

nifca

NORDIC INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

INFO

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LENE CRONE JENSEN: NOTES ON THE RHETORIC OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY
BÜLENT DIKEN: AESTHETICS OF DISPLACEMENT AND (POST)POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION
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HERE COMES EVERYBODY

We assume you all have at some point experienced the very annoying phenomenon of a website being under construction, and for some reason, always the one you need the most. However, the site we now are searching for is still under construction, mainly because there are no quick answers, no absolute positions and no ultimate models to adopt.

When preparing the conference *Under Construction*, which was held 12–13 October in Helsinki, we at NIFCA chose to put the main focus on three aspects of a very versatile discussion. For us the three elements – balanced representation, strategic mainstreaming and redefined criteria of quality – form a productive spiral, a strong means to create positive results.

Cultural institutions are derivatives of states and governments, thus they have inherent obligations to represent the social context in which they exist. Culturally diverse representation in arts and cultural institutions appears to be more or less out of touch with the surrounding world. The question is how can we ensure a more balanced representation in our arts and cultural institutions, funding bodies, educational systems and so forth?

To advocate mainstreaming is not to speak against margins, the field of independent culture and grassroots. On the contrary, it is an open invitation to share with the mainstream, an invitation to engagement and knowledge towards new common challenges. But it is also a pragmatic view of the Nordic landscape – decision-making, resources and infrastructures are, to a frightening extent, concentrated on the institutional level. So, changes also have to happen also within institutions to have the necessary impact.

Qualitative criteria, markers and indicators of quality, run a serious risk of outdating themselves the moment they are put on paper. Thus, the discussion must be focused, not on new ‘old’ quality criteria, but on identifying means and strategies to constantly redefine qualities. We know some of the tools to improve qualities, but we need new cultural skills and capacities to partake in writing the formula.

After the conference our task is how to reconstruct *Under Construction*. Looking back at one of

Thomas McEvilley’s previous articles, entitled *Here Comes Everybody*, we noticed that *Under Construction* did include everybody. From pioneering experts in the field of internationalism in visual arts to artists, politicians, bureaucrats, art historians, to museum directors with various backgrounds. We were all “inside the tube” as McEvilley describes it in his article.

With his remarks at the conference, McEvilley highlighted how difficult it is to turn the art of the other into the art for us all. His historic intervention, with the *Magicians of the Earth* exhibition in 1989, resulted in the defeat of the negative notion of ‘primitivism’. It showed us how knowledge, if in the right hands and heart, can be a decisive, constructive power used to build dialogue between nations.

Rasheed Araeen left us with numerous reflections, sharing with us his personal experiences as an expatriate visual artist and theorist. He has a real will to change, what he refers to as the attitude of mainstream institutions. It used to be the only dominant power, led by one-sided Western norms. Araeen, among others, was a major driving force behind the shift of art practices among diaspora artists in the UK. Their struggle could be used as a source of inspiration for expatriate artists living in the Nordic region.

Artist Carlos Capelán has always rejected the description of his ethnic self and refused to represent himself according to the rules of the hegemonic structure in order to be himself. Capelán argues that art has for a long time, since the Impressionists and even since the Renaissance, been related to identity. And suddenly identity, as an issue, has become an issue of ethnicity.

Bülent Diken took the debate at the conference beyond art and otherness. He highlighted that Richard Sennett was committed to use Edouard Manet as an artist of displacement. For him displacement summarises the experience of strangeness. Diken drew parallels between the contemporary politics of immigration and Manet’s ‘distorting mirror’: “I look in the mirror and I see someone who is not myself. In Manet’s mirror I become displaced.” Diken related the emergence

of the network society, based on mobility and displacement, to our contemporary aesthetics and modernity. He sees the death of the centre and how it is marginalised. The margin is the place to be.

In his article looking at the evolving Nordic identity Tomas Tråskman takes us right through Manet’s mirror. He tells us how the aliens, who invaded our lives, actually turned out being us. Tråskman urges us not to be obsessed with our Nordic identity, because that may simply lead us to further isolation from the rest of the surrounding world. Per Kvist writes that monolithic national identities in the Nordic countries no longer exist.

Fred Andersson’s article on social sculpture focuses on the private and public in art. Andersson addresses the issue of us all being very globalised. At the same time, he asks us whether we can avoid being more or less local, in the general sense of the word. It is a vision of the ending of borders, between what is public and what is left of the private. Andersson measures where the contemporary community stands in relation to all of this.

We take this opportunity to thank all of you who attended the conference, but also urge everybody to put theories into action. The computer manufacturers have just launched their products and have left the rest of us to deal with the problems. The metaphor of the computer is used in order to say that time has run out, for only *talking* about cultural diversity. Cultural diversity was launched in our societies – a long time ago. We are at a point when we must open our cultural institutions to cultural diversity, we must get operational, we must act out our cultural diversity. As Lene Crone Jensen underlines in her article: our theoretical assumptions must be tried out in the real world.

We need to accept the fundamental assumption that we are not the culture, we are part of a culturally diverse ‘Norden’ which in turn forms an integrated part of an increasingly globalising world. We are everybody.

NETWORK NORTH

This programme aims to consolidate dialogues between the Nordic region, Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. With a focus on 2002, Network North takes place across disciplines. NIFCA is co-ordinating the visual arts component, using the full scope of our core activities, including residencies (see page 4), publications, talks and exhibitions.

www.nifca.org/networknorth

IONIC.NIFCA.ORG

As part of Network North, a new architectural commission for hosting digital artworks - in collaboration with OCEANNORTH and Oleno - will be launched. This will include a selection of existing works and new site specific commissions, the first of which will be a work exploring the implications of human cloning by Danish artist Jakob Boeskov. Watch this space:

ionic.nifca.org



SALLA TYKKÄ: THRILLER

Following a NIFCA residency at Delfina studios in London, Finnish artist Salla Tykkä has been commissioned to make the next film in her trilogy. This will be premiered at NIFCA before embarking on a tour. A 48 page book will be published to coincide with this event, which includes an interview between the artist and Glasgow-based curator Francis McKee.

LOCAL CHANNEL

All are welcome to use the broadcasting facilities at NIFCA to create and transmit Internet TV shows. See www.superchannel.org

ANNIKA LARSSON NEW VIDEO

Following a NIFCA residency at Suomenlinna, Swedish artist Annika Larsson has been commissioned to make a new video. The video was shot in Helsinki at the Senate Square during the month of November and is being now edited.

ROHTO

ART FOR YOUNG MEN

NIFCA and Helsinki City Art Museum are collaborating with artist Markus Renvall. Following his proposal Rohto consists of a five day multi-artistic event targeted at young men aged 16-24 - and anyone who happens to know one. For this event NIFCA together with Markus Renvall will produce six new video works by Nordic artists, dealing with the issues concerning the lives of young men.

Helsinki City Art Museum - Tennis Palace, 6-10 February 2002, open from Wednesday to Sunday at 12-22. Free entrance for all www.taidemuseo.hel.fi

ROTATION:

A NIFCA PROJECT IN MEDIA SPACE

In collaboration with leading international weekly newspaper, *Morgenbladet*, NIFCA has commissioned artists to create a full colour double-page spread every 2 weeks throughout 2001. The last 5 spreads will be curated by Jacob Fabricius (DK):

Mary Beth Edelson, USA
Laura Horelli, Finland
Henrik Olesen, Denmark
Adrian Piper, USA
Kvinder på værtshus, (Women in Bars) Denmark and Sweden

MEMORY PROJECT

The project is about memory and the past, which is always present, both on individual and collective levels. The participants of the exhibition are from the Art Academies of Helsinki, Gothenburg, Trondheim, Copenhagen and Reykjavik – one professor and four students from each. Rantakasarmi, Suomenlinna, 8 December – 13 January, open daily 12-18.

BLICK:

NEW NORDIC FILM & VIDEO

This selection of 49 works by 40 artists made by Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt (NIFCA), Maria Lind & Cecilia Widenheim (Moderna Museet) is touring the world as widely as possible in the next year. A VHS compilation of diverse work is accompanied by a 24 page full colour catalogue. For more details about screenings near you see www.nifca.org. Interested venues should contact assistant@nifca.org.

MODERNA MUSEET
MODERN MUSEUM

HELIUM

A SOUND PROJECT ON THE INTERNET

a collaboration between BallongMagasinet and NIFCA Curators from the Nordic region and beyond will each select 5 artists working with sound to contribute to the project HELIUM.

Curators:
August 18, 2001:
Alexander Rishaug (NO)
October 15, 2001:
**Jesper N. Joergensen/
onepercent cph (DK)**
December 1, 2001:
Johannes Bergmark (SE)
January 15, 2002:
Duba Sabolec (SLO/NO)
March 1 - April 15, 2002:
Cristina Ricupero (NIFCA)

www.ballongmagasinet.com

REFUGEE CALENDAR 2002

CONCEPT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENS HAANING

The Refugee Calendar consists of photos of refugees, photographed in Tampere, Finland, in September 2001. The persons photographed are all waiting for a reply to their asylum application in Finland. Other than having the intention of drawing attention to the problems refugees face, these photographs aim to put specific focus on the aspect of attraction and excitement aroused in the meeting with a new country, a potential new home.

WHAT? PAINTING? STOP FOR A MOMENT!

The Stop for a Moment exhibition series examines different ways of dealing with the problematics and possibilities of painting. Rather than presenting works which extend and stretch the limits of painting’s formal medium, the series examines the multifaceted ways of working with ‘painting proper’.

STOP FOR A MOMENT - PAINTING AS A PLACE TO BE

2 March - 7 April 2002 in Gävle Konstcentrum, Sweden
Cecilia Aaro
Ulf Verner Carlsson
Dag Erik Elgin
Andreas Eriksson
Maria Hall
Kristoffer Nilson
Rickard Sollman and
Marianna Uutinen

www.gavle.se/konstcentrum

STOP FOR A MOMENT - PAINTING AS NARRATIVE

5 April - 15 June 2002 in Proje4L - Istanbul Museum of Contemporary Art
Vanessa Baird
Birgir S. Birgisson
Niklas Engvall
Robert Lucander
Elina Merenmies
Milla Toivanen and
Lene Væring Jensen

www.proje4l.org

STOP FOR A MOMENT - PAINTING AS PRESENCE

6 September - 27 October 2002 in Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, Turku, Finland
Marcus Eek
Anna Fro Vodder
Jukka Korkeila
John Kørner
Elina Merenmies
Tiina Elina Nurminen and
Tal R

www.wam.fi

The exhibitions are initiated and produced by NIFCA in collaboration with the receiving venues.

NETWORK NORTH RESIDENCIES 2002

We are pleased to announce that the following artists have been shortlisted for Network North residencies:

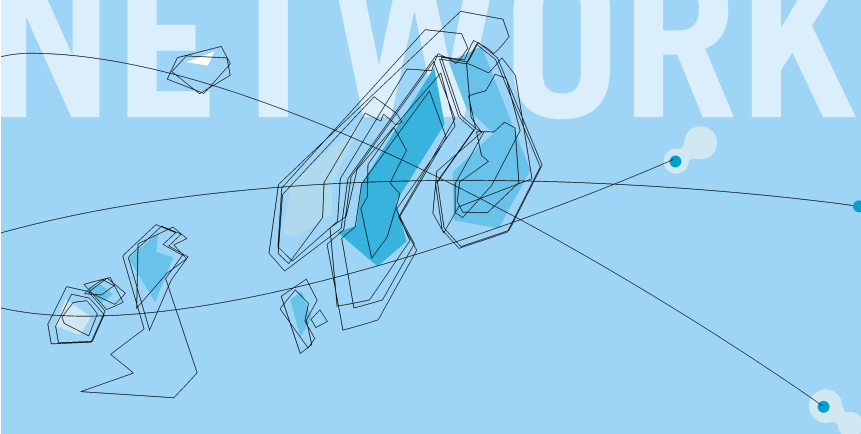
The Icelandic Love Corporation (Iceland)
Mats Adelman (Sweden)
Tobias Anderson (Sweden)
Christian Andersson (Sweden)
Anne Bjerger Hansen (Norway/Scotland)
Will Bradley (Scotland)
Roderick Buchanan (Scotland)
Gerard Byrne (Ireland)
Justin Carter (Scotland)
Jan Braar Christensen (Norway)
Anna Copland (Scotland)
Jacob Dahlgren (Sweden)
Jacqueline Donachie (Scotland)
Steven Duval (Scotland)
Brendan Earley (Ireland)
Chris Evans (Scotland)
Luke Fowler (Scotland)
Anneli Furmark (Sweden)
Belinda Guidi (Scotland)

Hrafnhildur Halldórsdóttir (Iceland/Scotland)
Ilana Halperin (Scotland)
Seamus Harahan (Northern Ireland)
Jim Harold (Scotland)
Katie Holten (Ireland)
Allan Hughes (Northern Ireland)
Juha Huuskonen (Finland)
Lynn Hynd (Scotland)
Andrea Jespersen (Scotland)
Daniel Jewesbury (Northern Ireland)
Sandra Johnston (Northern Ireland)
Unnar Órn Jonasson Audarson (Iceland)
Cecilia Lundqvist (Sweden)
Katarina Löfström (Sweden)
Camilla Løw (Scotland)
Sophie Macpherson (Scotland)
Lena Malm (Sweden)
Maria Mc Cavana (Northern Ireland)
Shauna McMullan (Scotland)

Jesper Nordahl (Sweden)
Stefan Otto (Sweden)
Laércio Redondo (Sweden)
Jaakko Rustanius (Finland)
Egill Sæbjörnsson (Iceland)
Riiko Sakkinen (Finland)
Charles Sandison (Finland)
John Shankie (Scotland)
David Sherry (Scotland)
Dan Shippies (Northern Ireland)
Lucy Skaer (Scotland)
Anu Suhonen (Finland)
Thorbjörg Thorvaldsdóttir (Iceland)
Charlotte Walentin (Sweden)

Further information about the residencies in the next issue of *NIFCAinfo*, which will be dedicated to Network North.

NETWORK NORTH



NETWORK NORTH

Caroline Woodley

Network North is a quietly ambitious project. The premise is that culturally-driven relationships exist between certain countries, they are often strong relationships (sometimes volatile) based on common goals, collaborations and the open exchange of ideas. The intention of Network North is to invest in and develop these relationships, trust that long-term collaborations can be sustained and act responsively to ideas rather than rigidly to a schedule. In 2002 the five Nordic countries and self-governing countries such as Greenland and the Faroe Islands will be engaged in developing specific collaborations with Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Long-term effects already seem possible.

NIFCA has extended the reach of its residency initiative to include Scottish and Irish artists and organisations. In 2002 residencies will take place in Belfast, Dublin, Dundee and Glasgow in addition to the Faroe Islands, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Lapland & Barents Region, Oslo and Stockholm. The enthusiasm that met the NIFCA residency concept in the Scottish and Irish arts communities suggests that this extension could be maintained permanently. The common concern of these particular cultures, aware as they are that they might be seen as located within the periphery, is the establishment of outward looking arts communities, not marginalised, not uninformed, but enlivened by mobility and resultant conversation.

Glasgow-based curator, writer and lecturer Francis McKee was recently invited to participate in the curators' residency scheme at NIFCA as part of Network North.

CW You were invited to take part in the residency scheme at NIFCA last summer – was this your first real introduction to the art scene in Helsinki?

FM It was. I knew the work of many Finnish artists but only through exhibitions in other countries or through magazines etc. The residency allowed me to see their work in the context of Finnish culture and I was able to meet the artists and build relationships. There was the luxury of time. I could meet artists several times just to find out about their work and interview them later on, once I had absorbed more. The residency scheme also created an intense atmosphere on the island of

Suomenlinna where we were based. The small colony of visiting artists all got to know each other well and so new projects and relationships grow out of that. The Icelandic Love Corporation, for example, were close neighbours and through meeting so often it became clear we wanted to work together and in January/February we'll be collaborating on a book project. Other projects emerged through my interviews with Finnish artists such as Salla Tykkä – again there will be a book soon based on the interviews. Other material was collected specifically for my website simply through being there.

CW Residencies make me think of the phrase 'sweet neglect'* not so much in terms of what may or may not be on offer at the place you relocate to but the temporary dislocation from normal support networks – it seems that residencies are as much about rediscovery of resourcefulness, as about making new contacts.

FM I like that phrase 'rediscovery of resourcefulness' – that's exactly what I experienced. There was enough support to make life comfortable but essentially you were left to look inward and reconsider what you do, why you do it and eventually – if you decide you're happy with the answers to those questions – how you can do it better. The residency released an immense amount of energy in me and at the same time gave me a chance to focus that into a few worthwhile projects. (It was also summer, very hot, a beautiful island and a fast Internet connection...)

CW Did you observe other collaborations in place or developing during your stay?

FM It was clear that many links are already forming between the Nordic region and the UK. UK artist and curator Graham Gussin and Ele Carpenter, for example, curated the current Nothing exhibition at the Rooseum in Malmö, on invitation of the director Charles Esche. BLICK, a show reel of new Nordic film and video, is beginning a tour in Scotland and Ireland at the end of this year. BLICK has also led to the idea of creating a new programme of contemporary Scottish and Irish video work and that project is now beginning to take shape.

CW Were there any independent projects that were particularly inspiring?

FM It's hard to know where to start – Torbjörn Lime's Pineapple Gallery in Malmö looked like it was about to undergo another period of intense activity as he was also energised by the residency. He has already worked with Transmission Gallery in Glasgow on an exchange but it was clear that there was a lot of scope for follow-up projects with artists and other spaces in Scotland and Ireland. Malmö was being referred to in Scandinavia as 'the next Glasgow' which I read as meaning the city was gaining momentum from a combination of artist-led activities and responsive institutions. In Copenhagen Christian Chapelle is running a gallery called Mogadishni and he impressed me as a really thoughtful, supportive curator/gallery owner who was passionate about the work he was exhibiting.

Other Finnish artists who were inspiring would include Elina Brotherus who has created a fascinating body of photographic work and, very recently, video too. It was interesting to see how her work was benefiting from a series of residencies and visits to France, opening up a Finnish practice (there is a large concentration of photographers there) to another cultural viewpoint. Likewise the work of the Renvall brothers – Seppo Renvall's films in particular – were exciting in the way they combined the visual aspect of his work with live music and performance without diluting the power of the image.

Performance itself appeared to be emerging as a very strong force – inspired by two more established artists – Roi Vaara and Irma Optimist. Irma is a mathematics professor and artist who will be visiting Glasgow soon to talk about her work at a conference on the role of mathematics. It is worth mentioning too that Estonia is only an hour and a half away by ferry and has a raw, energetic art scene with artists such as the Valie Export Society and Ene-Liis Semper...

Caroline Woodley is publicity co-ordinator for Network North

*'sweet neglect' is a phrase that the art critic Terry R. Myers used to describe the Los Angeles art scene and is investigated by Lars Bang Larsen in considering 'The Curse of Copenhagen' in the text Off and On, see www.francismckee.com, Old News Archive, August-September 2001.

THE CONTOURS OF NEW WORLDS

Tomas Ivan Tråskman

The Nordic countries are currently undergoing a chaotic phase of development. Nordic cultural identity has become a contentious and provisional concept and is therefore very much 'under construction'. This much is self evident.

The Nordic cultural identities differ in nature and origin from anything one imagined them to be earlier. The current model of Nordic cultural identity is mutating into something less insular and is thus all the more prone to change due to external pressures and forces. An embargo is not a valid solution in this case. The alien which has invaded our lives has turned out to be ourselves. This is an inevitable development and, like fate, will arrive unannounced without consideration or reason. The establishment of unified Nordic identities is a naive project, the assumption being that Nordic national interests are furthered by isolating ourselves from the rest of the world. We must therefore embrace our new status as bastards and half-bloods. In this sense our selves are very much 'under construction'.

The dangers and contradictions of this project are apparent in every act of creation as the potential for outrage is always present. How do we prevent culture from turning into ethnic conflict and different forms of micro fascism, all of which are based on authoritarian dominance.

The *Under Construction* seminar underlined the necessity of relinquishing control of language and being an alien in relation to one's language. In other words, we must embrace our otherness

rather than suppress it. The seminar was thus an amalgam of different voices and 'gazes'. Some of the participants tiptoed around the subject matter while others approached the subject in the brutal manner of a dentist eradicating a malignant tooth. As a whole, the seminar was interesting, challenging and often complex. After all, the purpose of the seminar was to proceed off the beaten track and avoid habit and authoritarian modes of discourse. *Under Construction* attempted to negotiate a new route by providing a forum for otherness and indeterminacy.

IDENTIFYING THE PHANTOM CULTURAL CONSUMER

For reasons which needn't be explained here, the consumer of cultural products has always been assumed to be white. The significance of this assumption and its cultural impact interested many of the participants at the seminar. The artist Carlos Capelán defined the principals of the matter succinctly :
"I think I am ethnic, because I have learned to handle my Scandinavian identity, which is very much based on specific notions of isolation, difference and, of course, ethnicity. I like Sweden very much, with its liberal rhetoric and very conservative cultural politics. I am a part of it. I think it is fascinating that multiculturalism can be considered an instance of political negotiation. Maybe identity is a wonderful instance for political negotiation. But multiculturalism can also be considered an instance of strong symbolic meaning. Imagine the potential of international and

national identities in this pluralistic vision of the international. The process is, of course, very complex and changes happen fast at street level. Changes happen very fast at the individual level and at family levels. They happen even faster at second-generation levels. But do you really think that the cultural establishment in Scandinavia will take advantage of these multicultural experiences? I am sceptical."

Carlos Capelán has no fixed identity as an artist, he is neither a nomad or a resident artist nor a member of any other community. His relationship to other people is characterised by his status as a fluid entity and vagabond. He refuses to be defined as a lack or negation of other qualities and identities. Artists such as Omar Marzouk, Khaled D. Ramadan, Daniel Boyacioglu and Jean de Piepape, however, all demonstrated in their various ways how their double identities as artists necessarily emerge. The artists described their situation in terms of a double life; they felt caged and maintained by their Nordic cultural identities while also experiencing a freer sense of movement within those very same fixed identities. The artists wished to penetrate the mountain as opposed to ascending it, which is to say perforate the room instead of preserving it pristine and smooth. The performances, speeches and virtual simulations of new media all allowed the artists to create a perforated space where they could maintain a sense of dialogue and freedom. This kind of space encouraged the kind of praxis which Gavin Jantjes, head of Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, also sought in Nordic cultural institutions. Jantjes emphasised the

importance of a cultural praxis which encourages dynamic forward-looking pluralism alongside the project of preservation which these institutions wish to maintain.

RELEASED FROM CONCRETE HOLDING CELLS

The nomad artists wished to promote a brand of radical experimentalism and exuberance which can only be attained by employing a severe and sober method. These lecturing vagabonds, who were intensely committed to creativity in the here and now, were clearly on show in order to provide the Nordic spectators proof that they weren't just witnessing a passing fad. Qualities such as exuberance, severity and sobriety varied greatly among the artists in question. Rasheed Araeen and Thomas McEvilley oozed restraint and severity while artists such as Josette Bushell-Mingo and Maarten van Hinte provided the audience with the blend of recklessness and intoxication they required in order to tackle future challenges and daring new projects.

Josette Bushell-Mingo held an inspirational lecture about the seven day arts event Push which involved some of the most prestigious black artists working in all art forms. She noted the antithetical and complementary nature of a national arts body which is based on some form of binary opposition: "For me it was a totally political act. It was a gauntlet to the funding bodies: you have to rethink yourselves. You can not be putting us into little packets all the time. You have to reflect the diversity, the modernness, the hybridity of the black

modern community today. It was a gauntlet to the venues, the people and the middle scale companies. When I spoke to them, many of these companies, which shall remain nameless, said: 'Why don't you go to that black theatre company, they do that sort of work, don't they?' Yes, that is not the point. I want you to be involved. I want you to understand. I want you to support this. And of course, in the end it was a gauntlet to the communities themselves. Come and see your community on stage, come and support, be here. It goes halfway. You can no longer stand back, and say: 'I expect this to come to me'. I said no, you come and meet it halfway".

One could detect confusion in the faces of the nomad artists as they noticed that multiculturalism as a concept is largely unfamiliar and alien over here. Neither blackness nor the notion of coloured artists aroused the extremes of abject fear and indiscriminate love. The creation of a new discourse and language became possible when the lecturers noticed that they couldn't deploy such cultural metaphors. They were thus confronted with the inherent truth of what Bushell-Mingo meant when she said "I said no, you come and meet it halfway".

Under Construction was ultimately about our journey towards something which is ill-defined and of necessity indeterminate. The provisional nature of existence was once again at the heart of the matter.

Tomas Ivan Tråskman, art critic and documentarist
Translated by Jason O'Neil



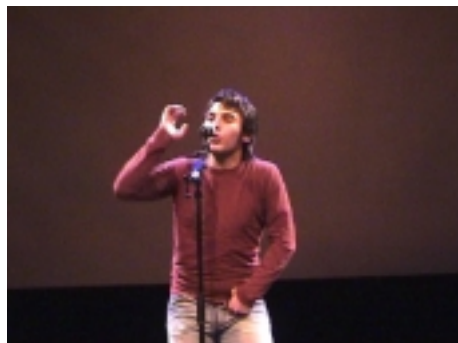
SILHUETTER AV NYA VÄRLDAR

'Under Construction', de nordiska länderna är i en kaotisk utvecklingsfas. Nordisk kulturell identitet är 'under byggnad'. Det är lätt att säga.

Nordisk kulturell identitet är av en annan art och natur, av ett annat ursprung än vad man tidigare tänkt sig. Den form av interioritet som utgjort uppfattningen av nordisk kulturell identitet, den modell enligt vilken vi har för vana att tänka, håller på att bli 'extern'. Blockering är ingen lösning. En främling invaderar 'vårt' liv och främlingen är 'vi' själva. Det kommer såsom ödet, utan skäl, förnuft, hänsyn, förevändning... Etablerandet av samstämmighet, definierad som, finskhet, isländskhet, danskhet, norskhet, svenskhet, (nordiska nationella intressen främjas bäst av att länderna bortom de två världshaven får koka i sitt eget späd) är naiv. Bastard och halvblod är 'vårt' sanna namn. 'Vi' är 'under byggnad'. Allt detta är svårt att säga.

Vi ser omedelbart farorna, de djupa tvetydigheterna som innebor i detta projekt, som om varje skapande stod inför en möjlig skendlighet. För vad kan göras för att förhindra temat 'kultur' att bli etnisk motsättning, en dominant och allomfattande fascism, till aristokratism, eller en sekt och ett folklore, olika typer av mikro-fascismer?

Seminarieret *Under Construction* visade på nödvändigheten i att inte ha kontroll över språket, att vara en främling i sitt eget språk, för att dra talet till sig och 'sätta något obegripligt till världen'. Seminarieret var ett hopkok av röster och 'ögon'.



Under Construction conference, 11-12 October, 2001, Theatre Academy, Helsinki.

Hack i häl med anföranden som smög 'på tå' kring ämnet (som om föredragaren var rädd att väcka en sovande björn) följde anföranden vars angreppssätt påminde om en tandläkares och lät en förstå att man här har att göra med en 'ond tand' som det är bäst att dra ut, och det de snaraste. Det hela var intressant, utmanande och väldigt komplicerat. Seminariets funktion var trots allt att inte följa spår och invanda rutter, att ge var och en lott och reglera kommunikationen mellan lotterna. *Under Construction* försökte göra det motsatta, d.v.s. distribuera människor i ett öppet rum som är obestämt och icke-kommunicerande.

VÄRLDENS ÖGON – VILKEN FÄRG HAR DE?

Av skäl som inte borde behöva förklaras här har till helt nyligen och oberoende av konstnärens bakgrund så gott som alla kulturkonsumenter angetts vara vita. Det intresserade de flesta av föredragshållarna att ta reda på och grunna kring vad det antagandet har betytt för kulturen. Konstnären Carlos Capelán sade det väsentliga i sitt anförande under konferensen: "Jag tror att jag är etnisk, eftersom jag har lärt mig att handskas med min skandinaviska identitet, som tar sig uttryck i specifika uppfattningar om isolation, olikhet och självklart om etnicitet. Jag tycker mycket om Sverige med dess liberala retorik och mycket konservativa kulturpolitik. Jag tillhör detta. Jag tycker att det är fascinerande att multikulturalism kan anses vara ett fall av politisk förhandling. Kanske identitet är ett underbart fall för politisk förhandling. Men multikulturalism kan även anses vara ett fall av stark symbolisk betydelse. Föreställ Er potentialen som finns i det internationella, samt i den nationella identiteten i denna pluralistiska vision av det internationella. Processen är förstås mycket komplex och förändringar sker mycket snabbt på gatunivå. De sker mycket snabbt på individnivå och familjenivå. De sker ännu snabbare på andragerationsnivå. Men tror ni verkligen att kulturetablissemang i Skandinavien kommer att utnyttja alla dessa multikulturella erfarenheter? Jag är skeptisk."

Carlos Capelán är inte nomad hos nomaderna och bofast hos de bofasta eller halvnomad hos nomaderna och till hälften bosatt hos de bofasta. Hans relation till de andra följer från hans inre

karaktär av kringresande, från hans vaga essens, och inte omvänt. Konstnärer som Omar Marzouk, Khaled D. Ramadan, Daniel Boyacioglu, Jean de Piepape visade, under seminariets gång, på de mest skiftande vis att de med nödvändighet fördubblas, att de existerar två gånger, en gång såsom en figur infångad och upprätthållen av en nordisk kulturell identitet, en andra gång som en mera rörlig och fri figur inom denna samma stabila och samtidigt fiktiva identitet.

Att tränga genom bergen istället för att bestiga dem, att göra hål i rummet i stället för att bevara det slätt. Genom uppträdanden, tal, nymedias simulerade sinnesförnimmelser, uppfann konstnärerna ett hålat rum, som med nödvändighet gav dem möjlighet att kommunicera med både de bofasta och nomaderna. I detta rum öppnade sig möjligheten för det slag av pragmatik som Gavin Jantjes, chef för Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, efterlyste hos de nordiska kulturinstitutionerna. Jantjes framhöll vikten i skapandet av en pragmatik, en modell för blivande och heterogenitet som står mot det stabila, det eviga, identiska och konstanta i institutionerna vars önskan är att bevara.

UT UR BETONGHÄCKARNA

Nomaderna, i detta fall representerade av figurer som framhöll ett radikalt experimenterande, ett börjande på nytt i varje ögonblick – kringresande föredragshållare som utstrålade en speciell typ av berusning som bara kan uppnås via den strängaste nykterhet – var uppenbarligen inkallade för att ge nordborna den erfarenhet och historia som är nödvändig för att ingen skall missta sig att tro att allt handlar om en trend som det nu gäller att rida på. Förhållandet mellan de tre egenskaperna berusning, stränghet och nykterhet varierade kraftigt. Rasheed Araeen och Thomas McEvilley utstrålade tillförsikt, stränghet och nykterhet medan Josette Bushell-Mingo och Maarten van Hinte, uppfyllde åhörarna med en passlig portion vanvett och berusning för att de skulle kunna ta sig an framtida stormar och omöjliga galenskaper.

Josette Bushell-Mingos inspirerande föredrag om Push (ett sju dagars konstevenemang som leddes av några av de mest ansedda svarta konstnärerna,

omfattande alla konstformer, under sju tak) noterade det på en gång antitetiska och komplementära, nödvändiga för varandra och därmed inte fientliga, i en statsapparat som bygger på Ett-Två.

"För mig var det en helt och hållet politisk aktion. Det var ett slag i ansiktet på de finansierande instanserna: Ni måste ompröva ert tänkande. Ni kan inte längre slå in oss i små paket. Ni måste återspegla diversiteten, moderniteten och hybriditeten i dagens svarta gemenskap. Det var ett slag i ansiktet på teatrarna, människorna och de medelstora grupperna. När jag talade med dem, sade många av dessa grupper, som jag låter bli att namnge: 'Varför talar ni inte med den svarta teatergruppen, de arbetar med sådant, eller hur?' Ja, men det är inte där poängen ligger. Jag vill att ni ska delta. Jag vill att ni ska förstå. Jag vill att ni ställer upp för det här. Och sen var det förstås ett slag i ansiktet på själva gemenskapen. Kom och se er gemenskap på scen, kom och ställ upp, var här. Man måste mötas halvvägs. Ni kan inte längre luta er bakåt och säga: 'Jag förväntar mig att det kommer till mig.' Jag sade: Nej, ni måste mötas halvvägs."

En viss förvirring kunde ibland läsas på nomadernas ansikten då de insåg att man här inte har riktigt samma tillgång till de gängse begreppen om mångkulturalism. Varken svarthet eller 'färgade människor' väckte hos publiken några föreställningar om oerhörd, gränslös kärlek, anarki eller konventionell fruktan. Då föreläsarna märkte att de inte kunde utnyttja sådana metaforiska genvägar började (eller föll) det verkliga skapandet av ett nytt slag av språk, ett nytt slag av förståelse. De konfronterades med andra ord med sanningen i Bushell-Mingos ord: "Jag sade: Nej, ni måste mötas halvvägs."

'Under byggnad' – vi nalkas något på väg att bli till som ännu ingen vet vad det skall bli (vi vet inte ens om det som skall bli egentligen skall bli?). Verbet 'vara' bråkar med oss igen (besvärligt).

Tomas Ivan Träskman, kulturkritiker och dokumentarist

SOCIAL SCULPTURES AND CULTURAL TRANSLATIONS

Fred Andersson



Two American policemen in front of Alfredo Jaar's burning kunsthalle in the *Public Safety* project. Photo by Jörgen Svensson.

I want to focus upon the capability of contemporary art to question fixed categories in political discourse, and also in Art itself. In this context, I would like to forward some notes about the concept of 'social sculpture' or temporary public art. These notes were, in turn, intended as a response to a speech by the British cultural theorist Sarat Maharaj at the AICA conference in London one year ago.

The potential of social sculpture is basically its openness. It could be defined as the dissolution of fixed social roles and functions that are being replaced by an interplay of differences – a social sculpture being nothing but the differences between places, groups and cultures, and the negotiation of differences. An important aspect of this activity is the condition of the limited, physical Place as opposed to the transgressive nature of electronic networks.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

We may all be very globalised, but I wonder if anyone can avoid being a 'local' in a general sense of the word. Manuel Castells has noted the increasing tendency towards the formation of local communities within the world's biggest cities. This is of course an ancient phenomenon — to seek comfort and safety in small and local worlds. But what many sociologists including Castells are talking about today is how the nature of the Local is affected by structural and ideological changes towards faster communication and economical or political multinationalism. In the aforementioned speech by Sarat Maharaj, the main issue was the post-colonial problems of national and cultural identities in a time when more and more people in the world are being constantly transported, transferred and 'dislocated'.

Maybe, the Other that used to be the opposite of dominant Western culture in a world distinguishable as Center and Periphery now has to be redefined. Maybe, the primary Other will no longer be another race, another continent or another history, but rather, as Castells has pointed out, inferior levels of urbanisation and involvement in network society. In other words: we might look for the cultural Other next door or at the other side of town, as well on the other side of the world. In contemporary art, the approach of social sculpture might be regarded as a way of recognising the

Otherness of marginal places and classes – of the provinces, the suburbs, the outbacks, and the low-tech majority. However, it is hard to avoid a certain colonising and exoticising approach.

TRANSLATION: PROCESS AND CHANGE

When Maharaj speaks about the risk of putting people and artworks into certain fixed categories, he also describes the similarity of the languages of art history and anthropology — both being languages of power that establish a fixed order of things. To quote Maharaj: "People, practices and practitioners come to be seen in terms of an assumed, static 'origin' elsewhere rather than the ebb and flow of unceasing translation through which they live the present." As we can see, the concept of Translation is very important here. Sarat Maharaj stresses the importance of process and change as opposed to the fixed roles and identities that are ascribed to people and objects by means of various languages of power. This translation and this orientation towards Process rather than Object is important in social sculpture. And also, I would add, a certain passivity of letting things happen. This is, I think, what Maharaj talks about when he describes an "open-ended, unscripted production of difference in everyday cultural translation."

In his essay 'The Masses – Implosion of the Social in the Media' from 1985, Jean Baudrillard described the passivity of the Masses as a subversive force, a silent protest against the informative and enlightening efforts of authorities and intellectual elites. Maybe the basic conflict underlying the idea of social sculpture is the one of passivity versus activity, or the will to adaptation versus the will to education. If the educational aims of 'art for the people' or 'art for the immigrants' dominate too much, the desired exchange and interaction may not occur.

PUBLIC SAFETY

A good example of the opposite was the project *Public Safety*, designed and performed in small Swedish village Skoghall during 1999 and 2000. *Public Safety* was very much the work of one singular man, namely Jörgen Svensson, artist and professor at Valand School of Fine Arts in Gothenburg, Sweden. Jörgen Svensson was himself born and raised in Skoghall, and in *Public Safety* he realised a dream to put Skoghall on a more

international artistic map. The project was created as a cooperation between him and professor Anna Novakov at San Francisco Art Institute. Apart from Svensson himself, three internationally recognised artists participated, namely Alfredo Jaar, Esther Gertz and Paco Cao. The artists were specifically chosen as practitioners of public temporary art or social sculpture. They were all asked to stay in Skoghall for several weeks, and to develop projects with the aim of directly engaging the inhabitants of the village. In an essay that served as a theoretical basis for the project, Professor Novakov described the history of temporary and site-specific art-activities in big cities, noting that: "the small town, as a public space with its own distinct social dynamics, has been largely ignored". And she continued: "How does contemporary public art function within a small town?".

Alfredo Jaar's project proved to be the most controversial one, dividing the village into 'for' and 'against'. He investigated the role of the big paper-mill which once created the village and which totally dominated it until the beginning of the 1980s. As a symbolic action, he decided to build a kunsthalle out of paper from the mill, to open an exhibition of young and promising Swedish artists in the kunsthalle, and then to burn it after 24 hours. By doing this, he wanted to create a feeling of loss — losing something important just after getting it.

I think that this project of Jaar is a fine example of the balance between disappearance and presence, or adaptation and education, which I described earlier. The most important things about the event were the things that never happened. It meant no drastic and permanent change in the society of Skoghall, and no educational breakthrough. It might have been totally useless for the unemployed proletariat and the neglected immigrant artists. But it demonstrated the very concept of difference, and the very idea of something or someone being in a place in which he, she or it is experienced as being totally different. Let's hope that such experiences might here and elsewhere lead to a cultural translation that is "open-ended, unscripted".

Fred Andersson
Curator of Temporary Exhibitions,
Norrköping Museum of Art, Sweden

ACTIVE IMMIGRANT

Line Rosenvinge

Disguised as Günther Wallraff (the journalist who took on different identities in order to report from inside different environments), active immigrant Colonel waylays strangers in the street to borrow their clothes in a bid to resemble them and, in that way, take on their culture. Sequences are shot, photos taken and the question asked: "Do I look like you now?"

INTEGRATION

The Frenchman Colonel, peregrinating around Denmark and making himself understood in very imperfect English, manifests a directness that dispenses with the social niceties. The brief encounters he mediates between individuals who just happen to be in the street result in very forthright vox pop exchanges. As in the case of the woman who says that the Vietnamese are the best-integrated nationality, "because you don't notice them," and of the man who remarks that integration is no problem – "I don't mix with the Danes".

It is all very entertaining, and it is only after watching the footage on primetime nationwide television that you realise that these documented episodes reveal attitudes that might otherwise go unarticulated. Attitudes are expressed without prior deliberation and in terms that go close to the bone. The artist, then, does not just command narrow art circles but also the broad reach of the electronic and printed media. We need no introduction: the images and meanings in the 'snapshots' he contrives come over crisp and clear without it.

WHAT SHOULD THE IMMIGRANT BE BRINGING TO THE ADOPTIVE CULTURE?

For the artist knows tricks of his own. He succeeds in getting people to swap things and ideas. A foreigner gives the Dane God, and gets a carton of milk in return. The needs of the moment take many forms. Others give a hug, a kiss on the cheek. But what does the person from a foreign culture need? And what should the immigrant be bringing to the adoptive culture? With a camera at the ready Colonel mediates cultural encounters that make abstract issues concrete. They become

images to be registered by an attentive eye. Qua active producer, he has a sharp eye himself, while remaining a passive opportunist, letting his co-performers have their say. For he doesn't know the answers to the questions he poses – he is a witness himself.

STAGING AND DEDICATION

Colonel seeks to explore the sense of otherness, but also to absorb Danish culture. He talks to people in order to get a fix on Danishness – and foreignness in relation to Danishness. But he is also a purchaser of keywords and now the owner of domains such as www.danskhygge.dk (Danish cosiness) and www.danskluft.dk (Danish air). The determination to take on Danishness is rendered both concrete and absurd when, in a quasi-religious ceremony in a public setting, he desperately and comically attempts to renounce his French identity and become wholly Danish. As usual, chance passers-by are drawn into the conceit so that it ends up not as sheer fiction but as featuring elements of realism and unpredictability.

MEASURE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN CULTURES

Never mind the fact that Colonel, whose real name is Thierry Geoffroy, is married to a Dane and has three children: as an artist he continues, as he puts it, to "measure the distance between cultures".

I wanted to see if the flags were defining the private life



When he measures the distance between 'French' and 'Danish' it is a poetic undertaking that might well mimic science – as when he measures distance with a tape measure – but it proceeds on art's premises. How far apart are you and I right now? Distances are typically measured in centimetres, but here the exercise transmutes into the image of an entertaining sociologist who, in the person of Colonel, demonstrates that cultural distance cannot be measured.

But, active immigrant that he is, he carries on measuring and with his dogged persistence Colonel seems capable of getting just about anyone to contribute to his investigations: those who happen to cross his path find themselves placed in situations where, with few words and actions, they communicate their attitudes on what are otherwise abstract issues of cultural identity. The fictive sequences are authentic simply because they reflect what people actually think. This device is typical of Colonel's strategy, where the scene setting – with its input from real life – always rings true. We have, then, a personal artistic investment centred on construction – imaginatively entering into experience and acting it out – while at the same time exploring conceptions of cultural identity and otherness in general.

<http://www.colonel.dk/>
Line Rosenvinge, Master of Arts
Translated by Susan Dew

No, only 100% Danish.
A 100% Danish?



Colonel, Outside the Borders of Privacy



AKTIV IMMIGRANT

Line Rosenvinge

Forklædt som Günther Wallraff (journalisten som påtog sig forskellige identiteter for at kunne rapportere inde fra forskellige miljøer), passer den aktive immigrant Colonel fremmede op på gaden for at låne deres tøj i et forsøg på at ligne dem og tage deres kultur til sig. Der filmes, tages fotos og spørges: "Ligner jeg dig nu?"

INTEGRATION

Franskmanden Colonel, der bevæger sig rundt i Danmark og taler et dårligt engelsk, repræsenterer en ligefremhed der skærer hjørner af. De korte møder han skaber mellem tilfældige fremmede på gaden afføder autentiske samtaler hvis statements slår hårdt. Som kvinden der svarer, at vietnamesere er den nationalitet der integrerer sig bedst "fordi man ikke ser dem", og som manden der svarer, at integration ikke er noget problem, "jeg blander mig jo ikke med danskere".

Det hele virker morsomt, og når man ser optagelserne på landsdækkende tv i prime time er det først bagefter man oplever at scenerne blotlægger holdninger der måske ellers ikke formuleres. Holdningerne udtrykkes uden mellemregninger, for der er skåret lige til benet. Kunstneren kan derfor

bevæge sig i smalle kunstcirkler såvel som brede medier som tv, aviser og dagblade. Vi behøver ingen forhistorie. Billeder og betydninger fra scener, han har sat i værk, står stadig lige skarpt.

HVAD SKAL IMMIGRANTEN BRINGE SIN NYE KULTUR

Kunstneren kan andre tricks. Det er lykkedes ham at få folk til at udveksle genstande og begreber. En fremmed giver en dansker Gud, der til gengæld giver en liter mælk. Det fornødne i hverdagen kan have mange former. Andre giver et kram, et kindkys. Hvad kan man give en anden fra en fremmed kultur? Hvad skal immigranten bringe sin nye kultur? Med et kamera ved sin side skaber Colonel kulturmøder som gør abstrakte spørgsmål konkrete. De bliver billeder, som kan opleves i koncentrerede blik. Han kaster selv disse blik som aktiv iscenesætter men han er samtidig den passive medløber, der lader sine medagenter komme til orde. For han kender ikke selv svarene til de spørgsmål han stiller, han er selv vidne.

ISCENESÆTTELSE OG TILEGNELSE

Colonel vil undersøge følelsen af andethed, men han vil også tage den danske kultur til sig. Han taler med folk for at indkredse det danske og fremmede i forhold til det danske – men han køber også nøgleord og ejer nu domæner som www.danskhygge.dk og www.danskluft.dk. Viljen til at tilegne sig danskhed bliver også konkret men absurd, når han, desperat og komisk, ved en næsten religiøs ceremoni i det offentlige rum prøver at frasige sig sin franske identitet og blive helt dansk. Som sædvanlig inddrages tilfældige på

gaden i spillet, der derfor ikke kun er fiktivt, men også har en realistisk og uforudsigelig dimension.

MÅLE AFSTANDE MELLEML KULTURER

Det kan meget vel være, at Colonel, der i realiteten hedder Thierry Geoffroy, er dansk gift og har tre børn, men som kunstner bliver han ved med at "måle afstande mellem kulturer", med hans eget udtryk. Når han måler afstanden mellem 'fransk' og 'dansk' er det en poetisk handling, der kan virke videnskabelig, men det sker med kunstnerens metoder – som når han måler afstanden med et målebånd. Hvor langt er der mellem dig og mig lige nu? En afstand måles naturligvis i centimeter, men her bliver det et billede på en morsom sociolog, der i Colonels personificering viser at kulturafstande ikke kan måles.

Som aktiv immigrant bliver han dog ved med at måle, og med med sin ekstreme pågaaenhed, formår Colonel tilsyneladende at få hvem som helst til at bidrage til sine undersøgelser, hvor tilfældige fremmede sættes i situationer, hvor de med få ord og handlinger giver udtryk for deres holdninger om ellers abstrakte spørgsmål om kulturel identitet. De fiktive oprin er autentiske fordi de viser, hvad der faktisk tænkes. Dette greb er typisk for Colonels strategi, hvor det iscenesatte altid virker oprigtigt og med et link til real life. Et livsforløb centreret om konstruktion – indlevelse som udlevelse – men også om undersøgelse af opfattelser af kulturel identitet og fremmedhed generelt set.

<http://www.colonel.dk/>

Line Rosenvinge, mag.art.

AESTHETICS OF DISPLACEMENT AND (POST)POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION

Bülent Diken

The foreigner allows you to be yourself by making a foreigner of you. Edmond Jabés

Richard Sennett once mentioned Edouard Manet as an artist of displacement. Displacement is a concept that summarises the experience of the stranger too. ‘Cracking’ the familiar frames of reference, Manet gives unexpected twists to the established ways of seeing. In *The Bar at the Folies Bergère* (see: <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Gallery/2892/manet3.jpg>), for instance, it is technically impossible to be facing the barmaid directly and seeing her reflection to the right of her at the same time. In the upper right corner of the painting, reflected in the mirror, we see a man the barmaid is looking at. This man cannot exist optically either because, if he did, he would completely block out our direct view of the barmaid – the viewer is standing in front of the barmaid. The drama of displacement depicted is thus: “I look in the mirror and see someone who is not myself”.¹ In Manet’s mirror, I become displaced.

DISPLACEMENT

It is *this* experience of becoming something else, which is threatened within the horizon of the contemporary politics of immigration. This politics operates in terms of ordered and undisplaced identities. It classifies people into clean-cut cultural territories and imagines ‘invulnerable’ selves. In this context, notions such as displacement, mobility, hybridity, fluidity and so on work as Manet’s “distorting mirror”. Displacement is about avoiding routines and habits. It is also about deconstruction and nomadism. Displacement is an artistic and sociological tool, with which one can criticise what is static. Hence, the concept of displacement is associated with *resistance* to established forms of power. Indeed, retrospectively speaking, once displacement even promised emancipation. For instance, Edward Said wrote in the 1990s that: “... liberation as an intellectual mission ... has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant...”²



Bülent Diken in *Under Construction*.

MOBILITY AND THE NETWORK SOCIETY

This optimism of mobility and displacement is related to aesthetic modernity. My point is that it was possible and feasible in the industrial and industrialist society. Yet, today, there is emerging a new type of society, the network society. Its emergence reverses the tables. Hence, there is today a potential problem with juxtaposing the mobile versus the static in terms of power and identity.

The new type society, emerging today, is well adjusted to different forms of displacement, mobility and networking. It has been called *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (Luc Boltanski & Eeva Chiapello).³ In this context it is important to note that a compromise is emerging between the aesthetic critique of capitalism and capitalism itself. Until recently, it was French philosophy that, with an aesthetic critique, most loudly opposed capitalism and power. Concepts such as displacement, inspiration, perversion, hybridisation and transgression were seen as alternatives to the static powers of inertia, essentialism and the law. Nomadism versus sedentariness; situationism versus the society of spectacle.

ASSIMILATION OF CRITIQUE

The problem is that today this aesthetic critique is accommodated by contemporary power which itself goes nomadic. How can displacement, nomadism

and hybridity remain an alternative when power itself operates through hybrid, shifting, nomadic identities, which is the case within the network society? Critique is not a peripheral activity. Rather, it contributes to capitalist innovations that can assimilate critique. The assimilation of critique, in turn, confronts critique with the danger of becoming dysfunctional.

Capitalism had received mainly two forms of critique until the 1970’s: the social critique, from the Marxist camp (based on the concept of ‘exploitation’), and the aesthetic critique, from French philosophy (based on the concept of ‘nomadism’). Yet, since the 1970s, capitalism seems to have found new forms of legitimisation in the aesthetic critique. That resulted in a “transfer of competencies from leftist radicalism toward management”.⁴ Consequently, the aesthetic critique seems to have dissolved into a post-Fordist normativity that can combine inspiration, flexibility and profits with one another. And the notion of creativity has been re-coded in terms of flexibility, while difference has been commercialised.⁵

THE FAST EAT THE SLOW

In today’s society real geography is to a large extent cancelled by the deterritorialised logic of flows, that is, by the increasing mobility of capital, people and goods.⁶ Contemporary power works according to the principle of mobility: the fast eat the slow.⁷ Ours is a “nomad capitalism”.⁸ It justifies itself and advertises its products with reference to aesthetics: “Be Inspired”, as Siemens says in its adverts. Capitalists themselves boast in new ways: “I am such a nomad, I am such a tramp”, says Anita Roddick, the owner of Body Shop.⁹ As Terry Eagleton formulates it: “these days, centrality is distinctly uncool. The centre has been marginalised, and marginality ... is the place to be”.¹⁰

A MOVING WORLD

A new capitalist discourse based on metaphors of mobility is emerging in business organisations. It promotes the notion of “a constant adaptive

movement” and flexible organisational forms that can “go with the flow”.¹¹ In short, today “we are witnessing the revenge of nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement”.¹² We are today “condemned to nomadism, at the very moment that we think we can make displacement the most effective means of subversion”.¹³ Aesthetic creativity, industrialist productivity, and the market’s willingness to take risks are no longer exclusive worlds. The new capitalism is well adjusted to the world of networks precisely because networking is a transitory form.¹⁴ In this network-based and connectionist world, in which a pre-established habitus is not desirable, one “should be physically and intellectually mobile”. One should also be able to respond to the call of “a moving world”. The new “grand person is mobile”.¹⁵

DISAPPEARANCE OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS

What are the consequences of this development for immigration? The most important consequences are perhaps the disappearance of ‘society’ and ‘politics’. This goes hand in hand with the crisis of the aesthetic critique.

The disappearance of society and politics is related to the fact that the network logic can escape critique. The new regime valorises flexibility, communication and connectionism, and thus compromises the old civic/political securities. The new regime violates the assumption of a ‘common good’, which is necessary for politics.¹⁶

Network power is about the capacity to escape. Its instruments are fluidity, liquidity, and speed. In ‘liquid modernity’ power lies in the ability to ‘travel light’.¹⁷ Network speed is beyond the reach of politics: if politics is understood as time for reflection and dialogue, the speed of networking marks the end of politics.

Speed is *beyond* politics, as Paul Virilio says.¹⁸ Politics requires time, but for flows of capital, especially that of the multinationals, it takes no time to escape territories of politics. Thus, as Manuel Castells argues, global power is increasingly liberated from politics: whereas power belongs

to the “space of flows”, politics remain “hopelessly local”.¹⁹ Power now can easily escape the agora, the space in which private fears are translated into ‘political’ issues, and immigration can be discussed as a political rather than cultural issue.²⁰

CONTEMPORARY ‘BIG BROTHER’

We no longer have a ‘society’ organised around the clean-cut territory of a nation-state. We have increasingly transversal networks, channelling flows of capital and people. One of the most visible effects of the disappearance of the nation-state is that ‘society’ is increasingly *staged* as a fantasy construction today. Perhaps the best example is the *Big Brother* TV programme. Until recently, the typical fear of modern societies was the fear of panopticism, a fear related to being under the gaze of the public authorities all the time; the fear of George Orwell’s ‘Big Brother’.

In contrast, today’s *Big Brother* proves that the fears have changed today. As Slavoj Žižek argues, what is uncanny about *Big Brother* is the completely new meaning it gives to Orwell’s (and Foucault’s) panoptic society. What we have in *Big Brother* is “the tragicomic reversal of the Benthamite-Orwellian notion of the panopticon society in which we are (potentially) ‘observed all the time’ (...): today, anxiety seems to arise from the prospect of *not* being exposed to the Other’s gaze all the time, so that the subject needs the camera’s gaze as a kind of ontological guarantee of his or her existence”.²¹ When ‘society’ no longer exists or promises salvation, it is performed and staged as a spectacle. This masks the anxieties that follow the disappearance of ‘society’.

THE FANTASY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Similarly, in contemporary racism, the fantasy of national identity functions as a desperate attempt to re-stage the ‘society’, which is increasingly becoming meaningless as it is traversed by global flows of capital and migrants. What neo-racism serves is an ideological fantasy about a ‘society’ that still exists: *if* ‘society’ were not ‘threatened’ by the mobile (the immigrant), we would have a

consistent and cosy society. Is not this fantasy the kernel of the whole immigration debate? I wonder what would be left in the immigration debate if this fantasy were taken away. Nothing? If this fantasy is taken away, what is left is a series of social/political problems. Perhaps, therefore, we should “re-invent politics”.²² We should talk about the ‘common good’, not in terms of cultural identity but in terms of politics. Yet, the existing immigration debate is ‘post-political’, just as the dominant form of politics today.

POST-POLITICS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Post-politics, today does not ‘repress’ politics; rather it ‘forecloses’ it.²³ Multiculturalism seeks to identify specific problems of different sub-groups. What multiculturalism excludes is the universalisation of particular demands. That universalisation is “not simply a part of the negotiation of interests. It aims also at something more”: the restructuring of the social space.²⁴

In the post-politics of multiculturalism, particular demands of particular ‘minorities’ remain particular without being able to function as a general opposition against those in power. Thus the aim of multiculturalist politics of immigration, one could say, is to make sure that nothing disturbing really happens. In this sense, post-politics is the end of politics proper. With its apparatus of experts, social workers, and so on, its aim is “to reduce the overall demand (complaint) of a particular group to just this demand, with its particular content”.²⁵ And of course this closure of political space occasionally gives birth to outbursts of “violence as the only way to give expression to the dimension beyond particularity”.²⁶ Thus, in the network society, we keep witnessing the proliferation of different kinds of violence, especially ethnic violence and ethnic cleansing.

THE LOGIC OF CAPITAL BEHIND ‘CULTURES’

Ironically the immanent capital also operates as the only link between the ‘multi’ cultures.²⁷ In other words, multiculturalism is the very “cultural logic of late capitalism”.²⁸ Likewise, neither postmodernism

nor post-colonialism seem to be necessarily 'anti-institutional' responses to contemporary network capitalism. Contemporary forms of power can easily support their criticism on sedentariness, fixed identities, borders, and so on. Which is also to say that strategies of displacement are emancipatory. But this only in so far as power sets up hierarchies exclusively through essentialism and stable binary divisions.²⁹

Network society is no longer characterised by panopticism, which forces people to given positions. By being in permanent movement, the subject is always in a state of 'becoming'. The point, so far, is that hybridisation, displacement, mobility and so on do not automatically result in revolution. Change comes about depending on the context.³⁰ Neither displacement/mobility nor immobility necessarily brings with it liberation. Liberation can only be related to taking control of how displacement and fixity is produced.³¹

RIGHT TO MOBILITY

The problem of migration today is this: how can the mobile mass constitute itself as a political agent? First of all, perhaps, by demanding that migrations are recognised politically. The mobile multitude "must be able to decide if, when, and where it moves... The general right to control its own movement is the multitude's ultimate demand for global citizenship".³²

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NOTES

- ¹ Richard Sennett, 'The Foreigner' In P. Heelas & S. Lash & P. Morris (eds), *Detraditionalization*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). pp. 173-99; see pp. 173, 177 for quotations.
- ² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. (London: Vintage, 1999). p. 403.
- ³ L Boltanski & È Chiapello, *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).
- ⁴ Boltanski & Chiapello quoted in N Guilhot, 'Review of Luc Boltanski & Eve Chiapello's *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme*'. *European Journal of Social Theory* 3(3), 2000. p. 360.
- ⁵ Guilhot *loc cit* pp. 355-364.
- ⁶ Paul Virilio *The Information Bomb*. (London: Verso, 2000), p. 8; see also Manuel Castells *The Information Age. Volume I: The Rise of Network Society*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)
- ⁷ Zygmunt Bauman *Liquid Modernity*. (London: Polity, 2000). p.188.
- ⁸ R Williams, *Resources of Hope*. (London: Verso, 1989) p. 124.
- ⁹ Quoted in C Kaplan "A World Without Boundaries". The Body Shop's Trans/national Geographics'. *Social Text* 13(2), 1995. pp. 45-66. Here the reference is to p.54.
- ¹⁰ Terry Eagleton, 'The centre cannot hold', *The Guardian*, June 23 2001.
- ¹¹ N Thrift, 'The Rise of Soft Capitalism'. *Cultural Values* Vol 1(1), 1997 pp. 29-57; here references are to pp. 38-39.
- ¹² Bauman *op cit* (2000: 13).
- ¹³ S Lotringer & P Virilio, *Pure War*. Semiotex(e). (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 74.
- ¹⁴ Boltanski & Chiapello *op cit* (1999: 167).
- ¹⁵ Boltanski & Chiapello *op cit* (1999: 168, 183); see also N Albertsen & B Diken, 'Mobility, Justification and the City', *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, Vol. 14(1), 2001 pp. 13-24.
- ¹⁶ See Boltanski & Chiapello *op cit* (1999: 144-6, 274); Guilhot *op cit* (2000: 359).
- ¹⁷ Bauman *op cit* (2000: 58).
- ¹⁸ Lotringer & Virilio, *op cit* (1997: 86-7).
- ¹⁹ Castells (1996) *op cit*. pp. 376-428; Zygmunt Bauman, *In Search of Politics*. (London: Polity, 1999) p. 19.
- ²⁰ Bauman *op cit* (1999: 87).
- ²¹ See Slavoj Žižek, *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)use of a Notion*. (London: Verso, 2001). p. 249.
- ²² U Beck, *The Reinvention of Politics*. (London: Polity, 1997)
- ²³ See S Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*. (London: Verso, 1999). p. 198.
- ²⁴ Ibid. 204, 208.
- ²⁵ Ibid. 204.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right. The Future of Radical Politics*. (Oxford: Polity Press, 1994).
- ²⁸ Žižek *op cit* (1999: 210)
- ²⁹ Žižek *op cit* (1999).
- ³⁰ See Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp 137-159.
- ³¹ Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia II*. (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). p. 387.
- ³² Hardt & Negri *op cit* (2000: 156).

WILD IN THE STREETS OF HELSINKI?

Katya Sander and Simon Sheikh

Colonel. Do I look like a historical Danish hero I?
From series A Danish historical fictive hero.



The purpose of our workshop, "Wild in the Streets", was to discuss and compare methods of self-organisation, interventions into the public sphere and, ultimately, methods for cultural production as political activism. How can ideologies and methods in art be employed for concrete politics and direct activism? We – Jochen Becker, Katya Sander, Simon Sheikh and Valerie Tevere – wanted to discuss the development of models for an interaction between art practice, identity politics and activism.

This is an effort to shift focus from the art context, but applying the representational strategies used by art and visual culture, through cultural diversity and with an activist objective. A strategy that is in clear opposition to current trends using the political for aesthetic means *in* the art context, we aim to move in the opposite direction, from the art world to the field of political activism and interaction. This means a usage of the art world as a tool for production, funding and distribution rather than primarily as representational. We believe that the cultural sphere is a usable tool for creating political platforms and new formations rather than a primary platform in itself. However, such a project requires thinking, analysis and not least an open discussion between interested agents and groups.

It is necessary to establish networks, to compare and mediate practices as well as theories, which is

why we organized the workshop itself. It was a chance for people to meet. This meeting showed a great deal of potential, but also indicated a need for more rather than less thinking. A need for further communication, mediation and reflection, which was sadly not possibly due to time constraints. We only just scraped the surface and made introductions.

As it was, two issues came to the forefront of our discussions, the establishment of platforms and, in turn, questions of representation. Especially the latter had a particular urgency in light of the conference as a whole; who is represented by which systems and through which methods? This is, naturally, a question of language as well as access. It is a question of designations: of naming and being named and, indeed sometimes, of the indignity of speaking for others and being othered. When a conference like *Under Construction* addresses identity politics and issues of accessibility to political and cultural systems, we should question the language we use and how it places and names. Designations are not only empowering, but also limiting – which is why they should be employed strategically. Strategies are of crucial importance to political actions and cultural politics.

Katya Sander & Simon Sheikh are Danish art critics

ON BEING SIMILAR AND DISSIMILAR AT THE SAME TIME

Per Kvist

The sense of living in a multicultural society is now a major aspect of contemporary life in the Nordic region. So when the conference *Under Construction* raised the question of a Nordic identity and expressed a need for new models of cultural self-understanding, it did so precisely in terms of this setting. What follows here are some reflections on the matter.

PERCEPTIONS OF NORWEGIANNES

Although dialects and what are considered cultural identities vary widely across regions in Norway, the view nevertheless prevails that being Norwegian means being part of a relatively homogeneous culture. As a young nation, the construction of an encompassing national identity was doubtless felt to be a matter of some urgency. In the post-World War II era, the dominant social democratic regime pursued its aspirations to even out differences in both an economic and a cultural sense. The element of populism, or rather the insistence on ‘folksiness’, loomed large, and was accompanied with a sense that art, often considered to be of central importance, should be broadcast, brought out to the people. This is the origin of the importance ascribed to the three Rs: the Riksutstillinger (National Touring Exhibitions Norway), the Riksteatret (Norwegian National Touring Theatre), and the Rikskonsertene (Norwegian Concert Institute).

In recent years, it appears that the ability to accept differences has grown. We see this acceptance of a multiplicity of discourses within a more general perception of cultural policy. Norway’s past, with its harsh suppression and Norwegianisation of minority cultures, among them the Saami culture, leaves little to be proud of. The current situation is markedly different as far as differences of opinion and new constitutional structures to regulate the relationship between the Saami and Norwegian communities are concerned. But we find evidence of this also in smaller concerns, things of less consequence. Today, the Saami people and their culture are things of which Norwegian society is proud, not simply as examples of folkloristic exotica, but as an intrinsic part of our own cultural identity. We see this in the esteem in which Saami artists are held in Norway, such as the Saami painter Iver Jåks and the singer Mari Boine.

A parallel phenomenon to this transformation in our perception of Saami culture is in extensive

immigration of people from non-Western countries. We have grown far more familiar with other cultures than would otherwise have been the case. Furthermore, the presence of second-generation immigrants has caused us to examine more deeply our own cultural identity.

In Norway, as in many other countries, it is plain that different views prevail on culture and national identity. Racism and xenophobia are ineluctably part and parcel of life in Norway and from some quarters people advocate cataloguing Norwegian culture as ethnic culture. But other views of Norwegianness and cultural progress, conceived both as everyday praxis and official policy, point in different and far more encouraging directions.

Philosophically and historically, it is an impossibility today to conceive of a *single* identity, or a unified idea of Norwegianness. We juggle a range of roles, we alternate between different identities opting sometimes for one rather than the other. It is entirely feasible to feel closer to artists in other countries than to our neighbours. Nevertheless, the notion of ethnic or religious ‘purity’ is a dreadful instrument which, in practice, has caused and continues to cause conflict, terror and ethnic cleansing.

NEW NORDIC IDENTITY

How should we approach constructing a new Nordic identity in this contemporary setting? We have to admit that circumstances have changed, that cultures have moved closer to one another, that a need exists for a greater understanding of cultural diversity. It feels almost pedestrian to put this in writing, but are we talking about anything else?

Studies of the way in which second-generation non-Western immigrants tackle life in their new homelands are also a clue.¹ The studies show us how people of various cultural backgrounds handle a complex play in which they are similar and dissimilar at one and the same time, and how this ability is incorporated unproblematically as part of an overriding identity. By expanding this perspective, by including a general account of identity management in multicultural societies, it would not only impact on ‘the others’, but also have repercussions on the management of ethnic Norwegianness.

INTEGRATION OF THE MOSAIC PROGRAMME

In consequence, I believe that it is crucial to shape Norwegian culture in a far more dynamic interplay with art circles abroad. Network-building and a more flexible funding system that embraces others than just Norwegian artists will influence cultural interaction and joint projects in the right direction.

As part of this effort, I suggest terminating the Mosaic Programme² under the Norwegian Council for Cultural Affairs as a separate initiative (as is planned anyway) and integrating it as part of the operations of the various specialist subcommittees under the Council. Doing so would facilitate a change in our cultural perspective allowing us to see the development of a multicultural society as an aspect of the development of our own Norwegian identity. One of the risks of terminating the Mosaic Programme as such could be a loss of focus on an important area, but, at the same time, it would provide an opportunity to change our ways of thinking – not only of them but of ourselves too – learning in the process that we can be similar and dissimilar at the same time. This realisation could then serve a foundation for a new Nordic cultural identity.

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Translated by Chris Saunders

¹ See for instance, Undine Knarvik (Kvist), “Å være lik og ulik samtidig”, identitetshåndtering hos unge voksne tyrkisk fødte mennesker i Tyskland, Hovedfagsoppgave, UIB, 1997

² The Mosaic Programme is described as follows in the information leaflet: “Mosaic shall spotlight artistic and cultural diversity and set up meeting places between different forms of art across traditional borders. The Programme shall develop strategies to enable recognition of cultural diversity by 1) underpinning and integrating multi- and cross-cultural idioms in the established art and cultural policy schemes and at art institutions; 2) create a greater space for cultural self-development among minorities on their own terms; 3) boost minority participation in art and cultural activities as experimenters, as spectators and as resource persons.” The programme was initiated in 1988, and is about to be delegated to the different subcommittees, i.e., for music, visual art, literature and theatre.



Colonel, A Danish Student

OM Å VÆRE LIK OG ULIK SAMTIDIG

Per Kvist

Erfaringen av å leve i et flerkulturelt samfunn har blitt en vesentlig del av dagens nordiske hverdag. Det er dette som ligger til grunn når konferansen *Under Construction* reiser spørsmålet om nordisk identitet og behovet for nye modeller for kulturell selvforståelse.

OM OPPFATNINGER AV DET NORSKE

I Norge er det betydelige regionale forskjeller både hva angår dialekter og det som regnes som kulturelle identiteter, men likefullt har oppfatninger av det å være norsk vært knyttet til en relativt homogen kultur. Som ung nasjon har konstruksjonen av den nasjonale identitet kanskje føltes spesielt viktig og ikke minst har sosialdemokratiets hegemoni i etterkrigstiden ført til en utvikling ikke basert på forskjell, men heller likhet både hva angår økonomisk og kulturell utjevning. Innslaget av populisme, eller kravet om folkelighet har vært betydelig, samtidig som kunsten, slik den ofte har fremkommet som et sentralt fenomen, har vært sett på noe som må formidles, som må bringes ut til folket - derav også den store betydningen tillagt de tre R’ene Rikstutstillinger, Riksteateret og Rikskonsertene.

I den senere tid synes aksepten av forskjeller å ha blitt større. Denne aksepten av forskjellige samtaler ser vi også innenfor en mere generell kulturpolitisk forståelse. Norge har en lite flatterende fortid med

sterk undertrykking med tilhørende fornoringsprosesser av minoritets kulturer, deriblant det samiske. Denne situasjonen er vesentlig annerledes i dag både hva angår konfliktlinjer og de nye konstitusjonelle rammer som regulerer forholdet mellom det samiske og det norske storsamfunnet. Men det nye ligger også i noe annet og ikke mindre viktig. I dag fremstår det samiske som noe det norske samfunn er stolt av, og da ikke som et folkloristisk eksotisk fenomen, men som en del av vår egen kulturelle identitet. Symptomatisk i så måte er den betydning samiske kunstnere har fått innen det norske. Dette være seg virket til den samiske billedkunstneren Iver Jåks, eller musikeren Mari Boine.

Som et parallelt fenomen i forholdet til endringen i synet på samisk kultur har Norge hatt en betydelig økning i innvandringen. Fortroligheten med andre kulturer har blitt vesentlig sterkere og erfaringene med annen generasjons innvandrere har ytterligere stilt spørsmål til vår egen kulturelle identitet.

Filosofisk og i forhold til historieskrivning burde det i dag være en umulighet å hevde tanken om *en* identitet, eller om *det* norske. Vi håndtere en rekke roller, vi skifter mellom ulike identiteter og vi velger gjerne en identitet fremfor en annen. Den identitetsmessige nærhet kan ofte være langt større til kunstner kolleger i andre land, enn det vi føler for naboen. Men like fullt er tanken om denne etniske, eller religiøse ‘renhet’ et grusomt redskap som i praksis både har skapt og som stadig skaper grunnlag for konflikt, terror og etnisk rensning.

NY NORDISK IDENTITET

Hvordan griper vi så situasjonen i dag, i konstruksjonen av en ny Nordisk identitet? Løsninger er jo enkel er det ikke? Handler ikke dette å se fremover? Å ta innover oss at virkelighetene er endret, at kulturer er kommet langt nærmere og behovet for en forståelse og aksept av en ny situasjon preget av kulturelt mangfold og forskjellighet er og blir det vesentlige. Det virker så selvfølgelig å skrive dette, men handler det om noe annet?

En måte å nærme seg ny nordisk kulturell identitet finnes innen studier av identitetshåndtering hos annen generasjons innvandre.¹ Et vesentlig poeng i denne sammenheng er hvordan de ulike kulturelle bakgrunnene inngår i et komplisert spill av å være lik og ulik samtidig og at dette inngår som

uproblematiske størrelser i håndteringen av deres identitet(er). Og nettopp ved å utvide dette perspektivet, ved å la dette omfatte en generell beskrivelse av identitetshåndtering i et flerkulturelt samfunn, vil dette ikke bare få konsekvenser for ‘de andre’, men også i håndteringen av det å være etnisk norsk.

INTEGRASJON AV MOSAIKK-PROGRAMMET

Som en konsekvens av dette tror jeg det blir vesentlig å se på utviklingen av norsk kultur i et langt mere aktivt samspill med bevegelser i kunstlivet utenfor landets grenser. Det blir i så måte avgjørende å lage strategier for nettverksbygging og mulighet for fleksibel bruk av pengesekken til å omfatte mer en norske kunstnere - hvor kulturelt samspill og felles prosjekter får ny betoning.

Som en del av en slik utvikling tror jeg det er viktig at Norsk Kulturråds Mosaikkprogram² utvikles som et eget program (slik det er planlagt), men heller integreres som en del av den ordinære praksisen til kulturrådets ulike fagutvalg. På denne måten ligger det en mulighet for et endret kulturelt perspektiv, til nettopp å se på utviklingen av et flerkulturelt samfunn som en del av utviklingen av vår egen norske identitet. Det ligger kanskje en fare i denne endringen, ved å avvike mosaikk som et eget program, at fokus på et viktig område mistes, men samtidig innebærer det en mulighet for å endre en tenkning av - oss og dem - til å se på det å være lik og ulik samtidig, som en mulighet for en ny nordisk kulturell identitet.

Per Kvist er dekanus ved Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen. Han er rådsmedlem i Norsk Kulturråd og leder av fagutvalget for billedkunst og kunsthåndverk.

¹ Se for instance, Undine Knarvik (Kvist), “Å være lik og ulik samtidig”, identitetshåndtering hos unge voksne tyrkisk fødte mennesker i Tyskland, Hovedfagsoppgave, UIB, 1997

² “Mosaikk skal synliggjøre kunstnerisk og kulturelt mangfold og etablere møtesteder mellom ulike former for kunst på tvers av tradisjonelle skille linjer. Programmet skal utvikle strategier for anerkjennelse av kulturelt mangfold, ved å: 1) Bidra til å fremme og integrere flere- og tverrkulturelle uttrykk i de etablerte kunst- og kulturpolitiske ordningene og i kunstinstitusjonenes daglige virke. 2) Bedre minoriteters muligheter for kulturell utfoldelse på egne premisser. 3) Bedre minoriteters deltagelse i kunst- og kulturlivet som utprøvere, som publikum og som ressurspersoner.” Programmet ble startet opp i 1988 og skal nå integreres som en del av den ordinære virksomheten til de enkelte fagutvalgene, slik som i musikk, billedkunst, litteratur og scenekunst.

SELF, KARMA, AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Carlos Capelán

1 Communiqué of the PCLA (r)

The Post-Colonial Liberation Army (rematerialización) imparts:

1: that as capital tends to deterritorialise, being profit and actual political control the place from where its identity develops, in the same way, in the world of art, power tends to branch out allowing for new configurations;

2: that the Christian presently known as Saint Nicholas, who would later be identified with Santa Claus, was born in Patara, a harbour in Asia Minor (nowadays in Turkey) in the year of 265, that passed away in 334, and that his remains were stolen and taken to Bari (now in Italy) in 1087;

3: that in 1087, the city of Bari was suffering a recession after the Norman invasion, and that to overcome its crisis it needed to re-profile its identity in some way;

4: that at the time, the possession of relics of the saints generated great prestige and that Saint Nicholas was particularly well reputed, owing to the miracles he was held responsible for, and to other miracles attributed to him but actually worked by a bishop of the same region and same name but later date;

5: that the apparent social mobility within the international systems of art seems whimsical or incoherent because there is neither central instance, nor political platform to lend them cohesion ... artistic strategy, as there are, similarly, no central instances regulating circulation and investment of financial capital;

6: that, as it was stated by other organisations for more than fifteen years ago, the mobility of investment capital creates areas of wealth (and thus, power centres) within the former peripheries, and areas of poverty (and thus, peripheries) within places traditionally considered as centres;

7: that Nicholas was Bishop of Myra, in Central Asia (present-day Turkey);

8: that more than 400 churches in England were consecrated to him;

9: that the situation is not easy, and will not become easier with time;

10: that to have access to visibility in central instances is a question that may be related to certain political operations and economic investments, but that to achieve it is not easy;

11: that in 1087 seventy sailors embarked in three ships in Bari, arriving at night to Asia Minor; that they broke into the grave of Nicholas and carried

away most of his bones; that they returned, safe and sound, to Bari, where they were received as heroes; that this operation allowed Bari to regain the good reputation it had lost since the weakening of the Byzantine Empire; that Bari quickly raised a Romanic basilica to house Nicholas' remains; that some of Nicholas' remains still rest, since the 12th Century, in Turkey (then Myrna); that Turkey presently claims the remains in Bari; that it is unlikely the Christians in Bari will assume the Turkish claims, adducing religious motives (Christians versus Muslims); that the remains of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) generate touristic interest in Europe and the USA, and that by the Romanic basilica, there is now an Orthodox chapel visited by Greek, Russian and Balkan pilgrims;

12: that, each year, 100,000 tourists come to Bari to see the remains of Saint Nicholas;

13: that Nicholas reckons miracles to his credit such as having secretly given money so that three sisters could pay dowries and marry, avoiding being sold into prostitution by their father;

14: that another of Saint Nicholas' miracles was to have returned to life, safe and sound, the remains of three children who had been murdered, butchered and made into corned beef;

15: that the supremacy of painting within the

discourse of contemporary art has sometimes been replaced by the supremacy of a certain post-Duchampian object of dubious mystery;

16: that another of Saint Nicholas' miracles was to have saved the life of three innocent soldiers, from being decapitated by a judge's order;

17: that everything that happens is certain;

18: that another of the identitary fusions attributed to Saint Nicholas is related to certain attributes of the figure of the Germanic god Odin, and that a group of French nuns, inspired by the story of the children made into corned beef, secretly started, in the 12th Century, to make presents to poor families in the Day of Saint Nicholas (December 5th);

19: that at the moment of drawing up this communiqué, the price of a two-litres' bottle containing a liquid seeping from the grave of Saint Nicholas in Bari equals two hundred dollars;

20: that the presence of art experts of peripheral origins (Mosquera, Havana; Herkenhoff, Brazil; Nittve, Sweden; Okwui Enwezor, Nigeria; etc.) within power centres (New Museum and Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate Modern in London and Dokumenta in Germany, etc.), teaches us that in the power centres there are new art experts;

21: that the tradition of making gifts (bread, fish, meat and spirits) in the Day of Saint Nicholas to

poor students, appeared in England also during the 12th Century;

22: that the Protestant Reformation condemned the practice of making gifts, which were, though, preserved by the Dutch emigrants to the Americas;

23: that Evolutionism is the theoretical space of contemporary industrial society;

24: that the theory of avant-gardes is a theoretical project of the élites of the art systems;

25: that Saint Nicholas is called Sinter Claes in Dutch;

26: that, in 1931, American artist of Brazilian origin Haddon Sundblom designed the clothing of Santa Claus with the colours of Coca-Cola, propitiating the consumption of the beverage even in cold climate places;

27: present expansion of the Guggenheim Museums: Guggenheim New York Uptown; Guggenheim New York SoHo; Guggenheim Venice; Guggenheim Japan; Guggenheim Germany; Guggenheim Spain; Guggenheim Brazil, Guggenheim Vegas, etc.;

28: that it has always been said that Saint Nicholas' clothing included animal furs, perhaps because of syncretic phenomena associating him to shamanic figures;

29: that access to information is no longer useful as a regulating element of access to the centre, but that taste, as an element of value judgement of an art project's quality, fulfils this function well;

30: that the clothing of Saint Nicholas, before becoming red as the Coca-Cola, had been green, blue, or altogether and exclusively composed of animal furs;

31: that Puerto Rico and Costa Rica are countries relatively near and different; that Sweden and Switzerland are countries relatively near and different; that Uruguay and Paraguay are countries relatively near and different, that the theory of the alternatives and underground movements is a theoretical project ensuring the renewal and survival of the élites of the art systems;

32: that, looked at in a mirror, the cultural body of a nation or of any social group is reflected as a perceptible unit;

33: that the value assigned to an art project, subordinated to a system that categorises it, endows the art project with functional coherence;

34: that, a few minutes after being born, Nicholas started to pray and told the midwife that Wednesdays, Fridays and other sacred dates, he would drink milk only once a day;

Executive Committee of the PCLA (r)
Scandinavia, December 2000 - January 2001

The text by Carlos Capelán, artist and Professor at Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen, is part of a series of *Communiqués*, which he calls *Academic Performances*. He has distributed them this year at conferences in Santiago de Compostella in Spain, Umeå in Sweden, Sydney in Australia, and at the *Under Construction* conference in Helsinki. At first the *Communiqués* circulated anonymously on the net, and lately they have also been shown as 'art objects' in different exhibitions.

NOTES ON THE RHETORIC OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Lene Crone Jensen

The following reflections on *Under Construction* take the form of general observations on the conference as such, with less attention being given to specific constituent strands. My perspective is informed by the fact that I work in an art institution – a fact that entails my being part of the problematic which I find it relevant to ventilate here, and with which I am confronted daily in my own practice.

The conference, organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Finnish Ministry of Education and NIFCA, marked a recognition of the need for a change in approach and *modus operandi* in visual culture in the progressing of our multicultural society. Among its objectives was that of marking out a path towards what, in mildly proclamatory vein, was hailed in the publication *ARSIS/Under Construction* as ‘Det Nya Norden’. A new North, whose identity is in part to be forged through a redefined representative democracy: a democracy actively shaped by and reflective of a multicultural society. In all of this, visual culture is to be assigned a pivotal role: through drawing on a broader spectrum of forms of cultural expression it would come to represent a changed mainstream approach to cultural diversity.

STANCES ON THE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: RHETORIC

The idea that visual culture should have an important role in this process of change is both attractive and called for. The problem, or perhaps the snare, for this and similar initiatives – and indeed the same dilemma faces the private individual – is how to address the recurrent phenomenon of a disparity between words and action. Typically, a rhetoric of cultural diversity unfolds which is able to secure swift agreement on essentials such as openness towards other people and cultural forms, dialogue with alien cultures, the redefinition of notions of quality, and so on. Such agreement is as well intentioned as it is positive. But both here and in analogous contexts there is a tendency for this kind of debate to conclude in a status quo delivered by the rhetoric rather than actually issuing in action – or not, at least, in action that chimes with what is said. Instead, there is the immediate satisfaction that language brings, with our almost believing that we do what we say; and if things are repeated often enough there is the strong likelihood that they will figure in the public

debate in the guise of assured realities. This observation is not novel. And nor is there any reason to underestimate the significance of the fact that conferences qua rhetorical forums have an important function as in political, strategic game whose objective is to bring about change in society.

That I nonetheless want to focus on the gap between intention and result, between what is said and what is done, stems from my belief that taking account of that gap is crucial to any serious rethinking about one’s entire attitude to the multicultural society. This goes both in the context of addressing a conference agenda, and as a private individual, taking a long hard look at how one conducts oneself. The conference format is itself emblematic of the incongruence of word and act. A determining feature of that format is the identification of a problem area that will serve as the focus for debate and the exchange of views, findings and insights, with the aim to forge a basis for further action. As such the conference is patently a forum where verbal expression assumes centre stage, pointing towards some future time at which words will be turned into practice. The very name *Under Construction* self-referentially acknowledges that whatever a conference might effect lies in the future. Thought-provoking theories and explanatory models were presented, but it was also clear that, for all the well-meaning intentions, the serious achievement of a tolerant multicultural society was still a long way off.

THE RELATION OF THEORY TO PRACTICE

In the discrepancy between what’s said and what’s done, which served as my starting point, there resides the perennial issue of the intrinsic incommensurability of idea and experience, theory and practice. This distinction is essentially untenable since neither can exist without the other. My retention of it as a point of departure derives from the fact that, sitting in the audience and immediately attentive to what is being said, one registers an identifiable need, but one that goes unmet. That need is for the discussion to get beyond rhetoric in order, more sharply, critically and reflexively, to home in on the relation of theories to practice: the need to have analysed, probingly and searchingly, the practices of art institutions and the structures they represent. This is not to discount the differences of opinion that nuanced the debate at the conference. But critical

voices were raised that were allowed less scope and elicited less in the way of response, perhaps because they were too radical. These were voices that raised the issue of the racism, latent in many social structures, which arguably makes the wholesale redefinition of our art institutions imperative. If the organisers were aiming at more than the demonstration of a passion for justice, I should have liked to see that criticism boldly taken a step further. But that might require a different kind of forum.

INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE AND CONTEXT

Another important point to consider is what practical implications reflections about cultural diversity such as those that were expressed at the conference have for all of us as individuals. As has often been pointed out, each person and art institution needs to make a critical assessment of their respective practices and contexts, and to ask what sort of response to the issue of cultural plurality these signal. A number of considerations enter here.

- One aspect of the matter is the need to think through one’s own approach and practices as an art museum professional. Whatever may be the theoretical underpinnings of an exhibition featuring dialogue and openness towards other cultural forms, and whatever the redefinition of quality criteria proposed for a particular art project, there is no escaping the ‘inclusion-exclusion’ issue inherent in it. What is the rationale for the selection of particular artists? Is it all about justifying the rhetoric, with artists given prominence chiefly because of their ethnic background, even when that is denied? Or is it a case of real change?

- Another aspect is the need for an awareness of the art institution’s role as a vehicle for the discourses of society. The institution has an obligation to meet certain requirements and to discharge the responsibilities that warrant its being financed through the public sector. This holds both in respect of art/artists and the public. But if the political system it represents persists, despite well-meaning constituencies and welcome initiatives, in manifesting racist tendencies (witness the Danish election debate) and acquiescing in the unequal balance of power between Western and non-Western cultures, where does this leave the art institution? And what real scope for ongoing development does the system offer it?

RESULTS THAT GO BEYOND RHETORIC

Let me return to the conference. As noted above, there is a political consensus that recognises the role of the arts in giving substance to the concepts of tolerance and cultural plurality. In consequence, the Nordic Council of Ministers acknowledges an obligation, as a state-financed body, to support art: art, that is, which engages with the society that funds it. One hopes that the public sector will be equally prepared to support art projects that break, if necessary, with standard institutional frameworks, in an attempt to make room for other, different, cultural voices. More generally, an effort must be made to narrow the gap that exists between the rhetoric of cultural diversity and what goes on on the ground. This is incumbent on all – on those of

us working in the institutions that make art available to the public, and on those seeking to influence arts policy. Critical discussion must accompany the outworking of art projects, and indeed, most often it patently does. But perhaps that discussion should be assigned a different role: not simply that of a means in the service of an end, but one rendering it an integral part of the project, and conducive to results other than rhetoric. Looking ahead, I entertain the hope that the preliminary steps taken by *Under Construction* will be followed up in a way that promotes cultural initiatives and contributes to the flourishing of cultural diversity.

Lene Crone Jensen, Curator, Rooseum, Sweden
Translated by Susan Dew



BEMÆRKNINGER OM DEN KULTURELLE MANGFOLDIGHEDS RETORIK

Lene Crone Jensen

Mine overvejelser efter *Under Construction* vil i det følgende tage form som generelle bemærkninger om konferencen, og vægten vil således ligge mindre på direkte kommentarer om indholdet. Min synsvinkel er præget af min egen placering som ansat i en kunstinstitution; med det vil jeg fremhæve at jeg selv er en del af den problematik som jeg her synes er relevant at ventilere, og dagligt må tage stilling til i min egen praksis.

Konferencen var som bekendt arrangeret af Nordisk Ministerråd og NIFCA i erkendelse af, at det er nødvendigt at ændre holdning og arbejds-måde indenfor den visuelle kultur i udviklingen af vores multikulturelle samfund. Intentionen var blandt andet at arbejde sig frem mod det der i publikationen *ARSIS / Under Construction* lidt proklamatorisk kaldes ‘Det Nya Norden’. Et nyt Norden hvis identitet blandt andet skal konstrueres gennem et redefineret, repræsentativt demokrati, der aktivt bliver præget af og afspejler det multikulturelle samfund. Her ønsker man at den visuelle kultur skal have en central rolle, idet den ved at arbejde med et bredere spektrum af kulturelle udtryk kan repræsentere en ændret mainstream-holdning til kulturel mangfoldighed.

FORHOLD TIL DET MULTIKULTURELLE SAMFUND: RETORIK

Visionerne om den visuelle kulturs centrale rolle i denne udvikling er både sympatiske og tiltrængte. Problemet, eller måske den fælde som dette og lignende arrangementer kan gå i, ligesåvel som man som privatperson kan stå i det dilemma, er imidlertid hvordan man håndterer en jævnligt tilbagevendende uoverensstemmelse mellem ord og handling. Ofte udfolder der sig en retorik om kulturel mangfoldighed, hvor der hurtigt kan nås til enighed om nødvendigheder som åbenhed overfor andre mennesker og udtryksformer, dialog med anderledes kulturer, redefinering af hvad kvalitet er m.m. Denne enighed er såvel velment som positiv. Men her, og i andre lignende sammenhænge, findes en tendens til at debatten ender som en retorikkens status quo, hvor der faktisk ikke handles, eller ikke handles i overensstemmelse med det man siger. I stedet giver sproget en øjeblikkelig tilfredsstillelse, hvor man næsten tror på, at man gør det man siger, og gentages tingene



Colonel, From Pakistan



Colonel, From Somalia

ofte nok er der stor chance for at det fremstår som faktisk realitet i den offentlige debat. Der er naturligvis ikke noget nyt i disse betragtninger. Det skal heller ikke undervurderes at at konferencer som et retorisk forum har en væsentlig funktion i et politisk, strategisk spil, der har til formål at skabe ændring i samfundet.

Når jeg alligevel gerne vil fokusere på uoverensstemmelsen mellem intention og resultat, det sagte og gjorde er det fordi jeg mener det er yderst relevant at tage i betragtning hvis man virkelig skal gentænke sit forhold til det multikulturelle samfund. Relevant når man skal forholde sig til konferencer, og når man som privat person skal forholde sig til sin egen praksis. Som form tjener konferencen selv som billede på inkongruensen mellem ord og handling. Et af de bestemmende træk ved denne type arrangement er indkredsningen af et problemområde, som via debat og udveksling af synspunkter og viden har til formål at danne grundlag for videre handling. Som sådan er konferencen selvsagt et sprogligt funderet forum, rettet mod ved en senere lejlighed at omsætte ord til praksis. *Under Construction* markerede med sin titel selverkendende, at effekten af en conference ligger i fremtiden. Her blev fremlagt interessante teorier og forklaringsmodeller, men det blev også klart at vejen er lang før vi for alvor får realiseret et tolerant, multikulturelt samfund, til trods for de velmenende intentioner.

TEORIERNES RELATION TIL PRAKSIS

I diskrepansen mellem det sagte og gjorde, som jeg har taget udgangspunkt i, ligger naturligvis et tilbagevendende spørgsmål om den basale usammenlignelighed mellem idé og erfaring, teori

og praksis. En i bund og grund meningsløs adskillelse, da ingen kan eksistere uden den anden. Når jeg alligevel har taget udgangspunkt heri, er det fordi man som publikum i en konference der umiddelbart orienterer sig mod det der bliver sagt, kan sidde med et uforløst behov. Et behov for at diskussionen skal nå udover retorikken og drejes mere skarpt, kritisk og reflektivt ind på teoriernes relation til praksis. Et behov for at man nøje, granskende analyserer kunstinstitutionernes praksis og de strukturer de repræsenterer. Her skal jeg ikke ignorere de meningsforskelle der nuancerede debatten på konferencen. Men der lød kritiske røster som fik mindre plads og genklang, måske fordi det var for radikalt, røster om blandt andet den racisme som ligger latent i mange samfundsmæssige strukturer, og som kan gøre det nødvendigt helt og holdent at omdefinere vores kunstinstitutioner. Jeg kunne derfor have ønsket at man turde gå et skridt videre i kritikken, hvis man fra arrangørernes side ønskede at at vise mere end social patos. Men måske er der brug for et andet forum til det.

EGEN PRAKSIS OG KONTEKST

En anden væstenlig ting at se nærmere på er hvad tankerne omkring den kulturelle mangfoldighed, som udtrykt på konferencen blandt andet, indebærer i praksis for os som enkeltpersoner. Enhver person og kunstinstitution må, som det ofte har været påpeget, kritisk evaluere sin egen praksis og kontekst, og overveje hvilken indstilling man selv giver udtryk for i spørgsmålet om kulturel pluralitet. Her må man tage flere punkter i betragtning: - Dels må man tænke over sin egen personlige holdning og handling som kunstarbejder. Selvom der opstilles et teoretisk grundlag bag en udstilling

hvor der arbejdes med dialog og åbenhed overfor andre kulturelle udtryk, og selv om man redefinerer sine kvalitetskriterier i forhold til et kunstprojekt, må man forholde sig til den inklusion-eksklusions problematik som følger i kølvandet. Hvilken funktion udfylder de kunstnere som vælges ind i et projekt? Er der tale om en legitimering af en retorik, hvor kunstnerne primært får betydning i kraft af deres etniske baggrund til trods for en eventuel påstand om det modsatte? Eller er der reelt tale om en forandring?

- Dels må man være bevidst om kunstinstitutionens rolle som repræsentation af en samfundsmæssig diskurs. Som institution står man i den situation at man må leve op til de krav og udfylde de funktioner, som man bliver støttet finansielt på baggrund af. Dette gælder både i forhold til kunst/ kunstnere og publikum. Men hvis det politiske system man repræsenterer, til trods for velmenende kræfter og velkomne initiativer, stadig udtrykker racistiske tendenser (jævnførende den danske valgdebat) og en skæv magtbalance mellem vestlige og ikke-vestlige kulturer, hvilken situation stiller det da institutionen i? Og gives der fra systemets side reelt mulighed for at udvikle institutionen?

RESULTATER UDOVER RETORIKKEN

Her vil jeg vende tilbage til konferencen igen. Fra politisk side ønsker man som tidligere nævnt at anerkende kulturens rolle i styrkelsen af tolerance og kulturel pluralitet. Det vil sige at man fra Nordisk Ministerråds side også erkender sin pligt til, som et skattefinansieret organ, at støtte kunst; kunst som har at gøre med det samfund som finansierer det. Forhåbningsvis vil man fra offentlighedens side også støtte kunstprojekter, som eventuelt må bryde de gældende institutionelle rammer i bestræbelserne på at give plads til andre kulturelle stemmer. I alle tilfælde må man arbejde for at minimere den uoverensstemmelse der eksisterer mellem retorikken om kulturel mangfoldighed og ens handlinger på området. Dette må gælde for alle parter, både os indenfor kunstformidlingsinstitutionerne og dem som ønsker at føre politik på området. En kritisk diskussion må følge med udviklingen af et kunstprojekt, hvilket det jo selvfølgelig også oftest gør. Men måske skulle man tildele det en anden rolle. Ikke blot som et forberedende middel til målet, men som en central del af selve projektet, som forhåbningsvis kan føre til resultater udover retorikken. Jeg håber også, og ser også frem, til at ansatserne, der blev taget på *Under Construction* vil blive fulgt op, med reel betydning for kulturel virksomhed og udvikling af den kulturelle mangfoldighed.

Lene Crone Jensen, kurator, Rooseum, Sverige



Colonel, From Nepal

ÄT KÖTT OCH *DEMONSTRERA MERA*

Jag demonstrerar inte så ofta
man kanske borde demonstrera mera
Om jämställdhet, fientlighet och rasism
lika lön oavsett kön men mot kapitalism

Man kanske borde demonstrera mera
...inte så ofta. *Framför TV:n och softa'*
Men det måste ju nödvändigtvis inte
betyda att jag bryr mig mindre

Jag som pissat ner badhusets alla tre
simbassänger *går dit innan de stänger*
Jag som ytterst sällan betalar
För att åka tunnelbana *min röda fana*

Man kallar det att planka *Demonstrera mera*
två gånger har jag blivit tagen *Aresstera flera*
Men båda gångerna fixade jag
så att jag slapp betala *Ha!*

Jag kanske ändå borde demonstrera mera
mot djurplågeri och köttindustri
bli hindu och viska "Tat' wam asi"

Men jag demonstrerar inte så ofta
Ät kött och *Demonstrera mera*
Ät kött och *Demonstrera mera*
Ät kött, det är ändå dött, blir aldrig återfött

Ät kött och *Demonstrera mera*
McDonalds, jag har hört så mycket om de
De bara låtsas källsortera *Demonstrera mera*
men slänger allt i samma bytta sen
Så jag äter minsann Whopper meal igen

Jag känner två feminister, *två veganer*
socialister *som lever på Chikitabaner*
Så jag borde nog göra som de
jag kanske borde demonstrera mera

Men jag har ju gjort lumpen, för kung och fosterland
Där läste många porrtidningar ibland
Jag fattar ingenting... *läsa porrtidning?*
Utan bara runkade till bilderna så var jag klar

Det är ju så jobbigt att alltid fundera
trots att det alltid handlar om oss
Så jag demonstrerar inte så mycket mera
men så skriver jag ju dikter förstås

DET FINNS EN AV OSS ALLA inom oss alla

Låt en skara olika individer forma en ring
och du har en människas avbild
Låt sedan samma skara bilda ett led
och du avbildar en personlighet

Tjejer säger tjejgrejer men en tjej
säger att killgrejer är okey
Killar pillar i grillar och bränner sig
Repræsenterade inom dig och mig

Det finns en av oss alla inom oss alla
Alla kalla, alla allt för balla
Alla med eller utan ballar pallar
tralla samma visa jag trallar

Till svenskar och alla svartskallar
Jag kallar mig humanist
Vist är feministsnack trist
Invandrade handikappade bögars talan står på tavlan

Jag står över
jag behöver bara en mening att tralla
Det finns en av oss alla inom oss alla
men det är inte bara så bara. Låt en skara...

Olika individer formar en ring
ringen blir en människas avbild
Om samma skara bildar ett led
avbildas en personlighet

DANIEL BOYACIOGLU

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