

**Z****hdk**

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste

## **Kunsthof Zürich**

Der Kunsthof Zürich ist ein Ausstellungs- und Veranstaltungsort der Vertiefung Bildende Kunst im Bachelor Medien & Kunst der Zürcher Hochschule der Künste.

Limmatstrasse 44

8005 Zürich

Tram 4/13/17, Haltestelle Museum für Gestaltung

[www.kunsthof.ch](http://www.kunsthof.ch)

## **First Event on 1st of May 2013**

With three reading-performances, a lecture-performance and a screening by:

**Benjamin Egger, Harun Farocki, Petra Elena Köhle & Nicolas Vermot Petit-Outhenin (with Sam Porrit), Rudi Maier, Riikka Tauriainen**

The doors open at 18:30h. The first performance will start at 19:00h. With **bar**becue (please take your own grillables along).

This is the first in a series of events this summer and autumn 2013, comprised of screenings, public readings, performances, talks and an art guided walk through some of the playground places in the city of Zurich, which are to take place as part of

## **Opportunities for Outdoor Play? Playgrounds – New Spaces of Liberty (The Question of Form)**

A transdisciplinary collective research and production project curated by Dimitrina Sevova in cooperation with Prof. Elke Bippus, Franziska Koch and the Bachelor Medien & Kunst, Bildende Kunst of the Zurich University of the Arts.

The project undertakes a transdisciplinary research and ecological analysis of the social and political microclimate of playgrounds, their environment and spaces for outdoor play in the city of Zurich, in order to re-interpret and re-contextualize the collected material in-between the discursive fields of history, economics, sociology, aesthetics, architecture, design and art. The research critically inquire into playground structures, their equipment and toys from a historical perspective into the present day, in order to apply this knowledge in re-constructing a playground assemblage – a temporary dysfunctional playground as a relation that modifies objects, that is not tidying, but muddying, grounded in the materiality of everyday life in the biopolitical milieu. The playground's form will perform a rupture of meaning, re-inventing it through its dysfunctionality, creating an arena oriented to creative action and movement in a complex production of space where theoretical reflection and performative art practices involve various agents and actors at the intersection of ethico-aesthetical perspectives.

In this collective, process-oriented research the social dynamic of the neighborhood of Kunsthof will find itself embedded in macro aspects of globalization with its expansion in the territory of the creative city, reflecting on the global financial and ecological crisis. This crisis leads to a destabilization of notions of labor and time at a molecular and molar level, under the pressure of precarization and flexibilization which eats up all social flexibility that allows us to hold our balance and move freely, and to the destruction of the working day and free time and the demise of the living wage in the earthquake of the re-composition of all spheres of life.

Drawing on arguments from the realm of ecology, recycling, the commons, and leisure, the project aims to re-activate the space of Kunsthof as an open and accessible space, characterized by participation and collective agency – part laboratory, part community meeting place and place for critical discussions and reflections, sometimes open air cinema, recognizing different practices and social relations from which an outdoor space for play emerges for aesthetical experiments and shared knowledge.

The idea is not to fill the space temporarily with something that can be replaced by any other thing, but to let the social character of the playground speak, bringing together collective aspects as well as singular points such that “the construction of an unstable and ephemeral situation enjoins a displacement of perception, a passage from the status of spectator to that of actor, and a reconfiguration of place.” (Jacques Rancière) The organizational principle of the production of space within an existing space are especially important to the project, because outdoor play is a productive spatial and tempo-

ral practice which creates difference in repetition, because play is a transversal operation across space and time that realizes a temporary autonomous space where freedom of play can take place in-between the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics. The dysfunctional playground animates a middle ground in which sensual and cognitive relations can be shared equally between artists' labor and the labor of its public as a collective action of de-composition of the productive aesthetic labor power, creating new alliances, a new social organization and form of common, a new form of love, new aesthetic perspectives.

Today more than ever the boundaries between work-time and leisure-time are blurred. The field of mediation, under the effect of technological *dispositifs* and the system of the global market economy, can be perceived as a playground for precarious and affective labor where play and free time are put to work as never before. This becomes possible, according to Paolo Virno, "partly because human labour nowadays is situated outside the machinery, accomplishing regulative, controlling, and co-ordinating tasks. But above all because the 'raw material' of the labour process is knowledge, information, culture, and social relations."

Consequently, for its first event on 1<sup>st</sup> of May the project focuses on the transformative and creative capacities of artistic labor and its social value, which always carry the potentiality to fashion an alternative mode of production, exchange and consumption, and takes inspiration from Paolo Virno's thoughts in a dialog with Daniel Birnbaum and Isabelle Graw in their book *Under Pressure: Pictures, Subjects, and the New Spirit of Capitalism*:

*"The manifold 'linguistic games', even the most eccentric ones, always show their new productive role. Now that waged labour could be abandoned, now that it turns out as socially excessive, every aspect of social experience is included in its horizon. Language is both the terrain of conflict and the issue at stake. Liberty of speech and abolition of wage labour nowadays are synonymous."*

(Text: Dimitrina Sevova)

## Reading-performance by Nicolas Vermot Petit-Outhenin and Petra Elena Köhle

*"Leftist? You don't need to be a leftist to think like this."*



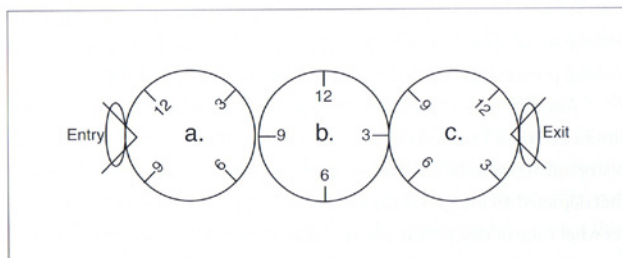
Film stills from *Tout va bien* by Jean-Luc Godard, 1972.

Nicolas Vermot Petit-Outhenin and Sam Porrit will read monologic sequences of two different characters on the chessboard of a factory strike in the context of 1968 in the film *Tout va bien* (1972) by Jean-Luc Godard. The movie in a self-reflexive way questions cinema apparatuses and the position of the movie director, as well as of intellectuals in the class struggle of that historical moment. The movie follows a factory occupation, a form of strike in which the way out does not lie in leaving the factory and destroying the machines, but rather the workers hold the plant manager hostage in the factory. They have no intention of leaving the factory – what has the desire to leave, what is flexible and needs movement is capital itself.

*"Why do you want me to come back to today's events? It's a flash in the pan. The unions must be quite annoyed to know I'm here. Anyway, they know very well it's not like me to negotiate under duress. In fact all this will sort itself out."* (The Director of Salumi, in *Tout va bien* by Jean-Luc Godard) (in French; 30 min)

## Reading-performance by Riikka Tauriainen

*Parallel reading of Gregg Bordowitz (The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous) and Vladimir Mayakovsky.*



*The Structure of Fast Trip, Long Drop, by Gregg Bordowitz.*

*"But the revolution is a demanding lover: it requires the withdrawal from all other romantic interests. It demands fidelity. The suspension of one's own amorous desires for the sake of a greater commitment is a theme that speaks most directly to my own inner conflicts."* (Gregg Bordowitz)

Gregg Bordowitz is an artist and writer who believes that the conjunction between the subjective (his

experience of having a disease) and the objective (the fact of the disease as a global problem) is necessary for understanding and fighting the crisis: "If it can be written," he says, "then it can be realized." (in English; 30 min)

## Reading-performance by Benjamin Egger

*"I do not care to look at any one."*



*Schlangenfrau (embodiment of flexible labor, following Gergory Bateson's Steps to an Ecology of the Mind, where he compares the ecological system to an acrobat on a high wire; for him, social flexibility means an 'uncommitted potentiality for change.')*

Benjamin Egger appropriates in his assemblage of readings from different texts, appropriated or written by himself, a line from Gertrude Stein's play "Turkey and Bones and Eating and We Liked it – A Play," from her book *Geography and Plays*. In the reading-performance the artist inquires why to be an artist is less than to be an artist. And how it is that there are more artists who do not know they are artists, than artists defining themselves as such. Benjamin Egger sees the emancipatory potential of art in the clash of observing, reflecting and asserting and places the artist's crown on the head of those people who are brave enough to fight for what they care about. (in German; 30 min)

## Lecture-performance by and with Rudi Maier

*Marx. Macht. Reklame. – Das Bild von Karl Marx im Spiegel der Werbeindustrie*



*Advertising for Levi's: "1883: indigo dye used for the first time (and Karl Marx dies)"*

"Workers of the world, celebrate yourselves!" – In these words a radio station advertised some years ago and called on its listeners to fight, via the Internet, for their right to party more on the job. The consequence: Almost all contributions mentioned poor working conditions, miserable pay and lousy treatment of staff by the managers. There was hardly any hint of partying anywhere. In a lecture-performance Rudi Maier presents parts of his collection "that's revolution – ads & revolt" which shows how signs and symbols, slogans and icons of leftist, alternative and counter-cultural movements have made it into the repertoire of the advertising industry. On the occasion of Mayday, the international day of the workers (and the working class) he will specially retrace multi-medially the career of Karl Marx's portrait in advertising. (in German; 40 min)



## Film screening: Harun Farocki

### *Workers Leaving the Factory*

Video, BetaSp transferred to MP4, 1995, 36 min, English



Stills from Harun Farocki's *Workers Leaving the Factory*

Directed by Harun Farocki on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of cinema, *Workers Leaving the Factory* is constructed from found footage. It stands in the tradition of radical film, of films that politicize the gaze, shedding light on the antagonistic relation of capital to labor, on how capital becomes dependent on the social production in order to accumulate. To this end, Farocki appropriates both the title of the first film footage in history and its cinematic material, "Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory" by the Lumière brothers, which shows women workers leaving through the gate the very factory they work at, a factory of photographic plates, ostensibly at the end of their working day, even if the angle of the sunlight and the fine clothing reveal that the Lumière brothers have directed their workers to appear for the shooting on Sunday after church. Farocki investigates the gate of the factory, perceived as a place of social conflict, throughout the history of cinema in quotes from a variety of films mythologizing and interpreting the first film material of the Lumière brothers. He follows closely the spread of surveillance cameras, "which have added a sinister panoptic twist to the Lumière brothers' foundational gaze." (Brian Rajski) The symbolic opening of the factory gates appears as a metaphor of the way out – with all its revolutionary potential inherent to mass industrial production and factory labor, as it has been shown in Soviet cinema, from *Mother* (1926) by Vsevolod Pudovkin to *Strike* (1924) by Sergei Eisenstein, but also in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) or Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961). If the strike is a way out towards the real from the crisis of the Fordist model, then in the new regime of accumulation of knowledge and creativity it turns out to be a hopeless situation as we have exited the factory regime, introducing in the transition from industrial capitalism to a soft system a multiplicity of subjectivity as a new notion of labor under biopolitics. Farocki shifts the angle of this symbolic interpretation. For him even from the first footage of the Lumière brothers of the opening of the gates of the factory there is a technological performance that creates new types of labor. (Text: Dimitrina Sevova)

#### **Short information on the artists:**

**Benjamin Egger** is a Swiss-based artist working with performances, installations and video. He studied at the Zurich University of the Arts, from which he graduated in 2008, and at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Jerusalem. His works were exhibited amongst others at Siemens Sanat in Istanbul, Kunstverein Zürich, Substitut Berlin or at the Swiss Art Awards in Basel. He currently studies within the Master Program of Transdisciplinarity at the Zurich University of the Arts working on the topic of the painting chimpanzee in comparison to the creative self-expression of the human amateur. ([www.benjaminegger.com](http://www.benjaminegger.com))

**Harun Farocki**, artist, author, and filmmaker living in Berlin, works at the interface between film, art projects, and installations and is currently one of the most important directors of experimental and documentary film in Germany. Since 1966 he has realized more than one hundred productions for cinema and television and over twenty-five installations. His work was presented at documenta 12 in Kassel, and in 2011/12 New York's MoMA Museum of Modern Art mounted a retrospective of Farocki's films. His works have been shown in numerous exhibitions and film festivals worldwide. Harun Farocki is an artist who addresses political, social, and cultural issues with his full intellectual commitment and singular approach. "If I am interested in how the technological, and subsequently electronic media have

transformed civil society, I can find no better chronicler of their histories, no more intelligent observer of their unexpected connections, no more incisive critic and yet interested party to their epoch-making significance than Harun Farocki.” (Thomas Elsaesser) ([www.farocki-film.de/1995eg.htm](http://www.farocki-film.de/1995eg.htm))

**Petra Elena Köhle** and **Nicolas Vermot Petit-Outhenin** have worked collaboratively since 2003. They developed a performative setting to understand the probability of a chance meeting, managed a guest-house in Sihanoukville and activated archive material by reenacting some of its documents. Koehle/Vermot’s latest works and research are investigating how technologies and more specifically the medium of photography relates to the process of archiving and how its mechanisms of selection impose certain rules. Their work has been exhibited in Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Museum of Modern Art Frankfurt, Kunsthaus Glarus, Shedhalle Zurich and at the Sinop Biennial in Turkey. They published several artist books with edition fink, among which *There where I should have been yesterday. I am here today* and *Pour les Oiseaux*. Currently they are doing a PhD at the University of the Art in Linz. ([koehlevermot.ch](http://koehlevermot.ch) / [www.editionfink.ch](http://www.editionfink.ch))

**Rudi Maier** lives and works in Ludwigsburg and St. Gallen, where he is a lecturer at FHS St. Gallen. He is a media theorist and activist and an anthropologist. After working as a registered nurse, he took up anthropology studies at the University in Tübingen, from where he graduated with a work on the use of Karl Marx in commercial advertising from 1967 to nowadays. He has since kept a focus on issues of the appropriation of revolutionary imagery and icons by commercial advertising, and participated with his research and collection of advertising in numerous art projects and exhibitions. His collection “that’s revolution – ads & revolt” expanded into a variety of collaborations and found its way into several art books. The theater play “Der Firmenhymnenhandel” written by Thomas Ebermann with Rudi Maier as his scientific adviser is based on another long-term research he did on the phenomenon of corporate songs. ([home.bawue.de/~mauss](http://home.bawue.de/~mauss))

**Riikka Tauriainen** has lived in Zurich for four years, where she completed her master’s degree. She grew up in Finland and studied also in Tallinn, Estonia, and in Berlin. Her works are internationally exhibited, including at the Sinopale Biennial 2012 in Turkey and Media-Scape 2012, Biennial for Time Based Art in Zagreb Croatia, The Swiss Art Awards 2013 in Basel, as well as a solo show at Les Complices\* in Zurich in 2010. Riikka’s focus is on the performative process of everyday life and art, which she puts into motion by means of medium and situation. She deals with topics such as social norms and behaviors, routine, banality and language. ([www.riikkatauriainen.com](http://www.riikkatauriainen.com))