesitate to use humor to deal with serious themes, nor is he too concerned about being faithful to historical facts. In his work *Uzi* (2009), the artist produced an installation composed of sculptures, objects and videos resulting from research on the Uzi machine gun and its Jewish creator, Uziel Gal, born in Weimar, Germany. Yochai Avrahami clearly manipulates the material from his research in selecting it, bringing it together and thinking about how to display it. This manipulation, which may also be ironic, is even clearer when, for example, the artist replaces the images of some of those he has interviewed with marionettes in a video that is, apparently, documentary in nature.

The choice of non-conventional formats in his work is very evident in the works *In the Land of Gilead* (2012-2013) and *Visit to Mount Zion* (2012, in collaboration with Maya Elran). In *In the Land of Gilead*, Avrahami chose the lecture or performance format to tell the story of Laurence Oliphant, an important figure for the establishment of the Jewish colony in the region where Israel is now located. In *Visit to Mount Zion*, the artists organize a tour in which they guide the public through sites that represent the history of the Mount Zion region. As such, they use a recreational tourist format to promote critical and reflexive thought.

The relationship between Israel and Palestine is explored in a discerning and good-humored way in the work *Rocks Ahead* (2006). In it, the artist takes as his scenario an inhospitable region of the border between Jerusalem and Ramallah to discuss the symbolic separation

between two places despite their physical proximity. On one side, we see stone quarries in refugee camps and, on the other, the ruins of the former Atarot airport. From these ruins there emerge beings, apparently made of debris, who wander these threatening lands abandoned by any type of life.

Yochai Avrahami's works are based on extensive research in which the artist seems to pore over his object of study. He does not, however, do this in order to present his themes with historical accuracy, but to find paths that contain a good story, be it fictional or not. He believes, then, that all forms of discourse, whether or not they belong to the cultured norm, are legitimate possibilities as supports for art, and that history is constructed by its own narration.

JUAN CARLOS ROMERO

1931, AVELLANEDA, ARGENTINA.
LIVES AND WORKS IN BUENOS
AIRES, ARGENTINA.



JUAN CARLOS ROMERO

Todos somos negros. [We're All Black]. 2009-2012. Performance actions: sticking up of posters on streets in several cities; pieces with typographic prints.



ARTISTS – POSTERS

20/30

JUAN CARLOS ROMERO

2/3

JUAN CARLOS ROMERO

When we walk through the streets of the city, we are stimulated in various different ways. Smells, sounds, temperatures and constructions form a living and complex universe inhabited by different people and groups. As we make our way through the city, we may come across something that causes us discomfort – a heavy rain that floods the sidewalk, or an image we would prefer not to see. Some situations impel us, others we try to pretend do not affect us. In sharing urban space with individuals we don't know, we become, even if momentarily, part of a collective. For several instants, we are part of a group facing real and imaginary conflicts.

Since the 1970s, Juan Carlos Romero has expressed his ideas in the public areas of cities, guided by the notion of collectivity. Together with students and professors at the University of La Plata, he carried out an action in the city of Berisso, known for its factories and workers hailing from the countryside. The group transformed a corner in the city's oldest quarter into a huge mural. "This is our intention – to paint in order to be able to say: we have to change everything, you and all of us together."

In addition to questioning "what?" and "why?" in artistic creation, Romero's projects forge new paths with the question "in whose direction?" As such, circulation is not restricted to galleries and traditional exhibition spaces. Contact with the work of art may take place in the small journeys undertaken in everyday life, such as on the way to school or coming home from work.

For him, art and public space are fields of tension that have conflict as one of the possible outcomes. The work he produces is marked by the impact of words, which do not simply refer to things, situations or ideas, but have a direct effect on reality – they are actions, they create the things they name. Romero's street posters, such as those that occupy the streets advertising concerts and election campaigns, for example, were printed with the words "violence" and "terror" in bloc letters, invoking feelings that speak of history and of the present. In them, verbal expression is not used to sooth, calm, reconcile or pacify. Every individual may relate it to his or her own experience and thus feed the shock between the different stances that coexist in the world.

We're all black now

Called a "graphic action" by the artist, *Todos somos negros* [We're All Black] (2009-2012) sheds doubt on the idea of us, you and them to the maximum. Also in the form of a street poster, the work takes the radical declaration contained in article 14 of the 1805 Haitian Constitution: "We are all black now. All citizens, from now on, will be known by the generic name of black." The urban intervention was carried out on the walls of cities such as Santiago, Chile and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Todos somos negros reinserts a motto whose origins lie in the Haitian Revolution (1804) into a contemporary context: the bicentennial celebrations of the Independence of Chile and Argentina. What differentiates the movements is that the first was led by African slaves, while the latter two were driven by the white elite. For the Haitian revolutionaries, *black* would have been a political rather than biological denomination.

Words can change their meaning and be invoked in different contexts, like interventions. They therefore have the ability to build collectives: calling and bringing people together, but separating them as well. If they are shown on the streets, they may function as mechanisms for creating new movements and other collectivities that will perhaps occupy spaces and transform the city for us all.

INES DOUJAK & JOHN BARKER

1959, KLAGENFURT, AUSTRIA.
LIVES AND WORKS IN VIENNA,
AUSTRIA.

1948, LONDON, ENGLAND.
LIVES AND WORKS IN LONDON
AND VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

Haute Couture 01 Fires. 2012-.

Project: Loomshuttles/Warpaths. Inkjet
print on cotton parachute fabric. Initial
research for this project was supported
by FWF Der Wissenschaftsfonds
(AR 19-G21). *Photo:* Ines Doujak. © Ines
Doujak.



INES DOUJAK & JOHN BARKER

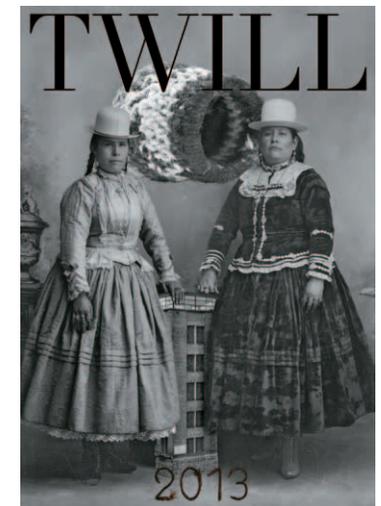
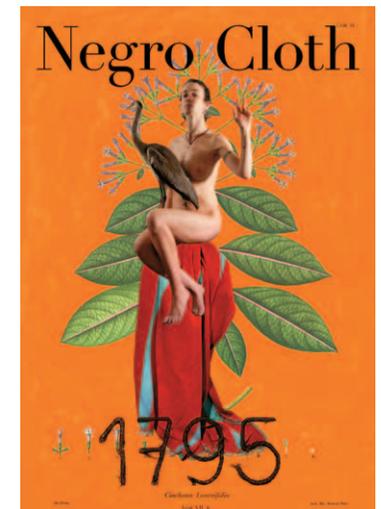
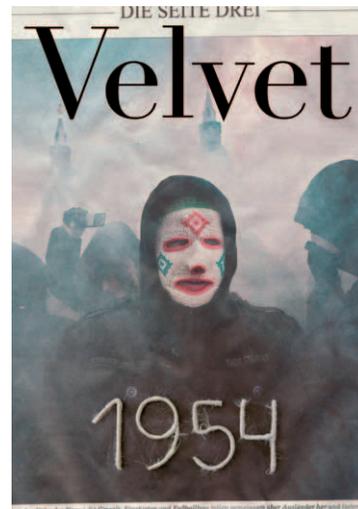
Eccentric Archive. 2011-.

Project: Loomshuttles / Warpaths.

Archive files: inkjet print on paper; clothing items purchased in Bolivia and Peru over the course of 36 years. Variable dimensions. Initial research for this project was supported by FWF

Der Wissenschaftsfonds (AR 19-G21).

Photo: Ines Doujak. © Ines Doujak.



INES DOUJAK & JOHN BARKER

What place do we occupy in the world? This is a question that no map is able to answer and no geography is able to solve. There exist norms and conventions that inform us how our society expects us to behave and political structures that establish a place for our culture in an international scenario. But our search for a place in the world does not always coincide with these norms and structures. When this happens, we need to discover for ourselves who we are: we must shed others' expectations and keep looking for new paths. In this sense, the construction of our identity is not just an individual experience, but a social act and a political positioning.

The partnership between Ines Doujak and John Barker seems to take place by way of this interest they have in common: the political dimension of cultural exchanges. Barker is a writer who has been investigating economics, geopolitical dynamics and labor exploitation since the 1970s. Doujak, for her part, is an artist who, through photography, collages, installations, performances and extensive textile research, has investigated the construction of identity as a process marked by cultural, social and gender conflicts.

In working together, their works in this way tend to deal with complex themes, such as post-colonial relations (the political, economic, social and cultural effects of colonization processes), the construction of gender and the feminist discourse, the avid interests of commercial businesses in making decisions that influence the lives of individuals, and the tensions between industrial and traditional models of production and consumption, among others. All of these issues end up revealing asymmetrical power relationships – in other words, ones in which a group, a nation, a culture or a form of expressing oneself is imposed upon others. Doujak and Barker invite us to think of relations that are more dynamic than those oriented by the traditional concepts of *center* and *periphery*. They produce images and actions that suggest other possibilities of cultural exchanges.

Vestments and the production of fabrics are essential to these artists' proposals. In works such as *Not Dressed for Conquering: Loomshuttles*, *Warpaths* and *Haute Couture*, they produce clothing and printed fabrics in order to subvert conventional social roles, highlighting clothing as an important element in the construction of gender identities and revealing their commerce as an example of financial structures based on models of colonial exploitation.

The idea of tailoring and sewing, the basis of clothes-making in the Western world, is a continuous process of the rupture and joining of elements. In transporting such thought to the social and political field, is it possible to produce other plots that bring different cultural practices and identities into the framework? Could there be similarities between the traditional clothing of the peoples of the Andes (with their specific cultural symbologies and codifications) and the industrialized world of fashion (which produces clothes on a mass scale and encourages us to have a personal *style*)?

The fashion circuit, generally speaking, restricts the practice of design and style to certain trend-setting hubs, while the technical processes of clothes-making often occur in other labor markets, exploiting cheap manual labor subject to harsh production regimes and precarious safety conditions.

T-shirts, hats, jackets, purses, skirts, undergarments and even nudity can, then, become elements of reflection on the forces that organize our world, as well as means of expressing our own identity.

CIA TEATRAL UEINZZ
1997, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL.



CIA TEATRAL UEINZZ

Finneganz Ueinz. Performances in Helsinki, Finland (2009), and at the b_arco cultural center in São Paulo (2009).



CIA TEATRAL UEINZZ

But what is it that we're really doing here?

— Question asked by one of the members of the Cia Teatral Ueinzz in the midst of the creative process.

The normal and the pathological – what's the difference between, the line that separates the two? In our society, there are mechanisms of various different scales that decide at every instant what is acceptable and what isn't (in other words, what you can do in one place and not in another), or if you can access a specific place or not. Madness is an extreme case: when society declares someone crazy, it immediately classifies and delimitates his or her actions as sick and, as such, irresponsible, devoid of sense and outside of its sphere. Certainly what we call "madness" carries a great deal of suffering and pain, but it is also the moment in which great shocks occur between life and death, the body and passions.

Theater is a privileged field of aesthetic experimentation, a ritual and sacred space with a procession of magic and astonishment. In the Cia Teatral Ueinzz's work, we see theater meet madness and representation meet life. Even so, madness does not appear as a subject; it is, rather, resistance to what is normal, opposition to society's impulse to decide what is acceptable and hide all that which suggests instability.

Ueinzz is made up of mental health service patients and users, therapists, professional actors, theater or performance interns, composers, philosophers and consecrated theater directors. Founded inside the A Casa Institute's Day Hospital in São Paulo, it later broke completely away from the hospital context. Its work happens in the form of theatrical presentations with conventional appearances: based on classic literature texts and, at times, held in spaces usually devoted to theater. However, they may also take place outdoors, in spaces that are normally intended for other activities, and the texts and actions may be, at least in part, improvised. This improvisation allows the actors to negotiate the way they follow and interpret the text and how they interact with the other professionals and with the audience.

The group calls its artistic language "theater of the unconscious," in developing mixed bodily states that move between the characters created and the actors. There then spontaneously emerges a *persona* – in other words, a representation of a social role or of a character, which is ambiguous, in a state of transition, which can never be defined in

just one way. The roles are not set – they are simply points of departure for something else. This mode of working suggests that others expect something of us that we do not always have to follow. The expectations and demands that our family, school, church or government has of us may be considered, negotiated and even denied.

Given that many of the members of the group are non-actors, theatrical representation takes a back seat, giving visibility to non-predetermined acting and opening space for the unforeseen, for risk, for what we could call "life in general."

In the present day, we can be a part of the world inasmuch as we consume. Going against this rule implies exposing oneself to failure. Failure, however, only exists if we accept the rules imposed by the game, which, as Ueinzz shows us, don't have to be assimilated. They can be disassembled through the deconstruction of working tools, only to be subsequently reinvented.

BASEL ABBAS &
RUANNE ABOU-RAHME

NICOSIA, CYPRUS, 1983. BOSTON,
USA, 1983.

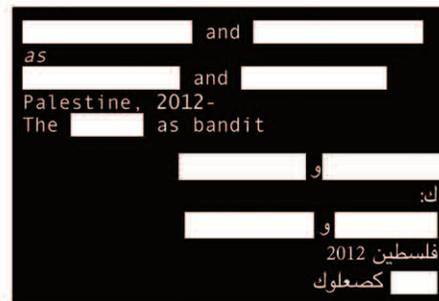
LIVE AND WORK IN RAMALLAH,
PALESTINE.

The Incidental Insurgents: The Part
about the Bandits. 2012.



And the Directory of the
Avant-Garde continued with its
heroes and errors

واستمر دليل الفن الطليعي
بأبطاله وأخطائه



BASEL ABBAS &
RUANNE ABOU-RAHME

The Incidental Insurgents: The Part about the Bandits. 2012. Chapter 1: installation composed of documents, images, personal items, tables, chairs, footstool, office cabinets, file boxes, speakers, 2 record players, vinyl records, sound of a skipping record, desktop computer with 35'51" video loop. Chapter 2: 6' video on 1 channel and sound on 2 channels, subwoofer. *Courtesy:* the artists and Carrol/Fletcher Gallery, London. Work produced by Young Arab Theater Fund and Al Mamal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Jerusalem.

- 1 **The Incidental Insurgents: The Part about the Bandits.** 2012.
- 2 View of the installation at the 6th Jerusalem Show, produced by the Al Mamal Foundation for Contemporary Art



BASEL ABBAS &
RUANNE ABOU-RAHME

How does someone else's history become my own?

When we read a fictional story, we create images of the scenes, of the characters and of the situations based on references that are familiar to us. In the search for what is familiar, the reader experiences an extremely subjective process in which the character's narrative becomes entwined with his or her own story, activating memories of experiences that have been had, acquired or witnessed. Although a work of fiction or a narration can take place in any time and space, the individual's experience will always be real, present and untransferable.

Using texts, objects, performances, sounds and videos, Palestinian artists Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme propose an immersion into multimedia environments and performances, replete with references to fiction, historical facts and personal testimony.

The installation making up the project *The Incidental Insurgents: The Part about the Bandits* (2012) is a recreation of Basel and Ruanne's studio. In it, we find texts and images hung on the wall, objects and tools, a computer playing videos in a loop and a turntable with a record spinning uselessly at the end of the recording. The impression is that the space ended up being abandoned by those who were there. All of the elements present in the room function as hints that quote or suggest different texts, even if in a fragmented manner. These texts discuss issues on the contemporary Palestinian context, such as political and territorial disputes and the dynamics of power structures.

The references used in the composition of *The Incidental Insurgents* evoke the personage of the bandoleer, a rebellious, marginal individual who is often simply understood as a criminal. The choice of this character presents a specific situation from the point of view of someone who has been excluded from the construction of the historical narrative. In this way, the pair of artists shows an alternative way of being in the world and questions the role of the artist in his or her social and cultural context. Both express a certain lack of adaptation to established norms and structures and need to create their own language in order to remain at the margins of the dominant ideology.

In the work *The Zone* (2011), we find procedures that are recurring in the work of Basel and Ruanne. In it, they create an environment filled with videos that lay bare the contrast between the project of the creation of a dream city and a precarious, desolate reality of

ruins. The artists exploit the potential of opposites in the construction of a critical vision of the spectator. The images of modern roads and advertising billboards, on the one hand, and abandoned buildings and armed guerillas, on the other, accentuate the relationship between desire and disaster, dream and catastrophe, past and present.

As in *The Incidental Insurgents*, *The Zone* is constructed by way of freely associated fragments. The lack of hierarchy and delimitations between one piece of information and another makes the spectator confuse what is fact and what is fiction, what is research and what is creation, what is remembered and what has been imagined.

Basel and Ruanne's projects are invitations to a journey that contains a certain mystery. It is up to the public to investigate and reflect, to make contact and even to identify with different contexts and ways of life. It is a moment that opens up the possibility of seeing the other, but not as an opposite.