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OPERATORANNA

Friday, 18 April 2014

Chance Encounters #22: Evelin Stermitz

Evelin Stermitz, M.A., M.Phil., studied Media and New Media Art at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and holds the degree in Philosophy from Media Studies. Her works in the field of media and new media art focus on post-structuralist feminist art practices. In 2008 she founded ArtFem.TV – Art and Feminism ITV (<http://www.artfem.tv>) and received a Special Mention for the project at the IX Festival Internacional de la Imagen, VI Muestra Monográfica de Media Art, University of Caldas, Manizales, Colombia, in 2010. Her works have been exhibited and screened at various venues such as the MMoMA Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russia / Vetlanda Museum, Sweden / Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico City / Museum of Modern Art, Buenos Aires, Argentina / PAN Palazzo delle Arti Napoli / CAM Casoria Contemporary Art Museum, Naples, Italy / Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad, Serbia / Fundació Joan Miró and CCCB Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Spain / Museum of Fine Arts, Florida State University, USA / MAC/VAL Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, France / Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA / International Museum of Women, San Francisco, USA. www.evelinsternitz.net es@mur.at

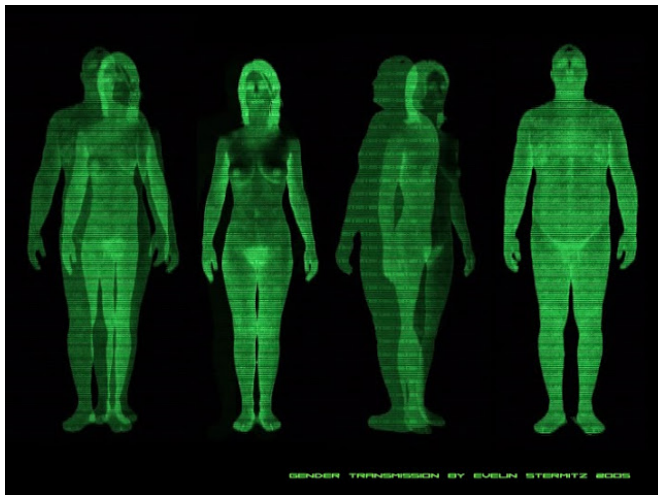


How did you first decide that art was your path in life ?

Actually, I have always been interested in different fields of the arts, first in contemporary dance, later in visual arts and time-based art. I decided to study media and new media art, since it came close to my occupation. Actually, I did not decide on the path of the arts, but it got tied to me somehow since art became the largest part of my life and constitutes a part that I find most interesting. When I remember earlier, my first visits of art exhibitions in galleries or museums through an art teacher made me real curious to find out more about art that seemed to be something secret to me and that I wanted to explore further. Later, I remember that I felt total peace when visiting those institutions. I enjoyed the silence and just watching art. If to describe them as white cubes, I would say that they are areas of peace and freedom that attracted me and created meaning to me.

What's your main interest as an artist ?

My main interest is my involvement in gender and socio-cultural issues, thus expressed through images, might it be as a still in photography or moving in video pieces. Through this the aesthetics of art can provide a frame for entering another level of perception and experience. This means, to deal with these issues outside of only logic experience and analysis, to receive another approach on those aspects, and to see later what meaning does it construct for the logic perception. Further, I think that the sensibility for women's issues in the arts is limited through the trained male perception of art. Although plenty of women graduate from art academies, but develop a perception that goes along with the male discourse in the arts and that strengthens a male system without any critical approach.



Where do you get the ideas for your work ?

My ideas or the themes of my works emerge from personal issues as well as from the perception of our current society and current issues. Central are women related issues and an aesthetics that provides space for gender aspects. The visual aspect is foregrounded, but sometimes the visual level becomes expanded through textual elements. Actually, although I also have been working with sound, I recognized that I am a lousy listener and just developed the ability to listen carefully recently. Therefore, I found new interest in the spoken word and sound. Actually, the ideas for my works come from fields of interest, from the need to explore and transfer these fields, actually suddenly they are here, and actually I cannot really say why and I feel the urge to realize them. Later I can put them in a contextual frame to see what I have done and what I have explored. I do have a previous conceptual frame to the idea and deal with this, but the process of creating is vivid and not static. I cannot do an art project like a mathematical statistics work where the output is predicted, previously settled and determined. When I was a child, I got a book entitled "He was there and sat in the garden"

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Annabelle Boko

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Annabelle Boko

Annabelle Boko is a London-based cultural operator. She specialises in creating contemporary art events that encourage cross-disciplinary practice, collaboration and exchange. Please submit your press releases and news for free to operatorannab@gmail.com. If approved, your events/news will be published in few days.

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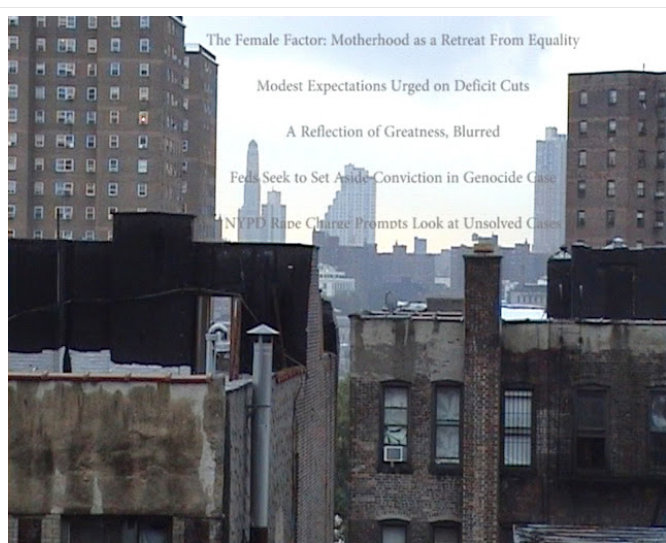
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(German title) with the original English title "He Was There from the Day We Moved In" by Rhoda Levine. Actually, I sometimes think about this book. It is about a long-haired dog that suddenly sat in the garden and does not want to move. I loved the drawings (by Edward Gorey), but did not understand the meaning of the book, which is "that some things are unknowable." I think it is like this with art, suddenly it is in the garden of your life and you have to deal with it.

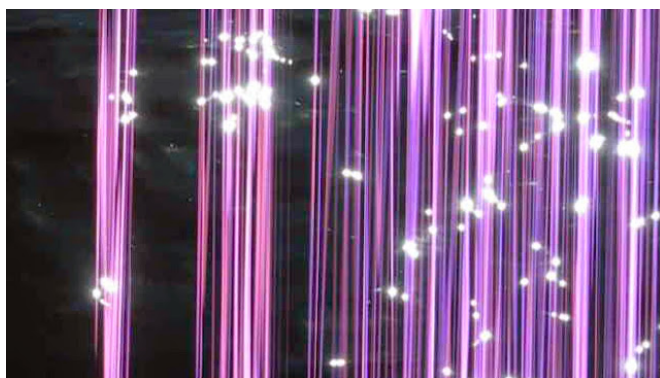


What would you most like to make that you haven't so far ?

I would like to realize a multiple channel video installation in a single room, since it is not so easy to find an appropriate room with all the technical equipment and facilities to do this. Also, I would love to find the time to work on a larger project like to create an artistic motivated documentary or an artistic inspired feature film.

What do you think is the social role of art ?

The social role of art is manifold, art engages the perceiver and can change the perception in our society, can raise awareness, or can provide different point of views on issues and open new paths. Art offers reflection and movement.

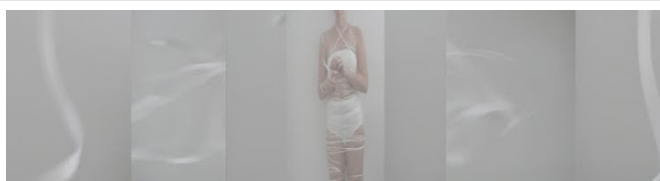


What place does creativity have in education ?

To be creative as an educator can provide playful methods on learning and joyful understanding of the process of learning. Thus making the process of learning a life-long joyful engagement with intellectual curiosity. Creativity beneath general education is further important in helping to find creative solutions for actual difficulties and to solve them in cutting-edge ways. Science says that in times of crisis, creative thinking is important to assist in finding new ways of solving current societal problems. But actually in times of crisis the politics are cutting down budget for art education and creative methods.

I find the research on creativity and education by Arthur D. Efland interesting, for example in American schooling "In the last decade there has been a resurgence of interest in creativity and the role that education might play in its cultivation. Creativity is the process by which the mind generates new and original ideas and innovation. – ideas and things that have not existed before. In large part this new interest has been brought about by multiple problems and challenges facing civilization on a global scale – problems such as environmental degradation, climate change, the globalization of the world's economies, and economic competition. ... The kind of creative thinking involved in solving societal and economic problems seems to be a far cry from the creativity that occurs within art practice." (Efland, p. 2)

It is interesting for creativity and education in the U.S. after World War II what Efland analyzes as follows: "Schooling for the working class stressed obedience to vested authority, punctuality, and cultural uniformity. By contrast schools for the middle class children stressed the development of individuality where each child was recognized for his or her unique abilities, interests and accomplishments." (Efland, p. 9) "By contrast, the creative class ... (-nowadays-) ... is a thesis advanced to explain connections between creativity and economic development and the role the arts might play in the development of cities and nations in the future. ... At very least the preparation of the creative class will rely on the ability to transcend conventional ideas in favor of receptivity to the new, the original and the different. I believe that this is not so much a matter of change in subject matter as it is a change in the atmospherics of schooling, making of it a place filled with curiosity and wonder." (Efland, p. 15) (Arthur D. Efland, From Creative Self Expression to the Rise of the Creative Class: A Speculative Inquiry in the History of Art Education, in: InJAE8.2, The International Journal of Arts Education, Volume 8, Number 2, December 2010, NATEC National Taiwan Arts Education Center.)



Do you think that by challenging conventional views, art can truly make a change in the public's perception ?

Art can raise awareness of unconventional views, but for conservative societies the impact of creating change is minimal and only influential in the

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intellectual art circles themselves. Actually, art movements always have been ahead from societies but developed within their societal and technologic scopes. But at least, art attempts to open (some) people of a society for new directions of perception. We have to be aware that still a large part of our society does not have any access to or interest in the arts and sees art merely as a decorative element.

What are your future plans and projects ?

I hardly talk about any future plans, because I prefer to talk about realized projects that can be discussed in concrete.

Thank you very much.

Caption to the Images:

Blue House, Dance Improvisation Performance, 2009, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

Gender Transmission, dual channel video installation, 2005, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

Into the Ceiling, Part I, 3 channel video installation, 2011, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

Stars and Stripes on Darkness, 6 channel video installation, 2013, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

White Band Cut, 3 channel video, 2007, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

Posted by [Annabelle Boko](#) at 02:15

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