

# EKATERINA SHAPIRO-OBERMAIR

80 born in Moscow, Russia  
98 Immigration to Germany  
since 04 lives and works in Vienna  
<http://ekaterina-shapiro.glazprom.org>

## **Education**

- 06–09 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria, performative art and sculpture class of Prof. Monica Bonvicini, diploma by Prof. Manfred Pernice  
05–06 University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria, sculpture and multimedia class of Prof. Erwin Wurm  
05 Berlin University of the Arts (UDK), Germany, class of Prof. Katharina Sieverding  
99–04 Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg, Germany, painting and object art class of Prof. Rolf-Gunter Dienst, honour as “Meisterschülerin”

## **Grants and Awards**

- 12.11–2.12 Gyeonggi Creation Center, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea  
10 Start-Award of Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture  
09 Appreciation prize of Federal Ministry for Science and Research, Austria  
09 Appreciation prize of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria  
04–05 Sokrates/Erasmus scholarship for the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria  
04 Scholarship for PVA – Media Lab, Plymouth, Great Britain  
03 Scholarship for the International Summer Academy Salzburg, Austria, video class of Ellen Cantor  
01 International Summer Academy Salzburg, Austria, installation class of Ilya & Emilia Kabakov and Boris Groys

## **Selected Solo Exhibitions**

- 11 Parallel Actions 1, Gallery Na Vspolnom, Moskau / RU  
10 Salon systématique, Start Gallery of the City of Vienna, MUSA Museum on Demand, Vienna / A  
08 Mental Rotations, together with Wolfgang Obermair, SWINGR, Vienna / A

## **Selected Group Exhibitions**

- 11 32. Österreichischer Grafikwettbewerb, Innsbruck / A  
Future Garden, kunstbunker – forum für zeitgenössische kunst, Nuremberg

edition release, <Dienstag Abend>, curated by Ludwig Kittinger & Fernando Mesquita, Ve.Sch, Vienna / A

NeoSI: neue Situationistische Inter...nationale, curated by Amer Abbas, Kunstverein Schattendorf, Schattendorf / A

Antidepressiva, curated by Christian Stock, Galerie Peithner-Lichtenfels, Vienna / A

in effigie, together with Anja Manfredi, Markus Proschek and Oliver Laric, Seidlgasse 14, Vienna / A

Die Fotografie in Referenz..., curated by Martin Vesely, Fotohof, Salzburg / A  
The Days of this Society are Numbered, at Hugo Canoilas: Mural Newspaper, Adrons Arts Center NY / USA

10 Apartment Exhibition. Vienna Entourage, ArtRaum, Moscow / RU

Where do we go from here?, Secession, Vienna (C) / A

Aquarellhappening 2000–2009, Tyrolean State Museum, Innsbruck / A

The Merger – by following this 1 easy rule..., Venue Display, Chicago / USA

Double Volley, Gallery Area 53, Vienna / A

09 Exhibition 6, Bäckerstraße4 – platform for young art, Vienna / A

Villa Sovietica, MEG – Musée d'ethnographie de Genève, Geneva / CH

10. Aquarellhappening, Mehlerhaus, Tux, Tyrolea / A

Soviet objects. Corpus Delicti, diploma exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna / A

Never Odd or Evil, together with Wolfgang Obermair and Markus Sulzbacher, Fenster C, Vienna (C) / A

Works on paper, Gallery Area 53, Vienna / A

08 Neo-SI?, exhibition curated by Amer Abbas, gallery Tristesse deluxe, Berlin / G

Oh, du lieber Augustin..., Georgien and Russian artists, Radovan-Halle, Vienna / A

boss-eyed god, together with Tamas St.Auby, N&n gallery, Budapest / HU

Archive in Residence, gallery UNA, Bucharest (C) / RO

Archive in Residence, VBKÖ – The Austrian Association of Women Artists, Vienna / A

07 If Chemicals Enter The Eyes, Wash Thoroughly With Clear Running Water, 5th Graphic Art Biennale Novosibirsk / RU

Interfest, Contemporary Art Festival, Chernyakhovsk (former Insterburg) / RU

06 Nairobi Retour, Kunsthalle Vienna, project space, Vienna / A

Economy Class, Alliance française de Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya – Austrian Embassy, Nairobi / KE

05 Home Stories, Kunsthalle Vienna, project space, Vienna / A

04 KunstFilmBiennale, Cinema at the Museum Ludwig, Colonne (C) / G

(C)= catalogue

### **Lectures and Performances**

- 10 BEETHOVEN::KK4+5·GIL. and others, together with Wolfgang Obermair, <Dienstag Abend>, curated by Ludwig Kittinger & Fernando Mesquita, Ve.Sch, Vienna / A  
Wolokolamsker Chaussee X, as a member of a group KJDT, Project Fabrika, Moscow / RU  
Visual Mini Bar, together with Wolfgang Obermair, at the exhibition "Pol-ygrades" by Kathi Hofer, Ve.Sch, Vienna / A
- 09 Das große Moskau, das es niemals gab, Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg  
Revolutionsmoderne, ruiniert in Moskau, Symposionistische Internationale Ostv/ Est Nr. 6, Nestroyhof, Vienna / A
- 08 The great Moscow, that never was, Institut for History and Theory of Architecture, University of Applied Arts Vienna / A  
4:33 GG, Performance together with Tamas St.Auby and Wolfgang Obermair, Symposium dedicated to the exhibition Fluxus East Budapest, LUMU Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art Budapest / HU
- 07 Minefield of the Russian Avant-garde, performative lecture, Café Anzengruber, Vienna / A
- 06 4:33 Generation Generali, action at the exhibition "...Concept Has Never Meant Hourse", together with Tamas St.Auby and Wolfgang Obermair, Generali Foundation, Vienna

### **Curatorial Projects (together with Wolfgang Obermair)**

- 10 Initiation and organisation of the exchange project between alternative exhibition spaces in Moscow and in Vienna, curation of the exhibition with Russian artist "Interpolare", Ve.Sch, Vienna / A
- 08 Exhibition series ...gelegentlich DJ (...occasionally DJ) with Patrick Anthofer, Kathi Hoffer, Michel Kral und Anna Ceeh/Franz Pomassl in kunstbunker – forum für zeitgenössische kunst, Nuremberg / G
- 07 If Chemicals Enter Your Eyes, Wash Thoroughly With Clear Running Water, Austrian part of the V. Graphic Biennale Novosibirsk (C) / RU
- 04 Menschen im Bunker, exhibition of Sergey Bratkov, kunstbunker – forum für zeitgenössische kunst, Nuremberg / G

### **Publications**

- 08 Das große Moskau, das es niemals gab (Hrsg.)  
SCHLEBRUEGGE.EDITOR, ISBN: 978-3-85160-137-4

# MONUMENTAL- DECORATIVE COMPLEX

Installation of a free-standing object,  
two objects on the wall and a mirror, 2011  
Wood, varnish, mordant, gouache, mirror  
Exhibition: "in effigie", Seidlgasse 14, Vienna  
May 11–15, 2011

Photo: Anja Manfredi





Photo: Anja Manfredi

Monumental-decorative Complex  
Ehhibition view



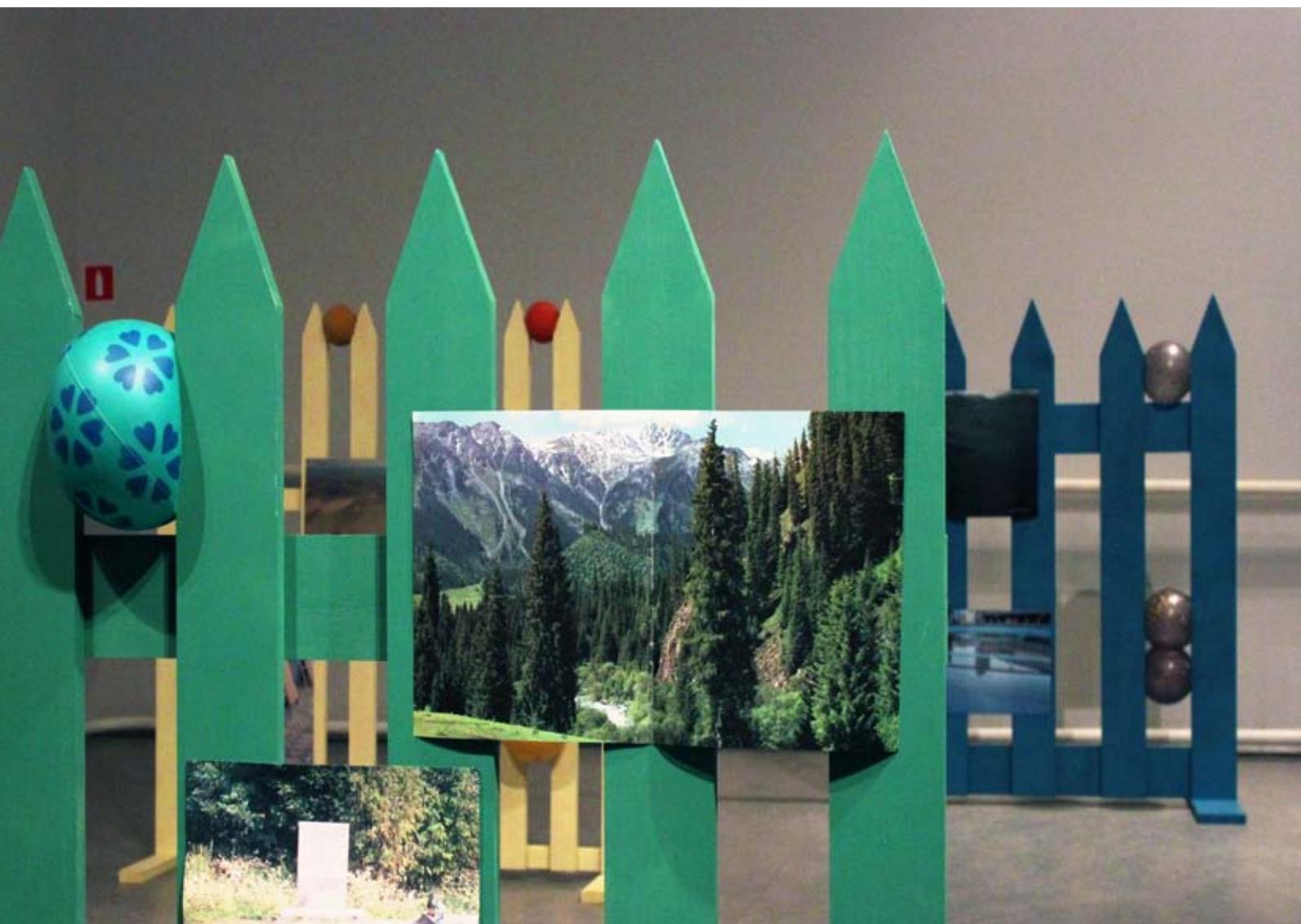
Photo: Anja Manfredi

Monumental-decorative Complex  
Ehhibition view  
Background: PART by Markus Proschek

# FENSES

Installation of three objects, 2011  
Wood, varnish, injet print, book pages, balls  
Exhibition: "Parallel Actions 1+2"  
Gallery Na Vspolnom, Moscow  
February 11–22, 2011

Foto: Alisa Oleva





Photos: Alisa Oleva

**Fences**  
Exhibition view

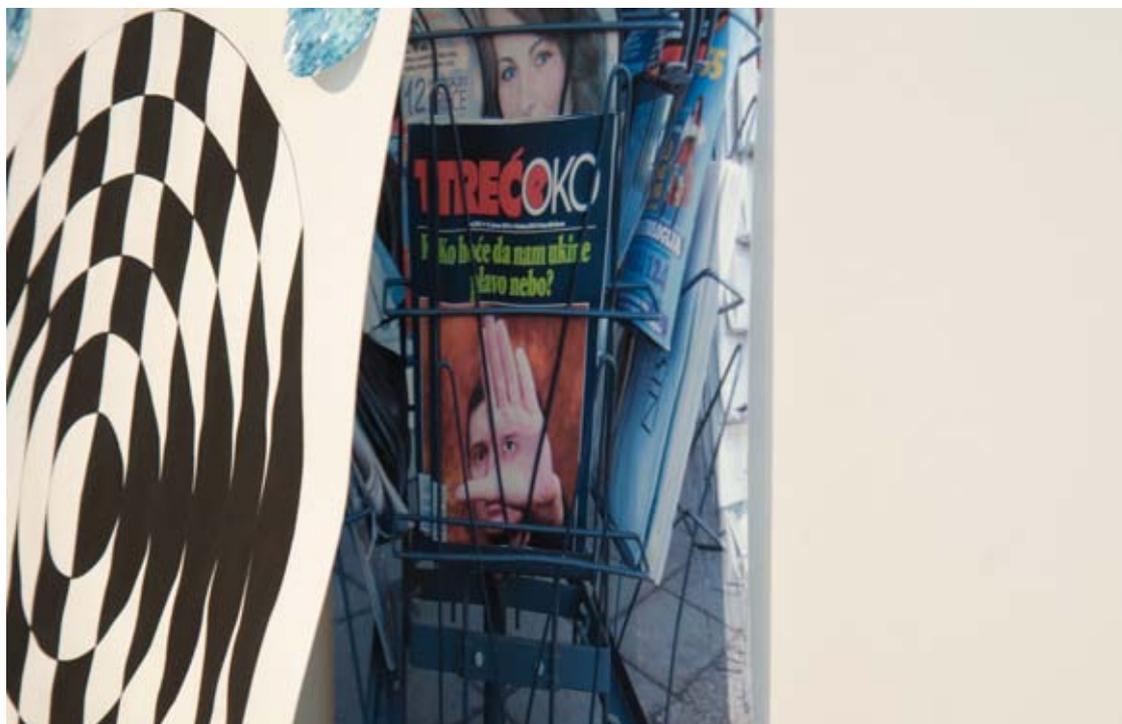


Photo: Wolfgang Obermair

**Crosses**, detail  
at the exhibition "Parallele Aktionen 1"  
wood, varnish, gouache, acrylic, inkjet-print,  
table tennis balls, rubber rope, 2011



Photo: Wolfgang Obermair

**Crosses**  
Exhibition view

# МОСКВА, ТЫ НАМ НЕ СТОЛИЦА

Moscow, You Are Not Our Capital  
an the Exhibition "where do we go from here?"  
curated by Elisabeth Bettina Spörr  
Secession, Vienna  
July 2–August 29, 2010

Foto: Wolfgang Obermair





### **Moscow, You Are Not Our Capital**

Katalin Timár

In the work of Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, relationality could be one of the most fundamental terms of describing her mode of operation, which is complemented by another key aspect of her artistic activity. This is a characteristic that Kathi Hofer called eclecticism in the context of Shapiro-Obermair's work, but in order to avoid any unnecessary associations to an exclusively formal approach, I would rather identify it as promiscuity, despite of the excessive sexual connotation of this term. This promiscuous strategy allows Shapiro-Obermair to maintain a resistance to received ideas when it comes to some central dogmas of art and art history, such as authorship, the possible facets of the multiple in the face of the uniqueness of the art object, the artwork's relationship to its spectators, the purity of the definition of the artist, to name a few. With her carefully staged installations and "arrangements", and from an anti-formalist position, Shapiro-Obermair reconsiders the transcendency of art by indirectly arguing with Greenberg's self-contradictory ideas about modernism and abstraction.

Москва, ты нам не столица / Moscow, you are not our capital epitomizes Shapiro-Obermair's interests in working with various layers and aspects of cultural history. The work is underwritten with her private micro-history since it contains photographic representations of certain emblematic locations in her geographical trajectory. This endeavour is translated into an aesthetic experience by Shapiro-Obermair's juxtaposition and variation of recurring elements, such as snapshots of seemingly ordinary urban locations (from Nuremberg and Berlin) with photographs of modernist-minimalistic objects, and hand-made drawings of repetitive, geometrical forms, looking like computer-generated prints. All these elements are carefully arranged and staged for the spectators who are invited by Shapiro-Obermair to establish their own relationship to her objects and to the ideas they are meant to evoke; some of which - as the title suggests - refer to the personal consequences of geographical dislocation that is, in the case of the artist, is devoid of any sentimental nostalgia.



Photo: Wolfgang Obermair

Moscow, You Are Not Our Capital, detail  
Installation of four boxes, mixed media (wood, glass,  
metal, ink-jet print, gouache, cardboard, b/w photogra-  
phy), different sizes between 83 × 60 × 7,5 cm and 95 ×  
70 × 7,5 cm, 2010

# FROM CHIPPING COME CHIPS

33 Hair Ties and Hair Clips from the Collection  
of Daniel Nicely Reis, exhibition view  
at the exhibition "where do we go from here?"  
Secession, Vienna  
July 2–August 29, 2010

Foto: Wolfgang Obermair



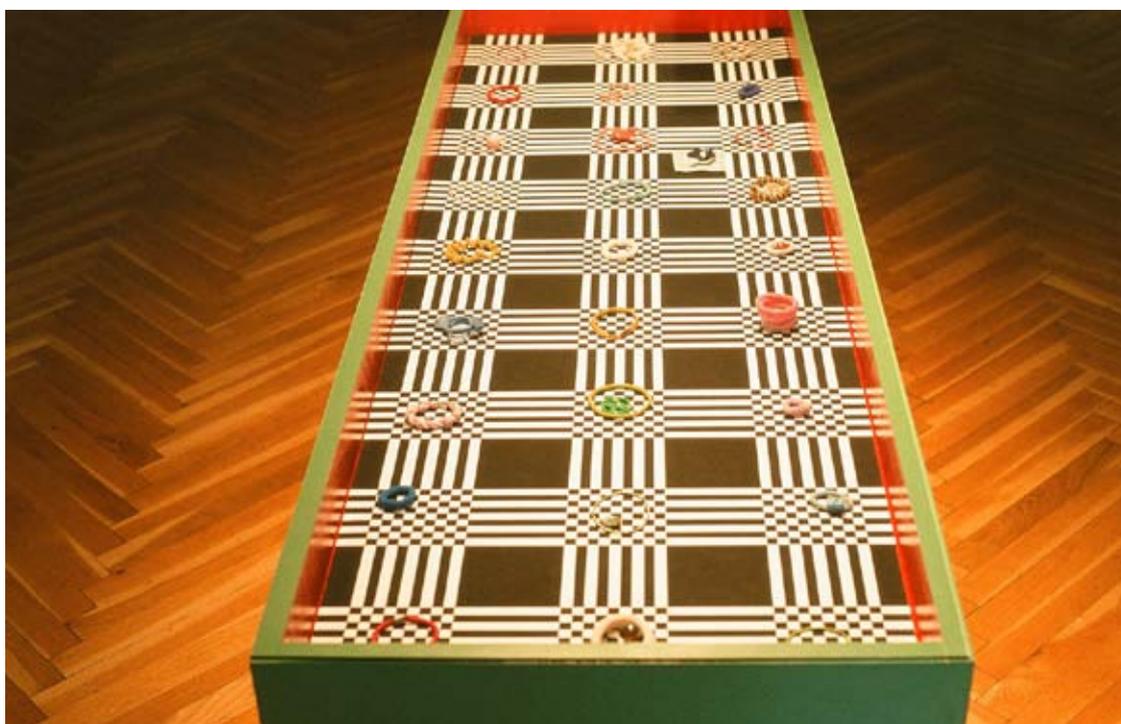


Photo: Wolfgang Obermair

33 Hair Ties and Hair Clips from the Collection of Daniel Nicely Reis, exhibition view at the exhibition "where do we go from here?" Display case, hair bands, framed collages, 2010

# SALON SYSTÉMIQUE

Solo exhibition  
Start Gallery of the City of Vienna  
MUSA – Museum on Demand, Vienna  
May 21 – June 17, 2010





Salon Systématique  
Exhibition view



Salon Systémique  
Details

EKATERINA SHAPIRO-OBERMAIR  
WOLFGANG OBERMAIR

## VISUAL MINI BAR

Visual Mini Bar  
together with Wolfgang Obermair  
at the exhibition "Polygrades" by Kathi Hofer  
mixed media (wood, glas, 3 bottles of vodka, rotating  
camera, video projector, car radio, speakers)  
Ve.Sch, Vienna  
March 25, 2010

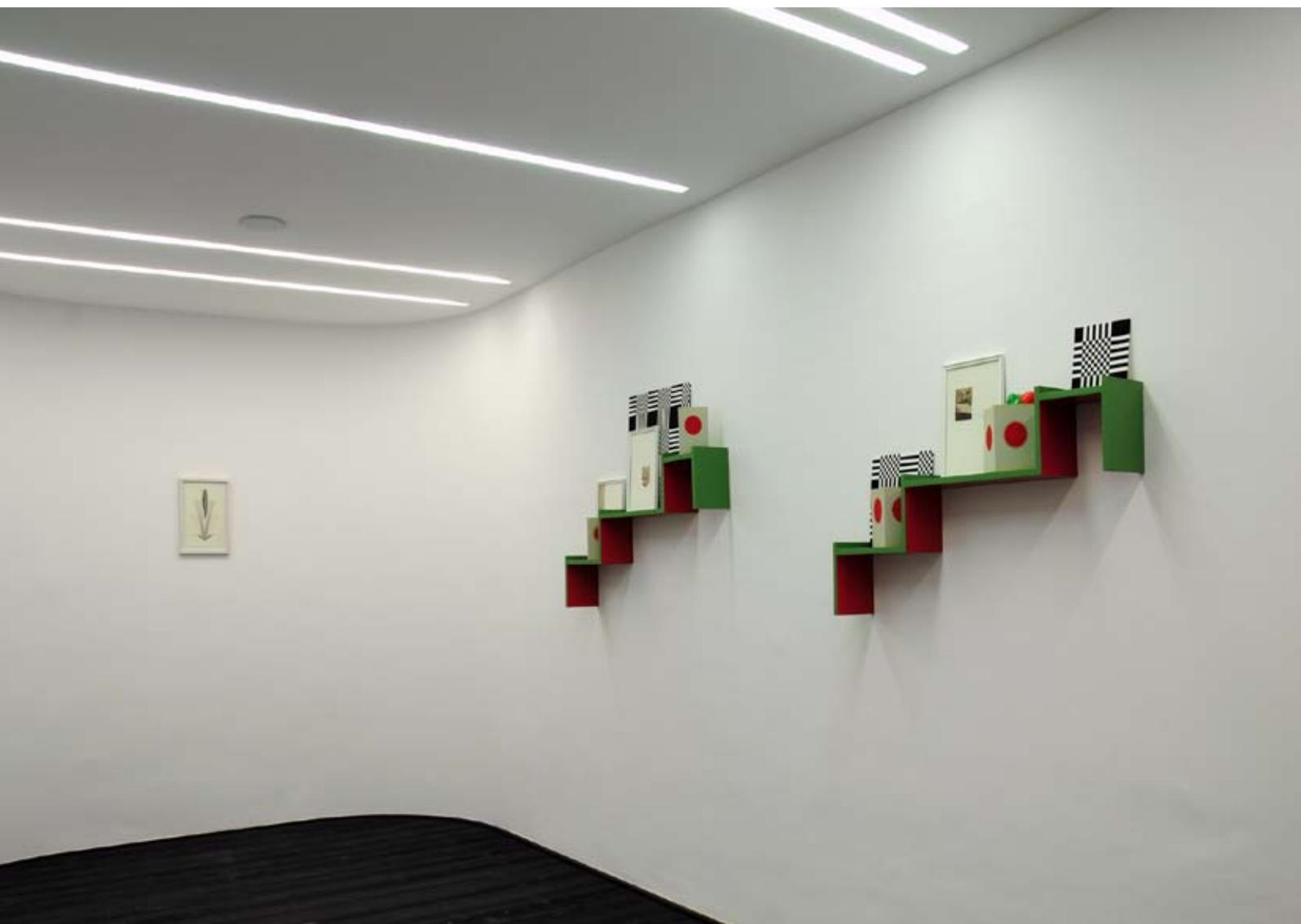




Visual Mini Bar in action  
Ve.Sch, Vienna, 2010

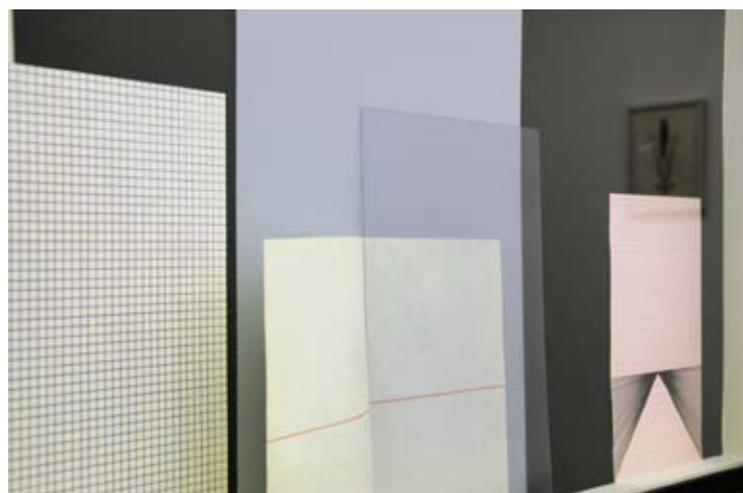
# EXHIBITION 6

Ryba-Fish, Polka 1 and Polka 2  
at the 'Exhibition 6'  
Bäckerstraße 4 —platform for young art, Vienna  
December 01, 2009–January 23, 2010





Stend 4 and Stend 5



Exhibition 6, details

# CORPUS DELICTI

Soviet Objects. Corpus Delicti  
Diploma exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna  
June 8 – June 26, 2009

© photo: Thomas Freiler



### Soviet Objects. Corpus Delicti

In Russian the word "Object" is called "Vešč", which etymologically speaking derives from the verb "veščat"(to speak). Vešč Objekt Gegenstand was also the name of a magazine published by El Lissitzky and Ilja Ehrenburg. The term Object is at the same time the center of the work "Corpus Delicti" with a particular depth towards the Soviet. This interest is not only conditioned biographically since the actual Focus of these objects consists in the fact that their context does no longer exist. Their original function has been lost, though their iconography can still be read, it is no longer completely understood. In a certain way the term "Soviet Object" was already a paradox from the start: on one hand, the ideological, spiritual and the speculative were of highest importance in the USSR. On the other hand, the materialism, which formed the basis of the communist theory, demanded for a way of thinking within the categories of the physical.

Creating part of the Project is a "found" collection of Soviet artifacts from the Russian dissident Ella Opalnaja, which, through its autonomy, becomes an element of the whole. It forms an exhibition within the exhibition. The same objects are shown twice. Once by Ella Opalnaja, once by Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair. The shape of the used display cases result from different variations of a wedge-shaped modular construction with a 14 degree angle, which can be applied both vertically and horizontally. Their raw material consists of Viennese furniture of the 1950s. Three assemblages hang on the walls, mounted in the spaces between them are three Soviet plant vases from the 1980s each containing a Chlorophytum (green lily).

Throughout the entire installation references to the Russian Constructivism are clear. These are not only readable in the stylistic idiom, which became the general vocabulary of contemporary art, but are also present in still current questions (like e.g. the discrepancy between autonomous work of art and applied art and/or the relationship between function and form of an Object). The emphasis of the artistic discourse lies thus in the attempt to extend the field of activity of the artist to curatorial work, exhibition design, architecture, culturology and ethnography. The position of the artist, the collector and the curator are placed in a relationship next to each other. Working with found objects re-activates the collective memory. The connection between memory, transmission and aesthetics, and also between the present and a reminding past, are all determining elements of the environment



Fotos: Wolf-Dieter Grabner

Showcases with Ella  
Opalnaja's collection

EKATERINA SHAPIRO-OBERMAIR  
WOLFGANG OBERMAIR

# NEVER ODD OR EVIL

Installation at the exhibition  
Never Odd or Evil  
together with Wolfgang Obermair  
Fenster C, Vienna  
April 3 – April 14, 2009





### **Never Odd or Evil**

In the center of the installation is a slender pedestal, on it are various objects from the era of the Soviet Union arranged closely and with no visible order: A child's plastic toy in the form of a llama, an electric samovar with the logo of the Olympic Games of 1980, a green carbolite jar with a picture of Lomonosov University, a porcelain cup with figures from the fairy tale Buratino, pull-out plastic cups for a picnic, Christmas decorations made of cotton wool and glue in the form of a bear, the young Lenin reading as a porcelain figure... The objects are illuminated with a specifically developed lighting system. The control of the light works on the basis of the electronic kit "Mini roulette" by the company Conrad. The lights, however, never come to rest, but move with relatively high velocity from a beam to the next. They linger only briefly at undetermined points and then take back to moving. In a word, it could be described as a "restless chase". Two benches in the simplistic Soviet design, carpentered from wood of Viennese rotunda furniture of the 50s, complete the installation.



### **Das große Moskau, das es niemals gab**

The Great Moscow, that never was  
Buildings of the Soviet avant-garde in contemporary Moscow

Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, Wolfgang Obermair [ed.]

With contributions by Nikolai Assejew, Kirill Faradzhev,  
Sergei Nikitin, Iwan Sablin, Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair and  
photographs by Ulrike Boehm, Vera Faber, Julia Jungfer

Germ./Russ., 204 p., 16,5 x 21,3 cm, numerous color and  
b&w images, paperback, Wien, SCHLEBRÜGGE.EDITOR, 2008  
ISBN 978-3-85160-137-4

The book documents the architecture of the Soviet avant-garde in Moscow and the situation concerning it today. In addition to four essays by controversial Russian authors of the younger generation and a story by N. Aseyev from 1925, the book contains an extensive part of the picture. Central are the types of buildings from the 1920s: workers' clubs, community kitchens, communal houses, bread factories, garages, public schools. Many of these so-called "construction of the second plan" were rediscovered only recently. The current issue between the preservation and demolition confronts the publication with a complex psychogram of a Moscow that never was. The editors provide an insight into the current discourse as a platform for the necessary and, in Moscow, still pending discussion over the architectural heritage and urban areas.

The title of the book "The Great Moscow, that never was" refers primarily to the urban plan, "Greater Moscow" by Sergei Shestakov from the year 1926. This plan provided for a fundamental restructuring of Moscow and regulated the distribution of key avant-garde works throughout the city. But after only a short time the plan was rejected. The avant-garde project of a new city remained only a fragment. Additionally, the book's title alludes to the fact that many designs of

the Soviet avant-garde architecture, even during their peak and despite numerous contests and competitions, were never created or if, only rudimentarily. In the sense of the book, the title also suggests a contemporary aspect: Constructivism, through its utopian character, gave the city the future vision that is obviously lacking in today's Moscow.

The two main components of the book are obvious. Text and images seem to exist almost independently of each other. The picture series show, in the form of a documentary account, what remains of the constructivist legacy in Moscow. The photographs themselves have been taken on two trips, one in April 2007 and one in September 2008. In the book, they are divided into five groups – depending on the type of object: training facilities, utility facilities such as kitchens and bread factories, administrative buildings, recreational facilities, such as workers' clubs and sports facilities, and, of course, the communal houses.

The texts do not comment on the images directly. There are individual essays of young Russian scholars. The authors belong to a special generation: though in their youth they still consciously experienced the Soviet system, they have taken their proper place in the post-Soviet society. Under different perspectives, they contemplate the non-homogeneous cultural heritage of the 1920s that is now – for many reasons – in a difficult situation.

Why is the cultural heritage of Russia so highly valued in the West and hardly worth anything in its own country? As ongoing, there is no functioning historic monument preservation in Russia. The constructivist buildings often fall to the way of commercial interests. This inevitably leads to their demolition or their incompetent reconstruction. In addition, everything that is reminiscent of the social and economic experiments in the spirit of communism evokes, in a large part of the population, only negative reactions. The visual culture in today's "resurrected" Orthodox Russia is dominated by traditional ideas about their architecture. Constructivism hardly fits into this canon.

How the situation in Moscow is perceived by the average citizen is described by the sociologist Sergei Nikitin in his text 'Graue, seltsame Gebäude' ("Gray, strange buildings"). In the project Moskulprog he conducted numerous surveys on the streets of Moscow. He examined how constructivist buildings are seen by the younger generation of Moscow. What do the older city residents think about these buildings, what were their real stories like in their real city?

In his article 'Stil und Stadtbild' ("Style and Townscape") the St. Petersburg art historian Ivan Sablin writes about the artistic and architectural features of the constructivist buildings. His position, which, through skepticism and criticism, not only unloads on the fragments of constructivist past, but on constructivism itself, is not entirely uncontroversial in Russia (especially in Moscow). By challenging the myth of the Soviet avant-garde architecture in his text Sablin breaks a taboo.

Kirill Faradzhev's essay explores the intellectual context of constructivism. For the philosopher Faradzhev the main goal of constructivism lies – as the Symbolists formulated in their literary manifestos – in the organization of “new forms of being with the education of a new constructive people”. Therefore, the Constructivism was primarily an anthropological and not a social class related movement. The architecture of Constructivism worked as an unmediated designer of the new life environment.

The text by Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, ‘Das große Moskau. Anmerkungen’ (“The Great Moscow. Notes”) at the end of the book deals with the urban development of Moscow by the end of the 19th Century to the present. Along with basic information for understanding the problems presented in the book, the text also offers insights into the changing status of the buildings of the Soviet avant-garde in the current urban landscape.

Written right at the beginning of the book, is a futuristic story by an author hardly known in this country, the revolutionary poet and close friend of Mayakovsky, Nikolai Aseyev ‘Ein Detail. Moskauer Fantasie’ (“A Detail. Moscow’s Imagination”), 1926. The hero of the story Vanka Oblakov embodies the lifestyle of the 1920s. Oblakov is a visionary of the future Moscow.

The editors of the publication are the native Muscovite Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair and Wolfgang Obermair. Both are artists and curators in the field of contemporary art and architecture.

Kirill FARADZEV

Translation: Victoria Rowley



Foto: Ulrike Boehm

EKATERINA SHAPIRO-OBERMAIR  
WOLFGANG OBERMAIR

# MENTAL ROTATIONS

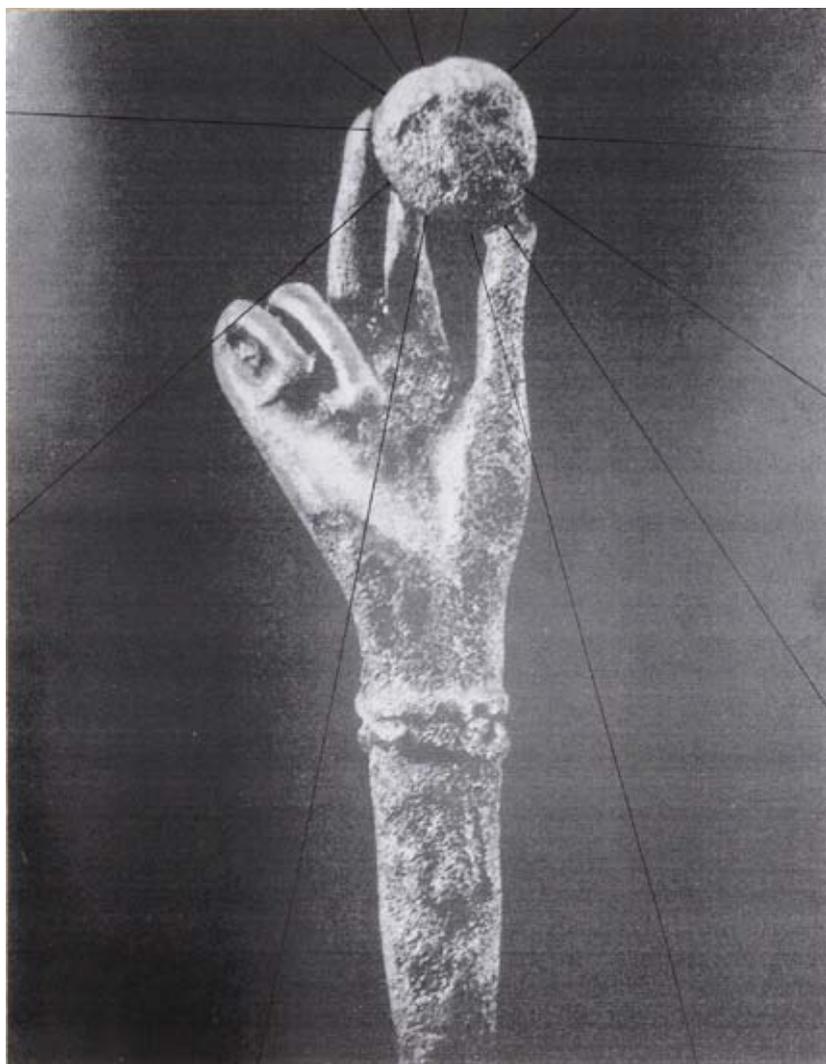
Exhibition together with Wolfgang Obermair  
SWINGR, Vienna  
April 24–May 1, 2008



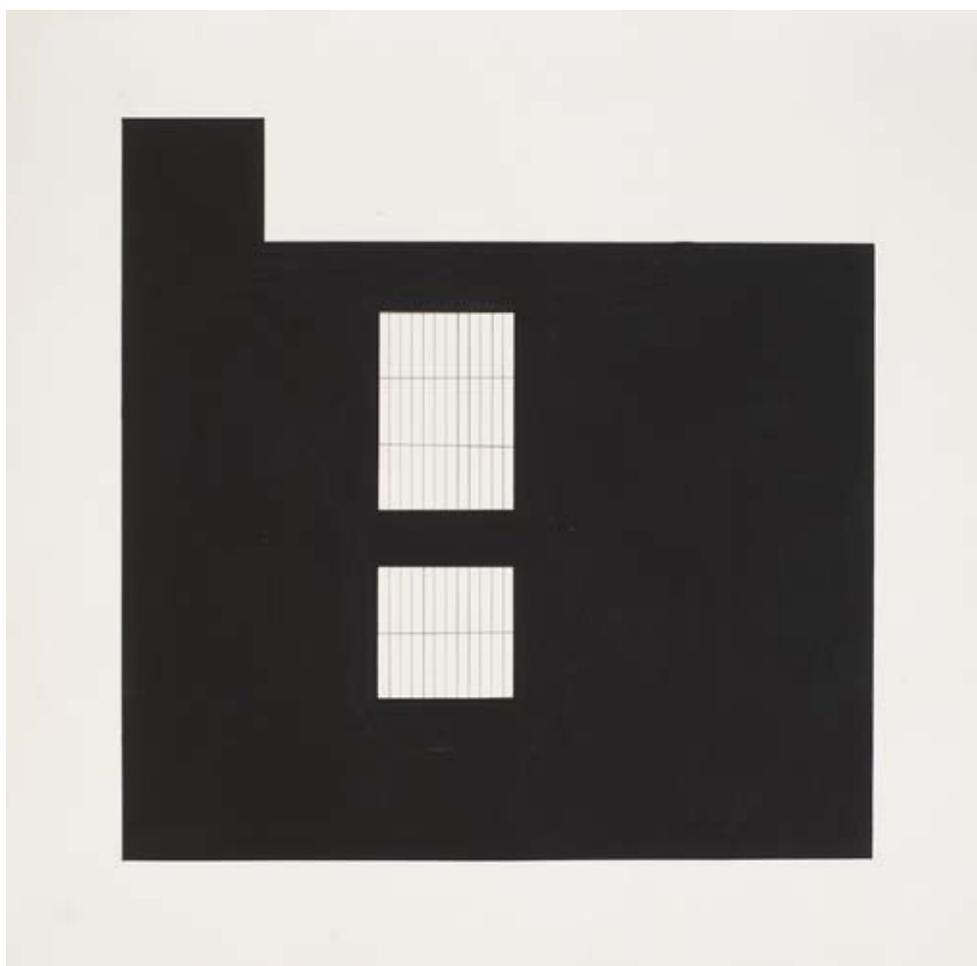


The focus of the exhibition "Mental rotations", which is on display at the Vienna offspace venue SWINGR, is not only a rapprochement between two artistic positions, but also a redefinition of curatorial position variables. Similar to "Operation Mors" (a joint project of the Novosibirsk State Art Museum, September 2007) this project is also trying to achieve a fusion of artistic and curatorial action. Through a continuously changing light situation an unusual dynamic is evoked; it can be seen as a contrast to the often sought after museum static (e.g., constant light): mounted on a long beam on the ceiling is a halogen lamp, it is in constant rotation and at a rhythm of about one minute, it partially illuminates the entire room. The setup is meant as an experimental situation that gives the architecture a readable direction and destabilizes receptive habits. By this invasion, the space itself is administered a light dynamic which is usually only seen in the outer realm of the rising and falling sun: wandering shadows, light delocalizing phenomena for the beholder... Interactions between the two artistic positions are worn and in its reception layered. Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair's drawings are in this light unevenly physical. The paper, which through its tinting by black tea has already been submitted to an artificial aging process, takes on an almost object-like plasticity in moving lights.

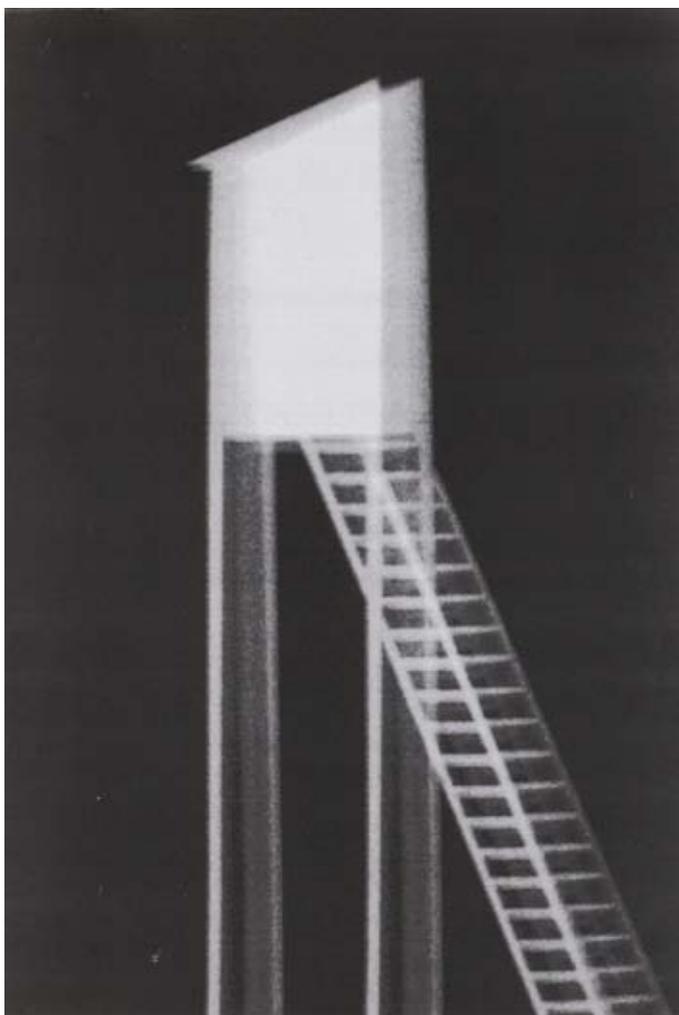
After 15 minutes a second light situation is created through computer-controlled relay: light and rotation motors are turned off, a video projector and DVD player are put in operation: The video installation, entitled "Mask and Spot on Fountain" by Wolfgang Obermair recalls in its spatial production the classic presentation the concept of "Black Cube". In Boris Groys sense, this is the ideal setup for an endless video projection (see Boris Groys, "The Aesthetics of the Video Installation"). For the purpose of Wolfgang Obermair and Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, this situation, however, lasts only 5 minutes before the light goes over to the rotation.



Hand  
at the exhibition "Mental rotations"  
marker on laser print-out  
26,5×20,5 cm, 2008



untitled  
at the exhibition "Mental rotations"  
pencil, gouache and tee on paper  
34,5×35 cm, 2008



untitled  
at the exhibition "Mental rotations"  
laser print-out  
27×18 cm, 2008

EKATERINA SHAPIRO-OBERMAIR  
WOLFGANG OBERMAIR

# OPERATION MORS

Austrian part of the V. Graphic  
Biennale Novosibirsk, 2007  
September 14 – November 15, 2007  
Novosibirsk State Art Museum, Russia





**If chemicals enter the eyes, wash thoroughly with clear running water**

Operation Mors

Ekaterina and Wolfgang Obermair, Novosibirsk State Art Gallery 2007

Operation MORS, Mors \*, PVC, houseplants

- (a) Hydro rating by Mors watering: pour Juice on the PVC and spread evenly.
- (b) Ongoing Staining Process: Continuous staining of the PVC surface through the exhibition visitors and the plant conditioned care operations of the supervisory staff
- (c) Symbiotic Conservation: Due to the intense attention to the indoor plants there will be a transfer of care to the entire exhibition area.

\* Mors (Russian: морс) – a Russian juice beverage that is made from grapes.



Poster  
Operation Mors

# 4:33 GENERATION GENERALI

It's December 12th, 2006, 7:30 p.m. The following action takes place in the exhibition hall of the Vienna Generali Foundation: a well-known character from the Hungarian Fluxus and Conceptual Art scene of the 1960s and 1970s, the artist Tamás St. Auby, makes indecent advances to his young colleague, Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair; he puts her over his knee and spansks her with a folded newspaper. At a first glance the scene is startling and intriguing at the same time, in the flagrant illegitimacy of the role stereotypical symbolic action and its still so transparent real harmlessness. The action is hard to bear on a continuing basis: due to the brazenness of the performed monotony. Here we become witnesses of this scenario, which is less a raw act of violence on a female body, but rather shows the ostentatious indifference of two actors, whose activity is reduced to the keeping-still (of one of them) and the mechanical up-and-down movements (of the other): clapping in step, for exactly 4 minutes and 33 seconds.

The title of the operation "4:33 Generation Generali", which was initiated by Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair, can be traced back to the famous composition/performance of John Cage. As well as in Cage's case, the title sets the time-frame. Here, Cage acts as an archetype, as a precursor, and as an essential reference to a contemporary artmaking, which structurally questions itself and its tradition. Another paragon appears yet life-sized, Tamás St. Auby; his virility and his age alone as well as his oppressive pose towards the young female artist let the ideal influence of the frame of reference art/history on a contemporary art production become an imperatively physical experience.

As a central theme the work picks out the (self-)perception of a young artist generation, which has always been recognized in its relationship towards its antecessors and traditions and which also encounters the pressure of positioning itself along a canon. The staging of the own localization as a violent confrontation is striking, the real location also being striking: The action took place during an exhibition of historic and contemporary conceptual artwork from the collection of the Vienna Generali Foundation and amidst all the "great names" that coined the notion of "Conceptual Art": Haacke, Fraser, Rosler, Sekula. Being a student at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair presented herself here with her partner Tamás St. Auby forming a part of the official Generali collection; St. Auby, who has been continuously developing

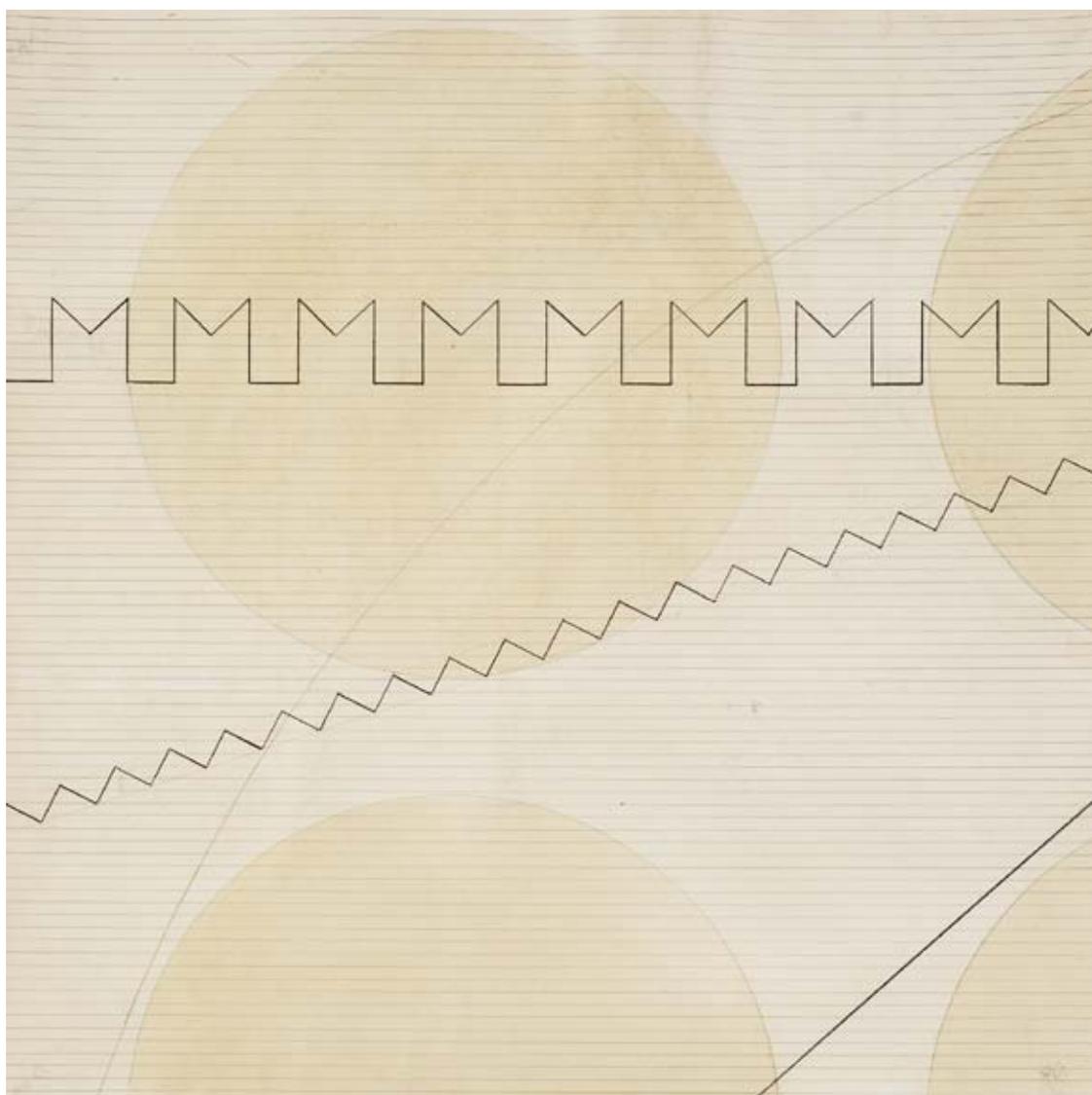


the stylistic elements of the art activism since the 1960s, has by the way framed a very similar curating statement with his latest project: In "Portable Intelligence Increase Museum, Pop Art, Conceptual Art and Actionism in Hungary during the 60s" he thoroughly gathered researched works and documents of an unofficial Hungarian art scene in the 1960s and presented them as a kind of a wandering archive in the official frame of miscellaneous European art galleries, such as in the Vienna BAWAG Foundation in 2004.

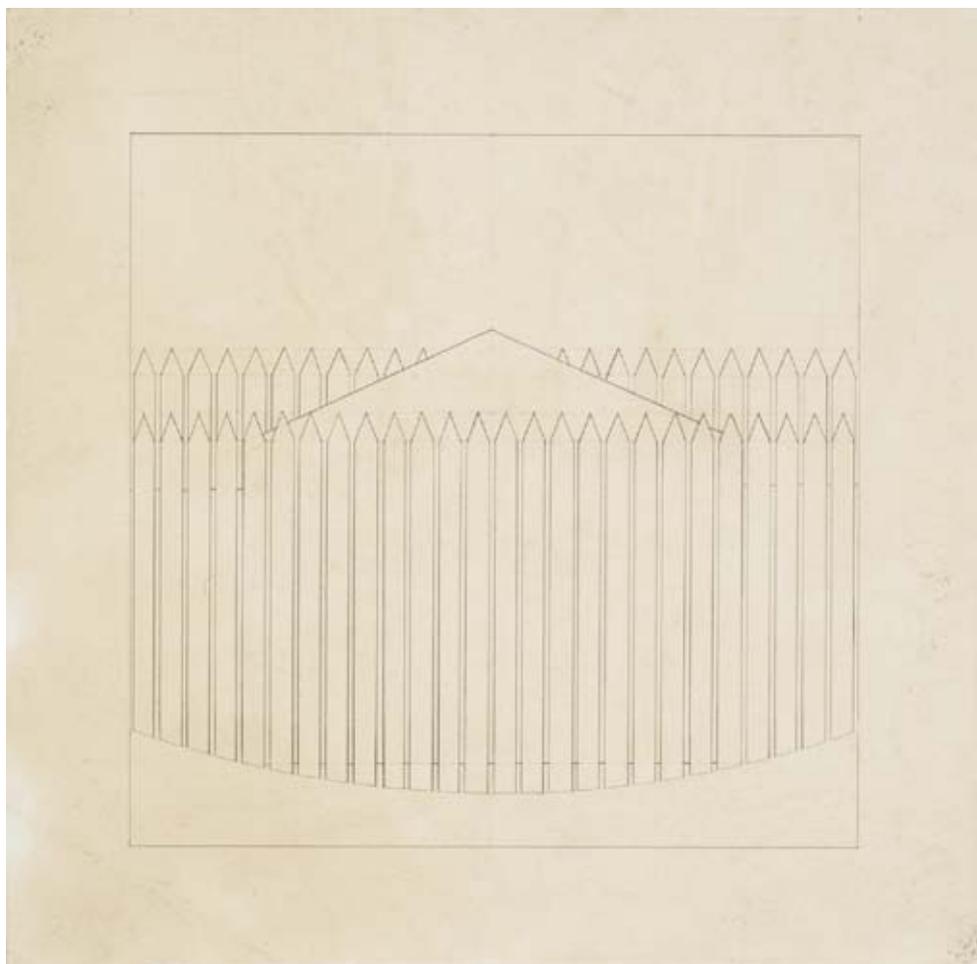
Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair has injected in "4:33 Generation Generali" (the knowledge of) such strategies of performative acquirement of institutional structures as well as methods from the Russian Actionism, which called attention to itself during the 1990s due to its aggressive actions aiming at a shocking impact. However, the artist does not trace back any of the seized techniques to their historical motives or – the opposite way around – to the last consequence. Also, the drastic measures of her work are only adumbrated. Ekaterina Shapiro-Obermair's working methods can be best described as coquetry with art history. She has learned her lesson well and understands the pioneer work that has been accomplished by artist generations before her. On this basis her unarrested eclecticism is an absolute emancipatory method created by herself in order to immunize herself against attribution and canonization in and by cultural activities.

Kathi HOFER

Translation: Patricia Büscher



Kremlin and the Saw  
pencil and tee on paper  
44,5×44,5 cm, 2006



House  
pencil and tee on papier  
34,5×35 cm, 2006