

Pascale Grau Catalogue of Works (Performances and Installations) from 1998 till 2009 arranged chronologically in descending order (without single Channel-Videos)

Artist's Statement 2009

My works are intended to get under the skin, and I mean not just intellectually, but physically too. I would like to awaken emotions with the actions on and with my body and the use of my voice, but also the staging of images and atmospheres. Especially in the live performances I try to make my bodily presence in the room so powerful that nobody can evade it, and that a transfer to the public takes place. An important role is played here by my voice: depending on how I say, sing or recite something, how I express myself in terms of sound, I waken different feelings in the person looking on. What is said and how it is said form two levels that sometimes harmonise, often compete, but always interact. Here voice and mood are communicators that should afford the spectators the possibility of identification and inner emotional reaction. When I am acting in front of a camera or for one, different parameters come into play from those in a live situation: the action is addressed to the camera, the cropped image is suggestive, close and intimate. In addition, here I work differently with the time factor and with sound. I restage these performances, preserved in video as it were, in the context of my installations in a kind of presentation to the public. The machines (video or slide projectors, etc.) and other scene-setting elements such as objects, light and sound interact with one another and likewise engender a particular atmosphere. A complex of themes sometimes goes through several processes of media transposition. The intention is to generate an added value in the sense of a contentual and sensory displacement by means of this translation and further continuation.

Performance and performativity are practices that involve remembering. In my work I have been concerned for ages with the body as a store of cultural memory, with my interest over the years shifting ever more to its function as a vehicle for constructions of identity. In my works I display the construction of actions by continuing and reflecting them "in duplicate" as it were in a different medium.

A theoretical and research interest has grown out of my artistic activity and it has again fed back into my works. Therefore the relationship between the performance and its "document" plays an important role in my working method. By (media) documents I mean primary products that are parts of the actual performances, for example sketches, concepts, recorded videos or sound.

Documentation in the sense of secondary products is to be distinguished from these, for instance video recordings, photographs or texts by third parties. I regard the performance itself as a form of document, by which I mean a strategy for remembering cultural practices. The repetition makes a displacement of cultural codes possible, and this can also show up what has been forgotten (contingency). This results in the document itself also being performative and tempting me to a media and contentual continuation. This publication is also to be understood in this light: it represents my creative work largely through images that have emerged as documents and documentation from performances. Of course I am aware of the limits of the potential for representing ephemeral art.

How can the atmospheric aspect of an event or the impact of a voice which is in any case imparted to the audience affectively be conveyed by images and language? That question has preoccupied me while I have been working on this publication. We agreed on the pictures, and studied and included other types and forms of document such as concepts, video and sound documents, eyewitness reports and suchlike.

09.01_P (cf. 06.01_I)

Im Garten der Fiktion [In the garden of fiction]

Concept: Pascale Grau has recourse in the performance *Im Garten der Fiktion* [In the garden of fiction] to pictorial and textual documents that are taken from the work process with the clothes cycle in which she explores the transformation of memory and clothing (cf. 06.01_I / 97.02_I). The video shots make the materiality of the textiles visible, and show details of the artist's body and skin. Her hand, smoothing the dress or playing with a button, imparts the physicality and sensuousness of the articles of clothing. Grau sounds out the performativity of these documents and uses it in the performance to go on and write "new" stories. In a spoken and sung live presentation she interweaves the video projections into a narrative structure with different strands. While in the videos it tends to be visual perception that is addressed, in the live act the function of the appellative and affective power falls to the voice. It always generates a surplus of vocal communication as it also articulates the unsayable in what is said. It is conveyed directly on to the bodies of those listening. The artist thus inspires the public to look for their own stories in the "garden of fiction".

Material: 2 projectors, 2 LCD monitors on pedestals, 3 DVD players, digital images, computer, video mixer, 2 videos (extracts from video material for *Erzählstoffe*, 06.01_I, colour, sound)

Duration: 30 minutes

Situation: The *Telling Tales* performance events brought together six performance artists (Yan Duyvendak, Pascale Grau, San Keller, Muda Mathis and Sus Zwick, Andrea Saemann) who explore multimedia narrative forms in their works. The two events were curated by Alexandra Könz in the context of her project on narration in contemporary Swiss performance art, in co-production with the Theaterhaus Gessnerallee in Zurich and the Kunstmuseum in Thurgau.

Comment:

"The tales and views of Pascale Grau are intimate. They provoke us to laughter, they move us to tears – they move us and seduce us. At the same time the performance makes it possible to undergo and apprehend a process which far transcends the narration of personal experience. Via the encounter with the stranger's story the spectator and the listener are led into their own recollections and confronted with the way that memory itself functions." (Jana Ulmann, Basle, 2006)

08.03_I+P (cf. 97.05_I+P / 97.04_I+P)

Never failed yet

Site-specific 3-channel video installation with performative prelude

Performance: 1 boat, 1 oarsman, microport, loop machine, sound system, projector, screen on stand, 1 video (Mini DV, colour, no sound, 18:02 min.)

Installation: 3 DVD players, 3 LCD monitors (fixed installation on site), 2 loudspeakers (fixed installation on site), 3 videos (all Mini DV, colour, sound, 18:02 min.)

For the former trout aquariums under the Dreikönigsbrücke in Zurich Grau developed a site-specific installation prefaced by a performance. From the riverbank a video showing close-ups of a trembling lily is projected on to a screen which is placed in a punt, standing up like a sail. The oarsman tries to compensate for the movements of the current and keep the projected image in the rectangle of the screen. Meanwhile Grau who is also in the boat sings Gavin Bryars' song, *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971), transforming her voice into polyphonic singing by means of a loop machine. The performance lasts about twenty minutes during which the specific surrounding conditions (the river, the bridge) are perceptually sounded out by the physical exertions of the oarsman, the video projection which keeps slipping off the screen and the reverberation of the electronically generated choir. Then the boat along with its occupants disappears downstream into the dark.

In the installation Grau again returns to the theme of water in the video takes that are shown on the two side monitors: on the right-hand channel underwater shots of a riverbed or of stones and plants bent by the current can be seen; the left-hand channel shows close-ups of running water. On the middle monitor, on the other hand, the artist "leaves behind" the video used during the performance and the singing added on the soundtrack as a kind of relic, as a sign of the past action. This "commemorative image" links the specific moment of the performative action to the installative mise-en-scène, but at the same time breaks up the rhythm of movement in the water shots. With the arrangement of the videos on three large monitors behind glass panes, Grau interlocks the perceptual experiences into one another: perceptions of space and time, of rhythm and ways of moving, of different states of matter and forms of existence.

08.01_P (cf. 08.02_V)

Verkörperung [Embodiment]

Concept: In the performance *Verkörperung* [Embodiment] the artist works with her own body memory, and in doing so relates to her two grandmothers: one she hardly knew, while she was able to have contact with the other one until she herself was thirty years old. She embodies the two women one after the other, accompanied by an essay-like text about memory that is read by a female narrator and played from a tape during the action. The physical search for the two grandmothers resembles a metamorphosis: it is not clear where exactly she appears as herself and where as the grandmothers she is evoking. This difference becomes visible and experienceable in the sense of the foreign in what is individual to oneself, and what is individual to oneself in the foreign. The distancing form of the use of language in the recorded text deals with the past. The body gestures and the use of the voice, on the other hand, make other aspects visible in the here and now. The voice is both a spatial phenomenon and a spatial occurrence. It always generates a surplus over and above vocal communication, as in what it says it also shows what cannot be articulated. In the overlaying of the voice from the tape with the body language of the performer, her gestures and her live voice, the past is transported into the here and now and reconciled with memories.

This performance, which was staged at the Kaskadenkondensator in January 2008, and the video documentation displayed along with it formed the starting material for the video *Un tout petit peu* (08.02_V), for which the artist re-enacted the original performance for two video cameras. Those takes were supplemented by close-ups from various angles. The material was edited from filmic points of view, and the sequences were broken up in “unfilmic” terms, so that a mixture of film, theatre and performance document was created resulting in fictionality and a new narrative about the artist and her two grandmothers.

Material: Light, CD player, audio recording, sound system

Duration: app. 10 minutes

Situation: In cooperation with *Regionale 8*, on 6 January 2008 the Kaskadenkondensator in Basle organized a performance festival at which six regional artists offered an insight into their current work. The selection was made by the artists Judith Huber and Markus Goessi who endeavoured to cover as wide a range of the region’s current performance scene as possible.

Comment:

“The voices and gestures conjure up images in my mind. I imagine Pascale’s grandmothers, how they quarrelled, ran away, worked, loved, ruled. A fierce “Nonsense!” fills the room and echoes through the corridor. This vocal live explosion impressed me most strongly at the time, and still does today, several months after the performance. It imparted the quality and significance of the performative “live act” as opposed to the technically reproduced action to me sensually, and impressed it on me physically. The distance between me and the audio text was reduced, and I became the protagonist in Pascale’s story, which at that moment was also mine.” (Alexandra Könz, Zurich, 2009)

07.02_P (cf. 06.02_V)

Mimikry [Mimicry]

Concept: According to Metzler's *Lexikon der Literatur- und Kulturtheorie* mimicry is the word used in biology for the strategic protective adaptation of a defenceless animal through imitation of a warning garb. The face is the visible indicator of individuality and at the same time the interface where cultural imprint and emotional impulse meet. Showing feelings is frowned on, and the face therefore often becomes a mask. Expressions of feeling are patterns that are adapted to the situation. The mimic expression for happiness, annoyance, disgust or fear is acquired and can be summoned up as a dance by the facial muscles. In the performance *Mimikry* [Mimicry] Pascale Grau acts out her expressions of feeling in a metamorphic manner by slowly altering one part of her face after the other. In doing so she seduces the audience into identificatory acting along (mimesis) that can trigger reactions ranging from empathy to shock (catharsis). For the artist herself this game also becomes a kind of masquerade that diverts those facing her – for their own protection from the genuine emotions.

Material: 1 profile spotlight, podium

Duration: app. 7 minutes

Situation: On the occasion of the exhibition *Les jeux sont faits* the curator Helen Hirsch invited Pascale Grau to give a live performance on the theme of play. The audience was divided into two groups and led into a narrow dark room one behind the other. A spotlight was pointed at the front end that directed concentration on to the play of the facial expressions.

Comment:

“During the performance the impression arose for me of a back-projection from the inside of your head to the outside, on to your face.” (Renatus Zürcher, Basle, 2007)

06.03_P

Ushi Gake & Ashi Dori

In collaboration with Judith Huber

Concept: The body as a whole is a house with various rooms, an outer shell and an inner life. While flesh and subcutaneous fat have become subjects of conversation and their plasticity is regarded as accepted practice, the previously protected areas of the inner life have also vanished. Private matters are dragged into the light in front of the running TV camera and commercialised to the point of absolute triviality. In the performance the artists reflect on this sell-off of the body and its spin-offs in culture, art and society. By playing with gender and masquerade the artists reinvent themselves. Ushi Gake and Ashi Dori are actually concepts borrowed from traditional Sumo wrestling the ritual meanings of which are extended and reinterpreted performatively. A sequence of scenes consisting of monologues, actions, singing-and-dancing inserts and video playbacks unfolds. The recordings are either an extended stage set or are interwoven into a dialogue by the female performers. From these scenic fragments a net-like structure is created that is reinforced associatively, or loosely combined in the heads of the audience.

Material: Helium-filled balloons, various masks and costumes, hairpieces, pumpkins, stick gloves, loop machine, microport, sound system, DVD player, video mixer, video and audio material, closed-circuit projection: video camera, projector

Duration: 50 minutes

Situation: Under the *Züri-plage* umbrella, the Gessnerallee Theatre is running a try-out space in the P3 (small stage) for forays into marginal performative fields. Showing this performance derived from the fine arts, a work that can be located at the interface to present-day theatre, in this context was an experiment.

Comment:

“Of cyborgs, Sumo wrestlers and gender-specific obstacles on the path to individualisation. Judith Huber and Pascale Grau present a sort of mosaic made from shards of mirror, images and stories placed beside and behind one another, only a selection of which have been mentioned here. The performance admittedly shows many narrative traits, but they are never unambiguously determining, never restricting in the sense of “Here, that’s what we want to tell you!” Rather the construction of meaning and narrative – just like a possible recognition of social connections – happens in the onlookers themselves. The fact that this recognition can even come about is made possible by the two performers in an exciting way, with quite seriously humorous links to stories of collective female experience. The fact that a lot in it remains open gives me as an onlooker a feeling of freedom and the chance to make my own links and interpretations.” (Verena Gassmann, Zurich, 2006)

06.01_I (cf. 09.01_P / 97.02_I)

Erzählstoffe [Narrative materials]

1 monitor (Sony Cube), 1 DVD player, 1 video (Mini DV, colour, sound, 30:00 min.), headphones, pouffe

The installation Erzählstoffe [Narrative materials] is the second part of a long-term project in which Grau looks at her old clothes and the memories adhering to them. Each time she processes parts of the wardrobe she has bought and worn in the course of a decade, but since discarded. In front of the camera, she tries on these clothes, some of them now too small, remembers – in the subsequent narrative recorded to camera – specific moments when she wore a jacket or trousers, bought a blouse or a dress. Grau backs the clothes sequences with a soundtrack based on love songs sung by herself. For the video presented on the monitor she edits the shots in a chronology where the “trying on” is each time succeeded by the corresponding memory: Grau condenses the acoustically backed close-ups of the clothed body parts and materials and the interview-like recordings into time units that not only articulate the video in terms of rhythm, but are also inscribed in it as a narrative structure, as remembered situations in life that succeed one another.

Grau takes the performative actions that underpin the installation still further: after reappropriating the articles of clothing through the remembering process, she cuts them up and crochets the strips of fabric into a round object. Thus on the one hand this pouffe is a relic of the performance, and on the other it is a material, spatialized extract from the artist’s memory. With the installative confrontation of video and seat Grau probes the different functions of memory: remembering as an active, to some extent productive mnemotechnic activity, depositing and storing recollections in objects, people and places, as well as forging the link between memory and object.

05.04_P (cf. 07.03_V)

Tableaux Vivants

Concept: *Tableaux Vivants* is a performative concept and a project that is being implemented in different countries and on different continents. It relates to the richly traditional practice of reconstructing and presenting paintings and sculptures in a living picture and can be classed as an autonomous art form lying between theatre, performance and image. The project throws up questions about cultural memory and reflects or envisions the pictorial vocabulary in question.

Through the performative practice of reconstruction *Tableaux Vivants* attempts a new interpretation of values. The participants and the public enter into an energetic dialogue. On the one hand, part of the project is the process of finding a picture with a group of local artists, while another part is the public performance of the tableau vivant and its recording on video for about thirty minutes.

Tableaux Vivants has already been produced in Asia: Myanmar, Yangon, 2005 (picture: *Untitled*, Cho Cho Aung, a participant in the workshop, app. 2003); South America: Bolivia, Chochabamba, 2006 (picture: *Ultima Cena*, Jacopo Bassano, 1548); Europe: Switzerland, Basle, 2007 (picture: *Die Nacht*, Ferdinand Hodler, 1889); the next tableau vivant will be carried out in India in October 2009, at Bangalore. A further tableau is planned on the continent of Africa.

Material: various props and superstructures depending on the picture being modelled and the decisions of the performers, film setting: spotlights, video camera, tripod

Duration: app. 30 minutes

Situation: In the workshop held in the context of an international performance festival at a cultural centre in Yangon (Myanmar) the participants agreed to reconstruct a painting by a female participant. It shows a ritual still practised in Burma where small boys are handed over to the care of the monasteries for a certain period.

In Chochabamba (Bolivia) the tableau vivant could likewise be elaborated and shown in the context of a performance workshop at the mARTadero, an abattoir that has been transformed into a cultural centre. The group chose the painting *Ultima Cena* by Jacopo Bassano for a free reconstruction, and attached great importance to being able to design their own figures individually.

Grau made the Swiss tableau vivant with eight artist friends in Basle; they decided to reconstruct *Die Nacht* by Ferdinand Hodler, and concentrated on a formal correspondence that was as exact as possible. Additionally, the group tried to produce a new interpretation of Hodler's work where the content was concerned.

Comment:

"In an admirably democratic process people agreed on a representation of the Last Supper. Starting from the concept of active self-presentation in which each artist portrays his/her own position by means of an individual performance, they decided to group all those represented round a table; and thus – through quoting a well-known work of art – also to inscribe a gesture typical of postmodern art production into the process." (Angelika Heckl, Chochabamba, 2006)

05.03_P (cf. 07.01_V / 91.03_I)

Interiors

Concept: In the performance as well as the eponymous video (cf. 07.01_V) Pascale Grau explicitly takes the relationship of live performances to their documents as her theme. In the first part of the performance excerpts of the live action are recorded with a camera, with the artist putting her stomach prominently into the picture. Lying on her back, she uses her stomach as an everted interior, furnishing it with objects from a doll's house and a toy box. This view of the middle of the body is projected on to the wall on an enlarged scale. In the second part Grau continues to write the performative document that came into being in the action, the video recording, in terms of medium and content. It is cut in directly from camera as a projection and the soundtrack is added by her live, with her voice and using a loop machine.

Thus the audience become direct witnesses of this "picture production" and the transformations associated with it. As a result of the sound track the previously harmless-seeming game takes a dramatic turn, for the images that up to then could be experienced as cute everyday situations suddenly turn into nightmare scenarios.

Material: day bed, miniature objects such as toy furniture and toy cars, postcards, foam, feathers, figurines, etc., video camera, projector, table, loop machine, sound system

Duration: app. 30 minutes

Situation: The *DaDao Live Art Festival* in Peking was held from 1 October to 5 October in various locations and out of doors in the Dahanzi Art District. The curator and performance artist Shu Yang had invited 17 Chinese artists along with another 28 artists from Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and the USA to this four-day international festival, people he himself had got to know at other festivals. The performance *Interiors* was shown on the second day in the South Gate Space, an alternative theatre space with no stage and tiered seating for the audience.

Comment:

"In the performance I like the overlaying of authenticity and the past, and the simultaneity with which the interior is created on the stomach, but at the very same time when transferred as a large image undergoes an alteration." (Katharina Ammann, Chur, 2009)

05.02_P (cf. 02.04_V / 02.03_I / 93.03_P)

Die Welt mit Blumen schlagen [Beating the world with flowers]

Concept: Starting from a performance concept which Grau had already implemented with the group a.b. in the mise-en-scène *dressung 1–5* (93.03_P) in 1993, in 2002 the artist developed a 5-channel video installation (02.03_I) and a stand-alone video (02.04_V). In 2005 she picked up this concept again and devised the eponymous performance *Die Welt mit Blumen schlagen* [Beating the world with flowers]. She shows herself as a creator and director who intervenes in what happens in the world, who – now gently, now brutally – takes her protagonists in hand. She enacts a sad game with a world shrunk to the size of a toy which is whipped and maltreated by various flowers – beautiful objects, yet themselves fragile too. Grau hits the paper globes back and forth over a table with two flowers until the plants lose their heads or break in some other way; as she does so she follows the rhythm of well-known children’s songs, popular songs or hits that focus on the theme of flowers. Each time she picks up a new globe from a large container standing behind her, takes the fresh flowers out of a vase on her right, and deposits their remains in a second vase on her left. She follows on by singing aloud the song hummed inwardly as she hits the globe. Grau repeats this “cruel” game until at the end twenty battered paper globes which roll across the floor like severed heads testify to the past action.

Material: app. 20 paper globes to be inflated, 20 pairs of flowers, table, 2 vases

Duration: 2 x 30 minutes

Situation: Marina Abramovic curated and staged a two-day performance marathon on the theme of Body Art with artists from the performance group I.P.G. (Independent Performance Artists) which she had founded on the premises of the Hebbeltheater HAU 1 in Berlin. On their itinerary through the building, from the entrance stairs via the stage, backstage, auditorium, gallery, foyers and toilets and even cloakrooms, visitors experienced 23 performances, most of them lasting several hours. The performance by Pascale Grau took place on the backstage.

Comment:

“[...] a woman maltreats the world with flowers [...]” (Annette Jahn, in *Tagesspiegel Berlin*, 22.5.2005)

05.01_P (cf. 02.02_V)

Ovation

Concept: Grau first carried out this work, conceived as a homage to the opera singer Maria Callas, as a performance for the camera, for the video *Ovation* (02.02_V). This procedure marks a turning point in Pascale Grau's way of working: previously the live performances had always been behind the impulse to transpose a theme into another medium too; here the idea underlying the video is taken further in terms of content in the live performance. While the video was primarily concerned with fundamental thinking about the working conditions of artists, in the live performance Grau directly involves the public in the working process: wearing an evening dress and with her hair pinned up, Grau steps out in front of the audience, and very slowly makes a bow to all sides. The spectators become ever more part of an imagined outburst of applause which the artist seems to be acknowledging with her bows and her radiant smile. Only when the audience actually present start to clap does she end the performance. To that extent, in the live performance too she questions the rituals of recognition, politeness and empathy, so continuing to raise the question of the conditions under which contemporary art is produced.

Material: evening dress, pinned-up hairdo, stage, lighting (spotlight / lighting conditions where the performance is held)

Duration: variable

Situation:

Der längste Tag [The longest day] is a 16-hour performance event held in the open and curated by Dorothea Rust and Peter Emch in the Kunsthof Zürich in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008. In the yard between two buildings separated from the street by a wall the artists appeared on a low wooden stage approximately 16 sq. m. in area at hourly intervals from sunrise to sunset before a changing public.

Comment:

“She keeps bowing again and again in every direction, as if she was surrounded by tumultuous applause. Only when a few onlookers at a window on the opposite side of the street actually clapped did she end her performance – and was then rewarded with genuine, well deserved applause.”(Caspar Schärer, in *Tages-Anzeiger*, 23.6.2005)

04.01_P

Ring Ring [Wrestle, wrestle]

In collaboration with Judith Huber

Concept: In line with the ongoing development of their performance concepts Pascale Grau und Judith Huber integrate representatives from other professional backgrounds into their performances. In the run-up to the performance *Ring Ring* [Wrestle, wrestle] Huber and Grau curate a series of events under the title *stand in* at the Kaskadenkondensator in Basle. Inspired by the results, they invite a Shiatsu masseuse, a pizzaiolo (Swiss master pizza-maker) and a female DJ to take part in their own performance. Like the artists, they all produce something performatively in their work, albeit not in the context of art.

In interaction with the three professionals, they each bring their own specific capabilities into play. Here the metaphorical transformations by the players focus on the theme of wrestling: wrestling with body mass, with words, with inner images and other materials. In wrestling to find the most convincing expression in each case, sometimes working as a duo or trio, they all arrive at fragmentary stories and statements about everyday manoeuvres by means of actions, gestures and words.

Material: app. 80 kg pizza dough, pizza oven, various small implements, bean bag, Shiatsu day bed, DJ desk, sound system, closed-circuit projection: video camera, projector

Duration: 45 minutes

Situation: Grau and Huber were able to show *Ring Ring* with their three guests in the Kunstpanorama Luzern (opening of the season) and the K3 Project Space in Zurich (a special performance event). At *Bone 7*, a performance festival on the theme of duos (2004), and *Trabant #7* in the Klingental exhibition space (2007) financial considerations among other things led to a reduction in numbers, so the artists worked out an adaptation of the performance for two players.

Comment:

“As a prelude there is actual wrestling. In front of a video projection showing two comparatively light-weight women in the ritual Sumo fight, the two artists reconstruct wrestling poses, albeit in an ironical and aestheticised way. Physical strength and fighting are lightly and elegantly contrasted and offset by an erotic gesture, a hand fondling the breast (of art history). [...] But the two artists did offer some true wrestling at the close of their performance. They took on a box full of pizza dough and were defeated.” (Kurt Beck, in *Neue Luzerner Zeitung*, 10.1.2004)

03.01_I

untertags [below daylight]

Site-specific sound installation: 22 loudspeakers, 11 CD players, 11 CDs (each 30:00 min.)

When the former Sulzer-Burckhardt compressor factory in the Gundeldinger Feld in Basle was converted, Grau devised the installation *untertags* [below daylight] in the cellars of the huge area (12,700 sq. m.). She recorded noises in the spaces now used as offices and the surrounding area outside the building which she played over loudspeakers at ten different points in the labyrinthine, underground corridors. In the vestibule, directly adjoining the lowest landing, a mix of all the sound recordings could be heard. The voices of people exchanging greetings, noises at the work place and the twittering of birds recorded on the site were interwoven into an atmospheric carpet of sound referring from below the ground to life above ground, to everyday existence. For the former factory employees, the sounds of the birds in particular evoked memories of the previous function of the building, for canaries were kept in the underground corridors as “live gas detectors”.

02.05_P

voyage

Concept: *voyage* is a performance concept that is taken forward each time it is presented in the form of a new pictorial journey that is numbered accordingly. On the basis of different images such as postcards or newspaper cuttings, her own photographs and small implements from her “archive” Grau embarks on a fictional “journey”. In the course of the performance these objects are placed in front of a video camera in a partly planned, partly improvised sequence and conveyed to the public in a large-scale projection. At a certain point in the “journey” the artist plays a single on the portable record player, both the record and the player likewise drawn from her store of equipment. The music has the function of providing atmospheric backing to the stopping-places on the “journey”.

Material: various pictorial material (postcards, newspaper cuttings, etc.), photographs, small implements, table, portable record player, singles, closed-circuit projection: video camera, projector

Duration: app. 10 minutes per journey

Situation: Grau undertook *voyage 1–3* on the occasion of the Basle Museum Night in the Klingental exhibition space, and it was spread right across the evening. This occasion was part of the exhibition *voyage voyage* Grau was invited to present along with other artists.

voyage 4–6 was produced by Grau, assisted by Luzia Broger, for an evening event involving conversation with the artists. The two artists filled the evening together with this isolated cooperative venture in the context of the exhibition *come back* in the exex project room, which was intended to shed light on the hand-over of the exhibition space from one artist to the next.

Comment:

“Pascale Grau caused nostalgia-filled commemorative images to glide across a projection surface and Luzia Broger put on singles that matched the images.” (Ursula Badrutt Schoch, in *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 3.6.2003)

02.03_I (cf. 05.02_P / 02.04_V / 93.03_P)

Die Welt with Blumen schlagen [Beating the world with flowers]

5-channel video installation: 5 monitors (Sony Cube), 5 DVD players, 5 videos (all DVCAM, colour, sound, 19:40 min.), synchronous control system, 1 round loudspeaker, 1 paper globe (reinforced inside by an inflated balloon)

In the installation *Die Welt mit Blumen schlagen* [Beating the world with flowers] Pascale Grau returns to a performance concept she had already developed in 1993 with the group a.b. for the project *dressung 1–5* (93.03_P). She releases the scene where she juggles a paper globe by means of two flowers from its earlier context, and now carries out this action in a specific studio setting: the camera directed on to the action from above focuses on two flowers, lying like a fork and knife on a table spread with a dark cloth. Two hands pick up the flowers, the toy globe is thrown into the image and hit to and fro with the flowers until the plants disintegrate. Grau synchronises these video shots on the five monitors in such a way that there is always one showing the performative, destructive process, while the pairs of flowers can be seen lying still on the others. The noise of the hitting movements, the impact of the fragile stems and blooms on the thin-skinned paper ball sets the globe sitting on the loudspeaker in motion.

In the installative version, with the semicircular arrangement of the monitors, their angled position and the centrally placed loudspeaker with the globe, Grau accentuates the endless cycle of this (self-)destructive game. At the same time in the videos, with the fixed camera position she defines the area framed as the action space in which the delicate objects are made to interact by her. On the one hand she is referring to the ambivalent relationship between annihilation and her accessories, on the other to the latent potential for violence that can be extorted from (these) sensitive and aesthetic instruments, in this case roses, dahlias, cornflowers and other flowers.

02.01_I

Palermo

3 slide projectors (Kodak Carousel), 3 slides, 2 screens on stands, 11 plastic garden chairs, cloth overprinted with photograph, sand

In the middle of the darkened space Grau has shaped a shallow island made of sand on which she places two stacks of plastic chairs piled on top of one another. A printed cloth is hanging over the back of one chair, like a towel put out to dry. At the narrow ends of the surface marked out with sand there are two screens on stands, and a slide is projected on to each of them. A third projection is directed on to the wall, with the stacked chairs intercepting the light from the projector and casting a shadow on to the picture. The three photographs show a bride and bridegroom at a photo shoot on the beach, but from an unusual camera perspective: the photographer, i.e. the artist, is lying in the sand, and from that vantage point focussing not only on the finely decked-out couple, but also on the photographers and cameramen surrounding them. By means of this composition Grau shifts the emphasis between the protagonists, between the main individuals and their attendants. At the same time she duplicates the game of observing and posing, interlocking the various visual axes into one another. In the installative setting the different directorial gestures and rituals are heightened. While the artist reconstructs a situation she has experienced, using her shots to uncover the arrangement set up for the other cameras as a pose, the actions of the other people present on the beach are characterised by “functional connections”. On looking more closely, what at first glance seems like a romantic beach atmosphere in the late season is revealed as a calculated action whereby a meaningful moment is fixed as a commemorative picture in a culturally and socially regulated form. However, while Grau transmits this scenario from her personal viewpoint, in the installation she also leaves behind traces of her own presence, contrasting her individual “picture” with the stereotyped pictorial formulas as a kind of commentary.

01.02_I

Grotte [Grotto]

In collaboration with André Schmid, landscape architect

Vegetative, performative sound installation: wooden construction made from roof battens, geotextile material, alfalfa seeds, 10 humidifiers, 1 watering can, 2 water atomizers, 1 water aspirator, plastic sheet (to cover the geotextile fabric), 1 monitor with an integral video player, 1 video (VHS, colour, sound, 30:00 min.), 2 heterosexual lovers

For the exhibition in the Kaskadenkondensator in Basle Grau and Schmid developed a performative installation in which they address both the traditions of grotto architecture and its cultural connections in terms of meaning. In the lower false floor present on the site they erected a cave-like wooden structure which they covered with geotextile fabric on which alfalfa seeds were sown. For this vegetative structure to flourish, for the shoots to germinate and turn green, the grotto had to be kept moist; for this purpose Grau and Schmid placed a large number of humidifiers in the upper area of the exhibition space that were also responsible for the acoustic component of the installation. Throughout the exhibition the gentle humming and constant glugging of the machines were interwoven with the visually and olfactorily perceptible evolutionary processes of this biotope. With the two lovers who regularly settled down there for a few hours in a close embrace, Grau and Schmid referred back to the grotto's cultural and historical connotations, and again to some extent broke up the biological component of the installation. Furthermore the structure which could be walked on, and over time became completely overgrown with plants, opened up the relatedness to dialectic concepts of nature and culture, of inner and outer worlds. With the endoscopic video shots of the intestinal tract presented on a monitor in front of the entrance to the grotto, Grau and Schmid made the technologically backed model of investigating the inner life immediately visible; however, the installative arrangement left viewers in no doubt that for the artists this image-based exploration represents just one possible way of plunging into the entwined, multi-layered realms of human existence.

01.01_I

ins Gras beissen [biting the grass / the dust]

Single-channel video projection: 1 projector, 1 DVD player, 1 video (DVCAM, colour, sound, 00:18 min.), 2 loudspeakers (Fostex loudspeakers), projection size app. 2 x 3 metres

“Ins Gras beissen” – literally “biting the grass”, equivalent to “biting the dust” – is a symbolic expression for dying, most probably derived from the way wounded soldiers behave, as recorded in written sources since antiquity: on the battlefield they bite the ground to suppress their pain. Pascale Grau explores this turn of phrase in the installation at a performative, (body-)language level: she kneels on the lawn, bends her head forward in jerky movements, almost as if in a trance, and tears out a few tufts of red clover with her mouth, which she then chews. She transposes the takes of the video performance into an audiovisual version that clearly shows traits of “musical phrasing”. The unending stringing together of the sequence of images which lasts just a few seconds and is projected larger than life generates an almost meditative rhythm that is further intensified by the sound – loud, exaggerated and at the same time metrically structured grinding or chewing noises. Grau formulates a direct visual equivalent to the phrase behind the title, as it were resolving its semantic potential in the performative act. She concentrates on the grass with zestful determination, chewing up the usual connotations so to speak. Each “intake of food” seems to conjure up new associations in which language and image, linguistic and cultural references, overlap.

00.03

Wasserkraft Wassermacht [Water power water force]

Multi-part site-specific installation

3-channel video installation: 3 projectors, 3 video players, 3 videos (all S-VHS, colour, no sound, 10:00 min.), app. 30 floor cushions in orange and grey

space installation: 1 washbasin (found in the area and reinstalled), 6 spotlights, bars of soap and towels (from the company stores), 5 electric hotplates, 5 saucepans, sage leaves, closed-circuit projection: video camera, projector

3-channel video installation: 3 monitors (Sony Cube), 3 video players, 3 videos (all S-VHS, colour, sound, 8:20 min.), headphones, 3 plastic cubes (filled with water)

For the 75th anniversary of the Oberhasli Power station (KWO) Pascale Grau thought up the multi-part site-specific installation *Wasserkraft Wassermacht* [Water power water force] , and devised its official opening together with the musician and composer Hans Koch. Water as a natural resource, an element, the power station as a workplace, and the activities carried out there form the thematic background the artist explores here. For the monumental turbine hall (50 x 24 x 15 metres), with the 3-channel ceiling projection she designed a homage to the strength of water, showing its different “states of being” in relation to tempo, intensity, degree of turbulence, etc. Floor cushions were scattered over the space, making it possible to look up at the “ceiling pictures” in comfort. In another space installation Grau took up the ritual of hand-washing that is part of everyday working life in the power station because of dust emissions. She reinstalled a round, fountain-style washbasin, put soap and towels ready and veiled the room in sage steam, which rose from the saucepans placed on the floor. The lighting underlined this “feel-good atmosphere”, and at the same time directed the gaze both at its ingredients and the live transmission of the washbasin, its top view being projected on to the end wall of the space on an enlarged scale. Then in a storeroom the artist got the twenty oldest and longest-serving employees to talk. The portrait-like video recordings were shown on three monitors which were positioned with their screens facing upwards, and plastic cubes filled with water were in turn placed on them. The employees outlined their role in the firm, and described their personal relationship to water. Grau here designed a temporary intervention that studied the energetic dimension of water – as a formative force, as a supplier of energy – and the everyday, as well as work-related handling of it in three scenarios.

00.02_P (cf. 01.03_V)

enhanced by King Kong

Concept: At the invitation of Andrea Saemann, Pascale Grau elaborated a contribution for the *Kunstgespräche 2000* event, which brought together works on the theme of horror films. From the artist's own experience of being able to follow horror films only from behind her neighbour's back, so to speak, i.e. only from the sounds, Grau developed a concept based on the original soundtrack of Merian C. Cooper's famous film *King Kong* (1933). In film history this film was the first Hollywood production that worked with special picture and sound effects. For example different sound tracks are overlaid on to one another and sound sequences are inserted played forwards and backwards, so that when the lion roars the noise is mind-blowing.

Grau is guided primarily by these loud passages in the film. She uses children's toys to reconstruct four scenes from the film live for a video camera. In the first scene of the film – the director practising the scream with Anne – Grau intones the text and the scream. In the second scene – the sacrificial offering to the monster – the original sound from the film is cut in. The third scene – the battle of the giants – had already been reconstructed and recorded in the same manner in advance of the performance. Grau now plays these takes during the performance and provides sound for the scene by endowing all the protagonists with her voice. She allocates the largest share in all this to the figure of Anne with whom she identifies most strongly. In the fourth scene – the victory of civilisation – the original sound from the film is again cut in towards the end when King Kong falls from the Empire State Building.

Material: table, spotlight, projection screen, children's toys and small implements, video player, video mixer, sound system, video (S-VHS, colour, sound, 4:00 min.), closed-circuit projection: video camera, projector

Duration: 20 minutes

Situation: At the invitation of the GSMBA Bern, Grau showed her performance *enhanced by King Kong* in the entrance hall of the Kunsthalle Bern on the occasion of the annual general meeting. The presentation had a rather improvised character, with the audience standing in a semi-circle round the installative *mise-en-scène* consisting of a screen and the performer's "work table".

Comment:

"A postcard serves as the background and in front of it a small soft-toy gorilla embraces a still smaller doll. Filmed and transposed on to a film screen, the scene develops a seeming reality. Backed by the original film sound, King Kong rises before the audience's eyes. And yet there are breaks and interruptions. Who is the monster? King Kong or the creature, the artist, that is manipulating him? What is the situation where our perception is concerned? The final attacks look genuine on the screen. But in reality they are only toy helicopters shooting chocolate cornflakes." (Jana Fehrensén, in *Neue Mittelland-Zeitung*, 28.5.2002)

00.01_I (cf. 98.01_I)

Split

2-channel video installation: 2 projectors, 2 video players, 2 videos (all S-VHS, colour, sound, 10:00 min.), 2 loudspeakers

The installation links up with works in which Pascale Grau studies individual regions of the body with respect to their potential to formulate ambiguous images by means of certain (performative) gestures and movements. The performance in front of the camera, the decision to dispense with any processing of the video recordings and the emphasizing of both the auditory and installative levels are characteristics of these works. For *Split* Grau films now her left, now her right arm, reaching out into space with her upper and lower arms in free movements. The stationary camera is meanwhile pointed at the body parts from behind, and the sequences are shot from slightly below, looking towards the sky. In the undefinable image space of the videos, precisely focused and blurred body parts seem to interpenetrate one another; they are largely released from their anatomical dependency and take on a life of their own. The simple arm movement turns into a kind of wing beat, backed by a sound of the spheres, a technically distorted song. By placing the two video channels in the installative arrangement at right angles as a large-surface projection, Grau reinforces the spatial experience of this movement. But at the same time, through the interaction with the sound, she also strengthens the abstraction of the immediate corporeality, intensifying the disengagement from gravity and physical dependency.

99.01_P (cf. 99.02_V)

Endorphine [Endorphins]

Concept: The artist wears a pink lace petticoat the hem of which is sewn up to form pockets. She steps into a cone of light. With the warm air from a hairdryer she rouses the ladybirds that are in the pockets of the hem from their “winter” torpor. Little by little, thousands of insects begin to populate the artist’s body. They crawl over her arms, back, breast and head and form themselves into patterns. Some swarm to the light or towards the audience. With her arms raised and turning in a circle, Grau sings the song *Killing Me Softly* by Roberta Flack again and again until all the ladybirds have become active and spread – like a lacy pattern – over her entire body. She leaves the room, leaving hundreds of “lucky bugs” there behind her. The performance is accompanied by a video which shows arms moving like wings against the background of the blue sky in sequences edited to run in parallel (cf. 00.01_I).

Material: 40,000 ladybirds, 1 hairdryer, 1 spotlight, 1 video (colour, no sound, 10:00 min., presentation as a projection or on a monitor).

Ladybirds are bred as beneficial insects in organic farming and used as working animals in plantations or glasshouses. They eat pests such as lice etc., and after they have done their work they are collected and kept in artificial hibernation at a temperature of 8°C until the next time they are needed.

Duration: app. 30 minutes

Situation: The performance weekend with twenty artists, some of them appearing in parallel, took place in the rooms of the Kunsthalle Bern and was curated by the art historian Eszter Gyarmathy. *Endorphine* was performed on the ground floor, in the first room on the right-hand side, with the video being shown on the narrow end of the room as a wall projection. In front of it, a cone of light beamed from above marked out the action area and the public gathered in a semi-circle around it.

Comment:

“Then suddenly everything springs into life. I don’t know if I’m repelled or fascinated by it, as I haven’t yet ascertained what kind of creatures are forming such a beautiful pattern on your body. The woman next to me relieves my mind when she says they are ladybirds. I can relax, yet a slight uneasiness persists. Now I think it must have been uneasiness about being unable to control such active life – autonomous life. The clusters of ladybirds on your back, on your head, had something eerily beautiful about them. Sensuality to spare! At the same time the embodiment of innocence, that was the whole picture. Then suddenly, out of the silence, from your innermost self, with complete humility, you start to sing. Goose pimples! [...] I am most profoundly moved and infinitely grateful that there is someone around who takes life (and herself) so seriously [...]” (Ruth Schwegler, Berne, 1999)

98.01_I (cf. 00.01_I)

Wasserlauf [Water run]

2-channel video installation: 2 projectors, 2 video players, 2 videos (all S-VHS, colour, sound, 20:00 min.), 2 loudspeakers

Pascale Grau's video works are very much characterised by a working process in which the performative action, the fact of performing in front of the camera and for it, is of central importance. The means the artist uses in her actions to translate the aspect of the performative, the direct experiencing of the gestures and the bodily presence, into the other "recording" medium of video can be followed particularly clearly in the installation *Wasserlauf* [Water run]. On two free-standing projection surfaces which are positioned beside one another five centimetres apart, Grau juxtaposes two videos as mirror images, each turned at a 90-degree angle to the other. The shots show two pairs of legs moving above the surface of water; the legs seem to be striving to get away from one another in slow, decided movements, yet not to move from the spot. On looking more closely striking details catch the eye: the constantly changing direction of the flow of the water, the red-painted toenails, and above all the spatial nature of the video images in terms of depth which corrects the initial impression of image editing. The videos reproduce the actual (filming) situation. Hanging three metres above a flowing river on a bridge Grau herself films her own kicking legs and records her movements from different positions: with her body facing upstream and downstream respectively, with the camera turned towards her body, or turned away from it. The sound, a march played by a tuba, gives the installation a certain insistent quality. It interacts with the rhythm of the movement of the body parts and reinforces the impression that this "idle running" represents an undertaking that is not only fruitless, but extremely precarious.

97.05_I+P (cf. 08.03_I / 97.04_I+P)

Die geben von Herzen [They give from the heart]

In collaboration with Andrea Saemann and Simone Kurz

Site-specific installation with performative denouement

Installation: pink angora wool, monitor, video player, video (S-VHS, colour, no sound, 20:00 min.), 2 loudspeakers, 1 Walkman, audio recording

Performance: microphone, sound system, LED banner, Swiss ball, 600 CHF, 1 bunch of flowers

Pascale Grau, Simone Kurz and Andrea Saemann develop the work *Die geben von Herzen* [They give from the heart] for the art kiosk in the Lorraine district in Berne that takes as its starting point the kiosk's original function as a place where goods were traded. In it they pick up the associated system of buying and selling, supply and demand, and expand this theme by the aspects of the fulfilment of (secret) wishes and barter. While preparing the exhibition the artists try to discover the heart's desires of the people of Berne: through newspaper ads and in the form of a competition in the *Berner Stadtanzeiger* they collect up needs and pipe dreams expressed in writing which they incorporate into the development of the project. In the installation in the kiosk they first transform its display window into a soft membrane made of angora wool consisting of innumerable crocheted squares lovingly prepared at home. From this surface a woollen chute descends into the interior of the kiosk, while a video monitor is placed at the end of it. If you put your head into the large, funnel-like opening, you see a video with a ball of wool that is being unravelled by invisible hands. From two loudspeakers that are fitted directly behind the crocheted wall the wishes can be heard, spoken in a whisper.

In the live performance at the conclusion of the exhibition an award is made publicly to the most inspiring entry to the competition. While all 21 wishes submitted are again repeated in text form on the LED banner on the roof of the kiosk, Pascale Grau and Andrea Saemann explain the various stages of the project and their decision process in word and image. They introduce the winner and reconstruct his heart's desire, finally to find a new Kung Fu teacher after an eight-year break in training, in the form of combative poses from Bruce Lee films. After that Simone Kurz pulls the wool funnel out from inside the kiosk, reaches her hand through it and hands the winner the prize of 600 Swiss francs in the form of a bunch of flowers with the money stuck into it.

97.04_I+P (cf. 08.03_I+P / 97.05_I+P)

Leiblied Variationen [Body-song variations]

In collaboration with Andrea Saemann and Simone Kurz

Site-specific installation with performative denouement

Installation: pink wool, metal shelf, monitor with integrated video player, video (VHS, colour, sound, 8:00 min.), fluorescent tube with cover, drill holes in the wall

Performance: 3 stools, app. 20 balloons, gold threads, video (S-VHS, colour, no sound, 4:00 min.)

The performative concept of *3 x 3 (1. Schritt und 2. Schritt)* [3 x 3 (1st step and 2nd step)] (96.03_P) forms the starting point for this site-specific project. In the installation and the performance Leiblied Variationen [Body-song variations] Pascale Grau, Simone Kurz and Andrea Saemann now shift the focus away from the theme of love and suffering to the phenomenon of the “hole”, cavity or deficit which can be construed in several ways. The spectrum ranges from the “budget deficit” – the word of the year in 1997 – to emotional blanks and relational gaps that are again and again willingly and lovingly filled by women because of their social skills. The artists first cover the floor opening existing on the site with a kind of suspended ceiling made of crocheted pink wool squares; although this closes off the space lying underneath it, because of its material nature it ultimately offers no firm hold. On the adjacent wall holes are bored into the roughly plastered surface to form the word “Haushaltsloch” [budget deficit], illuminated by a fluorescent tube. With the promotional video for the filler Moltotill that is shown on the monitor standing on a metal shelf, the artists lay a trail – that must surely be interpreted ironically – to the home-worker tradition, pragmatic Do-it-yourself, that reaches out to the other elements of the installation and activates their ambiguous interpretation: State finance and private fates, traditional role images of female industriousness and male energy occur neutrally side by side, are intertwined with one another and finally broken down into quite fundamental human needs and emotions. In advance of the performance which takes place to mark the end of the exhibition, the artists physically dismantle parts of the installation. At the same time they thus create space for new actions and for the associations arising from them.

Kurz/Grau/Saemann divide the crocheted surface into its component parts and pull these over balloons that hang from the ceiling in a circle; they pull the loose ends of the woollen squares through holes in the floor into the space beneath. On the monitor a new video can now be seen in which a pair of legs sways in time with the beat, surrounded by a crocheted pink “mini-skirt”. The live performance takes place within this installative setting. The three festively attired artists sit in the half-height gap under the floor of the exhibition room and pull at the woollen threads hanging down. With steady movements they again unpick the crocheted squares that slowly separate from the balloons. At the same time Grau sings a melancholy Thai song, while Saemann and Kurz hum along with her. In the upper space, as the balloons are slowly uncovered they dance to these sounds, while the pink balls of wool at the performers’ feet constantly grow bigger. Because of the spatial situation the audience can follow both effects of the unpicking process: they witness how on the one hand the result of hours of handiwork literally melts away in the women’s hands, but on the other in the form of a “transfer of energy” it sets the air-filled balloons in motion.

97.03_P

Textile Hilfestellungen [Textile supports]

In collaboration with Andrea Saemann

Concept: In connection with the work process in which Pascale Grau was preoccupied by her discarded clothes, culminating in the installation *Wickel, Dinge für den geistigen Gebrauch* (97.02_I), Grau was asked along with Andrea Saemann to stage a performance in the intervention project *Jäger + Sammler [Hunter + Gatherer]*. The artists decided to apply the process already started by Grau to the clothes of both artists. For the purpose they cut up old articles of clothing in front of a running video camera, and recounted bygone experiences they linked with the garments to one another. In the live performance *Textile Hilfestellungen* [Textile supports] the two of them now crochet these strips of cloth into a sort of thick oven cloth, counting the stitches as they do so. They skewer the clothing so processed into “cloth boards” on a stick, like paid bills. Meanwhile the pre-produced video is played on a monitor standing on the floor, so that counting and recounting overlap one another acoustically. A series of slides with images from their private photograph albums show the artists in older snapshots wearing the clothes in question.

Material: slide projector, slides, monitor, video player, video (S-VHS, colour, sound, 60:00 min.), 2 stools, strips of fabric, 2 thick crochet needles, wooden stick

Duration: app. 60 minutes

Situation: Two of Pascale Grau’s former students – Regula J. Kopp and Stefan Kaegi – invited hundreds of Swiss artists and artist groups to animate the SZU Selnau underground station with installations and performances over an 18-week period. Every evening there were two interventions in shops that were standing empty and in the corridors. Grau/Saemann staged their performance in premises with glazing on three sides. There the performance, the audience sitting on chairs and the slides that were projected on to transparent paper attached to the glass pane could also be seen and followed by casual passers-by. Private and public, inside and out were intermingled.

Comment:

“They counted the stitches and told stories half aloud. As they did so they dissected a piece of their life into individual life strands as it were, and span them – like the Fates – so as to deposit them in the store of memory.” (Matthias Scheurer, Basle, 2009)

97.02_I (cf. 06.01_I)

Wickel. Dinge für den geistigen Gebrauch [Wraps. Things for spiritual use]

15 articles of clothing wrapped in plastic film, 15 wall brackets, 1 slide projector (Kodak Carousel), 5 sets of 15 slides

With the installation *Wickel. Dinge für den geistigen Gebrauch [Wraps. Things for spiritual use]* Pascale Grau concludes the first phase of a long-term project in which she looks at her clothing and the memories linked to it. She goes back to the wardrobe she wore between 1984 and 1994 from which she had selected and kept individual items. She now twists them together into tight rolls that she encloses with plastic film. She fixes the virtually shrink-wrapped “portions of memory” to the wall on brackets, lining the stick-like objects of varying lengths up alongside one another. The slides that are projected on to the wall in the immediate vicinity in each case characterise an article of clothing. The compact blocks of text provide information about the type of garment and the fabric, how the garment came into the artist’s possession, and what happened to it. In addition Grau gives a thumbnail description from memory of the feeling or motivation that led her to buy, wear or keep this particular coat, skirt, pullover, etc. Pascale Grau here examines the construction of memory in two different forms that she juxtaposes as complementary principles. The reminiscences preserved in the textile are compressed into static structures that provide no clue either with respect to the actuating factors – the garments – or in relation to their interpretation or placing. On the other hand, the chronological sequence of the projected texts refers to a story or a biographical development that can be understood as a lapse of time or as a defined section (of life). Thus thoughts fixed in speech and pupated fragments are interwoven with one another, and the nucleus of a new “spiritual use” resides in their associative correlations and concrete, visually perceptible connections.

97.01_I (cf. 96.01_V)

Misses Easterly

Single-channel video installation: 2 stools, light blue, semi-transparent fabric, 1 monitor (Sony Cube), 1 video player, 1 video: *Misses Easterly* (96.02_V), no titles or closing credits

The installation is based on the eponymous video which Pascale Grau here stages spatially, thereby expanding it in terms of content. The starting point of the video is the German expression “Zu-Leibe-Rücken” (literally take to the body, i.e. tackle, get to grips with), which the artist examines on her own body by way of example in several performative sequences. In doing so she applies various household implements – from a pastry wheel by way of a vacuum cleaner brush down to the face-milling cutter – to the skin of her upper body. The incised freeze-frames of these instruments and above all the stereotypical appeals by the man’s voice to do it even more slowly, but even a little more gently, endow the video with a rhythmic articulation which is again and again slightly disrupted by the time lag of the “application noises”. Grau presents this video on a cube-shaped monitor standing on a stool and covered by a semi-transparent plastic mesh. By offering the possibility of taking a seat directly opposite it and at the same height, the artist suggests an intimate viewing situation where the public encounters the video at eye level, the only position from which what is happening on the glass screen behind the mesh veil can be perceived at all. Grau questions not only the directly experienceable physicality that is inherent in the sequences of images, but also explores the various perceptual mechanisms that result from the interaction of phonetic and body language. The covered view of the gestures perpetrated on the female body conjures up a sense of voyeurism, putting viewers into a state that hovers between attraction and aversion, taboo-breaking and socially regulated behaviour.

96.05_I (cf. 94.03_P)

Die Hochzeitstafel in den Lieblingsfarben der Braut [The wedding table in the bride's favourite colours]

Painted curtain made of Gobelin cloth (3.5 x 2.5 metres), wire cables and hooks, floor-mounted light track, spotlights, timer

In the mid-1990s Pascale Grau – often in collaboration with other artists – develops a number of performances in which the spatial “scenography”, the props and objects used as well as their inclusion in the performative actions, play a central role (cf. 97.05_I+P / 97.04_I+P / 95.01_P / 94.03_P / 91.04_P). Generally these are site-specific projects where the interaction with the preordained setting to a certain extent automatically arises from the context in question; but this interest can also be observed in works that have no specific local ties. Thus in the performance *Die Hochzeitstafel in den Lieblingsfarben der Braut* [The wedding table in the bride's favourite colours] the stage-like display with a curtain and the lighting are constituent factors within the spatio-temporal process rather than just serving the spatial and atmospheric structuring.

In the eponymous installation Grau takes examination of these aspects further, but shifts the emphasis from the level of the performative event to questions relating to the interleaving of differentiated spatial conditions. She makes an exact reconstruction of the set of the performance, but omits concrete references to any “stage action”, however it might be mounted. The regular alternation of two different light atmospheres represents the only action. At six-minute intervals the spotlights that illuminate the transparent fabric from in front go out, and the floor-mounted light track placed directly behind the curtain with lights directed far into the room is activated. As a result of the alternating lighting the spatial appearance is transformed: while with light coming from in front the lavish festive table painted on to the curtain shows up explicitly in the room as a freestanding picture, with the change in lighting the cloth acting as a room divider suddenly becomes transparent and reveals the area lying behind it to our gaze. With the restaging, Grau frees the performative setting from its original connection with the action, transforming it into a “purged”, accessible spatial structure. Many diverse associations are kindled by things as they actually are, the curtain and lighting, the picture and atmosphere, associations that are constantly altered and expanded by the physical (and mental) interaction between the viewers in the room.

96.03_P (cf. 96.04_V)

3 x 3 (1. Schritt und 2. Schritt) [3 x 3 (1st step and 2nd step)]

In collaboration with Andrea Saemann and Simone Kurz

Concept: 3 x 3 is a performative concept in several steps. From the performance by way of the video to the installation and back to the performance, Kurz/Grau/Saemann circle around common themes. In the process, the idea for the form to be used in the next medium takes shape from working in the first one. Thus the questioning of a theme is fanned out into several media realities.

3 x 3 1. Schritt [1st step]: Three women arrange three love songs: Andrea Saemann chooses the folk song *Du, du liegst mir am Herzen [You, You Are in My Heart]*, Simone Kurz the aria *Maria* by Leonard Bernstein from *West Side Story* and Pascale Grau the Marilyn Monroe song *I Wanna Be Loved by You* from the film *Some Like It Hot*. Each of them first develops her individual approach to all three songs, then they link these performative “fragments” into a common whole. Grau sings – using a microphone and a delay device – all three songs and during the singing she physically works out the proverbial labour of love to make herself “fit for love”. Saemann sings a duet with herself – with the aid of a tape –, translating *I Wanna Be Loved by You* into Swiss German and narrating part of the plot of *West Side Story*. Kurz devotes her entire attention to cleaning an assault rifle and hums the three songs to herself. The three songs about love, physicality and suffering interact with one another in a way that leaves enough room for each person’s subjectivity, yet generates a kind of three-part “choir”.

Subsequently, the three artists re-enacted the significant moments of the performance yet again for the camera and processed the takes into the autonomous single-channel video, *fit for love* (96.04_V). From 1997, in *3 x 3 2. Schritt [2nd step]*, Simone Kurz no longer performed live with the others. Parts of her role were restaged by Kurz/Grau/Saemann for the camera and played back as a projection in the background of the live performance; thus in the first and last scene Kurz was present even in absentia. Another new element was a monitor hanging from the ceiling showing a downward pointing gun barrel as a video image which was used in the scene from *West Side Story* jointly contested by Grau and Saemann: Grau sings Tony’s aria *Maria* with the help of the delay device, while Saemann moves the monitor above her to and fro like a swing. Saemann imperturbably carries on retelling the climax of *West Side Story*, even if her voice is gradually drowned out by the song which is overlaid with the technical “repetition” and also cracks at the end. Grau and Saemann went on tour with *3 x 3 2. Schritt* in 1997.

Material: *3 x 3 1st step*: delay device, microphone, cassette recorder, audio recordings, assault rifle, cleaning utensils; *3 x 3 2nd step*: 1 monitor (hanging from the ceiling), projector, 2 video players, 2 videos (all S-VHS, colour, no sound, 30:00 and 10:00 min. respectively), delay device, microphone, cassette recorder, audio recordings

Duration: 45 minutes

Situation: 3 x 3 1st step 1997: *AuaU* was the fourth event in the performance cycle *bien fait – mal fait – pas fait* (multimedia performances and impromptu compositions) which was organized by the dancer Suzanne Studinger in the Sudhaus Werkraum Warteck pp.

3 x 3 2nd step 1997: The well funded, internationally minded performance festival *For Eyes and Ears*, at which performance celebrities like Carolee Schneemann, Ben Patterson and Karlheinz Stockhausen were among those appearing was curated by the art historian Else Jespersen. It was held in a variety of places such as art museums and galleries, the theatre and public spaces in the Danish town of Odense from 29 October to 2 November 1997. Grau/Saemann showed their performance in the fully booked Theaterhuset, a neutral black space without a stage with tiered audience seating for approximately 150 people.

Comment:

“The theme was the longing for love from a woman’s perspective and it was symbolised in the love song to Maria from *West Side Story*. Heart and heartache were constantly divested of sentimentality with all kinds of deliberately deployed vocal and technical shortcomings. In doing so they pull off the feat of poking fun at media reproductions without laughing at women and their feelings of love.”
(Maria Vogel, in *Neue Luzerner Zeitung*, 22.3.1999)

95.01_P

Haus S(a)egen. Eine theatralische Einrichtung [House blessing / sawing. A theatrical arrangement]

(Segen means to bless in German, while Sägen or Saegen (pronounced in a similar way) means to saw) [Erklärung zum Titel]

An a.b. group project (Dorothee Daphi, Pascale Grau, Matthias Moebius, Andrea Saemann)

Exhibition: Karen Scholz and the a.b. group

Concept: The a.b. group trawls through (socio-)cultural fields to access them by artistic means, in the case of *Haus S(a)egen. Eine theatralische Einrichtung* [House blessing / sawing. A theatrical arrangement] the house. Playfully and with only seeming naivety, the artists examine how housing – starting from its practical function – became the projection surface for ideas, ideology and marketing, how its meaning has changed in history and art. In a mixture of performance, lecture and theatrical scene-setting and with the help of four overhead projectors they stage the house as a symbol and model for discussion of human beings in search of shelter and demarcation. In parallel, in the foyer of the institution, hundreds of miniature houses are presented in a very structured and neatly arranged exhibition, which was open before and after the show. At each performance the a.b. group select a certain number of house models which are used as visual aids in the performance, then taken back to the exhibition.

Material: house models made of various materials (wood, cardboard, etc.), 4 overhead projectors on trolleys, overhead transparencies, loudspeaker

Duration: app. 60 minutes

Situation: The Kulturfabrik Kampnagel [Kampnagel Culture Factory] directed by Armin Kerber invited the a.b. group for the second time to co-produce an exhibition and performance project. On the eight days of the presentation the exhibition assembled by Karen Scholz was open in the foyer. It comprised some 50 exhibits from the exhibition *Jedes Haus ein Kunsthaus* shown at the Museum für Gestaltung in Zurich in 1994; it was possible for the a.b. group to borrow them thanks to the good offices of the curator Martin Heller and the financial support of the Swiss arts council Pro Helvetia.

Comment:

“The ‘Theatrical Arrangement’ for four people, four overhead projectors, a loudspeaker – though no ‘house’ roars out of it – and countless miniature houses begins, how should it be otherwise, at home: housework, domestic noise. Slowly it becomes quiet, and the actors enter the middle area of the

stage, which is divided into three. They paint a large rectangle on the floor. The space for the house has been created, the convergence between house and human being begins. From a number of identically shaped miniatures – four walls, a pointed roof – the artists pick out individual objects that make the grade. Thus the bread house is now cut up, the sacrificial house is distributed in bits to the public, an inflatable house is burst, a misconceived cardboard house is burnt and the ashes swept away with a brush. [...] Accompanying the performance there is a small exhibition in the wooden shed in the theatre foyer. Everything that has to do with miniature houses and has or could have its place in the stage play is assembled here.” (Nele-Marie Brütgang, in *taz*, 4.12.1995)

94.03_P (cf. 96.05_I)

Die Hochzeitstafel in den Lieblingsfarben der Braut [The wedding table in the bride's favourite colours]

Concept: The performance *Die Hochzeitstafel in den Lieblingsfarben der Braut* [The wedding table in the bride's favourite colours] is a feeding and refusal ritual involving the artist and an old man, embedded in song. The clearly younger woman who is singing keeps repeating the decided gesture of feeding with an empty spoon that looks too large, while the naked man sitting on a stool each time blocks his mouth with his hands, so refusing the symbolic force feeding. The scene is enacted behind a painted curtain made of Gobelin cloth; the motif painted on it – an opulently decked wedding table – refers to the traditions of the eating culture. The light in front of and behind the curtain alternates at regular intervals. If the translucent cotton cloth is lit from in front, from the auditorium, then the motif is clearly visible. Immediately the light is switched on in the rear area of this “stage”, the image is to a certain extent “faded out”, and there is a clear view of the scene. From the perspective of film technique, the alternation of the lighting has the function of a flash back and forward by means of which the performative action is hotwired in constant alternation to the picture motif.

Material: painted curtain made from Gobelin cloth (3.5 x 2.5 metres), wire cables and hooks, floor-mounted light track, spotlight, timer, stool, spoon

Duration: app. 30 minutes

Situation: *Performance Index' 95* was an international performance festival which was held in the newly opened Werkraum Warteck pp in Basle (a former brewery) from 21 to 24 September 1995. Heinrich Lüber, Clara Saner and Martina Siegwolf were among the curators. Grau's performance took place in the so-called “Quiet Room”, a square, tall space that was left in a rough condition, divided by the curtain into an action area and an audience area. The spectators sat and stood crowded together in a semi-circle in front of the curtain, and were thus directly exposed to the trance-like atmosphere which was generated first and foremost by the songs composed and performed by Grau herself and the rhythmic alternation of the light.

Comment:

“Pascale Grau was able to stage the most convincing offering in terms of what constitutes performance (today), ‘non-mediatised imagery’. The picture of an opulent wedding table from the previous century has been painted on to a gauze curtain. Behind it sits a naked old man who is being force-fed with an outsize spoon by a severely but sexily dressed young woman, clearly or barely discernible in the alternating light of the spotlights. ‘Es muess so syii, es muess halt so syiii’ [It's gotta be like this, it's just gotta be like this], she sings purely and clearly, pure as the Alps, pure as Heidi, loud and clear. In theory that's it. That's where its strength lies, which not only held the hard-boiled public riveted where they stood, but also provoked loud sobbing from a sympathetic woman in the audience. And that reaction was not at all inappropriate: it was human. The performance has been born as a tour de force from the (desperate) hope of not having to elevate a piece of life on to a higher level of thought in order to understand it.” (Tadeus Pfeiffer, in *Basler Zeitung*, 26.9.1995)

94.02_I

Mahl Zeit [Meal time]

Site-specific installation: 150 kg potting compost, 45 flat porcelain plates, 45 soup spoons

At the request of the owners the curator Christiane Klappert devised a concept for the interim use for artistic purposes of the Sievekingvilla in Hamburg. She invited five artists to animate the empty building with site-specific works. Pascale Grau developed her installation Mahl Zeit [Meal time] in the former dining-room of the villa. Two doors lead into the room, and there are marks visible on the wall left by furniture that has been removed – a sideboard and a clock. Grau completely covers the floor of the room with a thick layer of soil; on it she lays the flat plates out in the form of four pictogram-like chairs and a table, placing a spoon in the middle of each plate. Seen through the doors from the wall opposite the windows the plates and spoons evoke the impression of a clock, showing the time as half past eleven. With the installation Grau refers back not only to the room's former function, but also to the social and cultural patterns that have to a certain extent been deposited in it spatially. With the reduced, almost graphic setting out of the plates and spoons as well as the very insistent materiality of the soil on the floor she underlines the interlocking aspects of (socially determined) rules and human basic needs such as food or housing, of order and sensual enjoyment. It is precisely this material ambivalence that feeds the multi-layered associative potential, which encompasses not only eating culture and table manners but also the rituals and (bourgeois) control mechanisms linked with them.

94.01_I (cf. 95.02_V / 93.01_P)

Mittwoch immer, die Gummihose [Always Wednesday, rubber pants]

3-channel video installation: 3 black wooden tables, 3 monitors (Sony Cube), 2 loudspeakers, 3 Gobelin embroideries (mounted on wooden panels), 3 videos (all U-matic LB, colour, sound, [spoon] 1:00 min., [stomach] 8:00 min., [fist] 4:45 min.)

In the installation *Mittwoch immer, die Gummihose* [Always Wednesday, rubber pants] Pascale Grau further develops the concept of the live performance by the same name created a year earlier. She expands the theme to (bourgeois) eating and table rituals as well as the associated measures of upbringing. At the start of the work process Grau commissions three elderly ladies to embroider a Gobelin according to her instructions; the texts on them refer back to old calendar pages with practical “maxims”: “2 | Wednesday | Breast treatment”, “14 | Wednesday | Fish stew”, “4 | Wednesday | Rubber pants”. The artist accompanies the production of these artefacts in the form of regular visits and conversations.

In the installative arrangement Grau puts these text panels together with three videos so that they compose formal and contentual units with the tables and cube-shaped monitors. For the videos Grau performs in front of the camera, carrying out ritual, sometimes aggression-laden gestures on her own body. Thus in the video on the left she presses a silver child’s spoon the tip of which she has taken into her mouth firmly against her closed lips; the middle monitor shows close-ups of a twitching stomach, the skin bearing the traces of the imprint of a waistband or some such thing; in the sequence presented on the right the artist pushes her fist into her mouth as far as she can and for as long as it takes for it to be expelled by a choking reflex. As sound Grau backs all the shots with the music of a tarantella, its rhythm picking up the twists of the body in the left-hand and right-hand videos, and in spite of the endless repetition of the folkloric dance piece it endows the installation with a certain lightness. On the other hand with the text-image arrangements, the direct spatial linking of the Gobelins and the videos, Grau subverts this rather cheerful physicality that emerges on the auditory level: the correspondence of “breast treatment” and spoon, “fish stew” and stomach contractions, of “rubber pants” and fist tends rather to evoke (childish) physical memories that are reactivated by Grau in the performative actions and visualised as cultural topoi in the media transposition.

93.03_P (cf. 05.02_P / 02.04_V / 02.03_I)

dressing 1–5

An a.b. group project (Dorothee Daphi, Pascale Grau, Matthias Moebius, Kai Rickert, Andrea Saemann)

Concept: The project “dressing – a scenic visitation” deals with conditioned realities and the a.b. group’s shared interest in (cultural, social) rituals. They use and stage the ritual as a theatrical experimental tutorial based on raising the following question: Which of the many small things in our homes are only waiting to emerge as quite big? In a playful and random procedure the artists extract 25 objects from their respective households that they integrate into the performance. Thus for example the objects that were in a flat and are remembered by all five people become performative material. The a.b. group intends to investigate things through play, to get wise to their ultimate purpose, to remove the single-track nature of meanings and give the things back their voice: meanings and a voice that have got lost in the concepts. In terms of content they are concerned with all forms of successful and vain endeavours at dressing, whether they involve a child, cooked food or a cuddly toy. Associative pictorial material like a Super 8 film made by the group and a slide projection comment on and counteract their games.

Material: table, cinema bench, cat litter, 25 objects belonging personally to the artists, 5 talking dolls, slide projector, slides, film projector, Super 8 film (colour, no sound, 4:00 min.), record player, 1 record

Duration: app. 45 minutes

Situation: In the context of a programme to encourage new-generation artists, the a.b. group was invited by the Kulturfabrik Kampnagel [Kampnagel Culture Factory] to elaborate a performance. This was produced at the festival *Junge Hunde im Mai* in former factory premises that could be converted into an unadorned theatre space with no stage, but with a tiered auditorium. Choreographed dance interludes, the progress of events seemingly guided by an invisible hand, the stage set – a square marked out with cat litter the surface of which had to be continually smoothed down – and the cockroach-brown costumes of the protagonists exuded an atmosphere that constantly fluctuated between keeping to the rules and involuntary, but precisely calculated comedy.

Comment:

“In the staged visitation *dressing 1–5* the a.b. group discovers the theatricality of inconspicuous household objects and in a wittily sarcastic collage of movement, image, music and word awakens them into wayward and cryptic life. A tender meeting of the brushes, a jaunty shoe-tree rondo, careful peeling of cucumbers and a thorough bout of cleaning.” (K.W., in *Hamburger Morgenpost*, 10.5.1993)

93.02_P

Eisprung [Ovulation / egg leap]

Concept: In the first part of the performance *Eisprung* [Ovulation / egg leap] Pascale Grau executes a leap into the water while wearing a fragile costume made of hens' eggs sewn on to a white swimsuit. She places herself at the edge of a pool of water and counts aloud from her current age down to zero, as she quite slowly raises her arms to a diving position. After this countdown she lets herself fall flat into the water, so that some of the eggs break away from the costume because of the impact, and others are shattered. An underwater camera records this action. The second part of the performance which is separated from the first in terms of both place and time is adapted to the location and the occasion, depending on the situation in which it is performed. The video recording is now projected on to a screen. Grau steps in front of the projection and performs songs or texts that accompany the video images. With the title the artist alludes to the double interpretation of "Eisprung", both the literal meaning of the word, the leap into the water in which the eggs are shattered, and the physiological process of female ovulation.

Material: 350 blown hens' eggs (sewn onto a white swimsuit and a bathing hat), a pool of water (size variable), underwater camera, projector, screen, video player, video (S-VHS, colour, no sound, 15:00 min.)

Duration: 2 app. 15-minute sessions

Situation: *Nonlieux – Poesie des Nichtortes* was a two-month art project involving forty artists and numerous performances, interventions, lectures and installations. It was curated by the Kaskadenkondensator team (Philippe Cabane, Anne Hody, Alban Rüdüsühli, Clara Saner, Martina Siegwolf). Grau carried out the first part of the performance in a fountain in the St. Alban district, and the second part in the Kaskadenkondensator. After the first part the public were requested to cross the Rhine with the artist on the St. Alban ferry. They rejoined one another in the Kaskadenkondensator where the underwater shots could already be viewed as a projection. Grau lay down in front of the projection wrapped in blankets and sang lullabies while the egg leap action was again projected on to her body and the wall behind her from the perspective of the underwater camera.

Comment:

"I see in it the futility of wanting, a deliberate (arranged) failure of the wish to cross borders and the wish for greatness." (Matthias Moebius, Hamburg, 1997)

93.01_P (cf. 95.02_V, 94.01_I)

Mittwoch immer, die Gummihose [Always Wednesday, rubber pants]

Concept: Pascale Grau steps on to the stage in front of a microphone, wearing an elegant velvet dress. She opens her mouth wide and in that position tries several times to utter the same sentence, “I want to put my fist into my mouth”, but the content of what she says is barely comprehensible. While this is still happening she lifts her right fist to her mouth and forces it into it until her voice peters out. She raises her arm upwards and turns her upper body and head to the right. At this moment sentimental music starts to play: Roy Orbison’s song *In Dreams* from the film *Blue Velvet* by David Lynch. In spite of fits of choking the artist keeps her fist in her mouth until a reflex action ejects the saliva-covered hand with full force. Without wiping away the saliva and tears she casts an eloquent glance at everyone around and leaves the stage, while the music is slowly faded out.

Material: microphone, tripod, sound system, audio recording

Duration: app. 10 minutes

Situation: In the context of the theatre project *Friseuse Carmen* various performance artists from the fields of dance, theatre, music and the visual arts appeared. These actions interrupted the course of the theatre evening as interventions. The site of the performances was a neutral theatre area with a stage and café-style seating; the artists animated the entire space with their interventions. Grau chose the “traditional” appearance on the stage, so awakening expectations of a song presentation which she let come to nothing with her performance.

Comment:

“The first reaction of the audience was laughter. But the longer the fist remained in my mouth and the more the fits of choking increased, women reacted with horror, shouting out to me that I should stop. The men for the most part on the other hand went on laughing.” (PG in conversation with IM, June 2009)

91.04_ P

WEIT WEST WILD NAH [Wide west wild near]

An a.b. group project (Dorothee Daphi, Pascale Grau, Anke Grot, Matthias Moebius, Andrea Saemann)

Concept: the a.b. group describes *WEIT WEST WILD NAH* [Wide west wild near] as a staged collage with projections about and on to the cult figure Winnetou, the noble savage and main character created in several books by the German best-selling author Karl May (1842–1912). The starting point is the fascination of the “Winnetou” phenomenon and memories of their own sharing in his experience, the feeling of elation in puberty at being quite close to the infallible hero. As far back as 1963 the German writer Arno Schmidt unmasked Karl May as a rumour-monger and a homophobic contemporary in his study *Sitara und der Weg dorthin*. This controversy prompted the performers to take on the role of Winnetou’s fiancée; he himself can be seen only in a film projection. Even Mathias Moebius takes on a female role, that of Winnetou’s sister Nscho-Tschi, who when she was alive suffered because Winnetou loved his brother Old Shatterhand more than her. The “fiancées” on the other hand also act as scientists, sadists and precision mechanics.

WEIT WEST WILD NAH was explicitly devised for the lecture theatre at the Ethnographic Museum in Hamburg. In advance of the performance the a.b. group re-shot the key scenes from the well-known 1963 film *Winnetou (part 1)* as a 16 mm film, with original costumes from the Bad Segeberg Karl May Festival: the blood brotherhood, the death of Nscho-Tschi and again and again the farewell between Winnetou and Old Shatterhand, backed by looped sound excerpts from the original film. The project brought together live performances and slide and film projections of stereotyped visual worlds that reflect the longed-for imagined ideas of wilderness: the wide prairie, monolithic rocks and breathtaking waterfalls as well as the protagonists inserted into them, all staged in the tradition of dioramas in scientific museums. And the group’s methodology can also be inferred from that: archiving, preparing, putting on display, and so explaining the world from a subjective perspective in order to expose and at the same time deconstruct the matter under discussion.

Material: slide projector, slides, film projector, 16 mm film (colour, sound, 5:00 min.), various props

Duration: app. 60 minutes

Situation: For this project with its background in cultural theory the a.b. group found a specific, historically charged performance venue in the lecture theatre of the Ethnographic Museum in Hamburg. The room built in 1902 was used for ethnographical and anthropological lectures and events, i.e. also to impart clichéd concepts of the “noble savage”. And shortly after the turn of the century the displays of human beings in Hagenbeck’s zoo were accompanied by lectures in this room. Students of ethnology were among the audience at the performance each time it was presented.

Comment:

“Questions to women and men on the street, observations at the Segeberg Karl May Festival [...] Beauty recipes for pubescent youngsters, 3000 slides about wounds, interments, contacts, analyses of ethnographical exhibitions – from this and much other material the Hamburg a.b. group [...] condensed a series of Passion scenes into a bombastic, erotic-religious tribute to the Winnetou figure of their youth. The group does not repeat – as might have been assumed – the familiar musty stories, simply reinterprets them critically. The scenes were derived rather from analytical findings. The freedom to invent exposes the empty myth to well-deserved ridicule.” (Berthold Rüniger, in *taz*, 20.12.1991)

91.03_I (cf. 91.04_P)

Fetisch [Fetish]

In collaboration with Anke Grot

Wooden box and wall construction (papered with structural wallpaper), goatskin, 1 pair of wall lights, 1 bar stool with cut-off legs, 1 slide projector (Kodak Carousel), 8 sets of 9 slides, sound system, audio recording

In this installation Pascale Grau and Anke Grot examine the cliché of the romance of the Wild West which had been significantly influenced in the German-speaking areas of Europe by the films based on Karl May's novels, made in the 1960s and 70s. In doing so they refer back among other things to the essay by Arno Schmidt (*Sitara und der Weg dorthin*, 1963) published at the beginning of the Winnetou boom in film and on television in which Schmidt points out signs of a latent, but suppressed homosexuality in May's novels. The artists design a kind of peep-box stage that they surround with props suggesting a rustic domesticity. The longish box which is inserted into the freestanding wall construction at chest height is lined with goatskin at the front; in addition all wooden surfaces are covered with a skin-like wallpaper. The wall lights installed above it with their orange shades illuminate the doubtful charm of the hunting-room decor, underlining the impression of a cliché-like rusticity and a sentimental closeness to nature. For the slides which are shown in the rectangular tube as a back projection, Grau/Grot choose a form of generating images which Grau will later have recourse to and expand in many of her performances (cf. 07.01_V/ 05.03_P/ 04.02_V / 01.03_V / 00.02_P). In a specific studio setting which the artists fit out with such things as illustrations from travel publications and magazines as background material, Grau reconstructs Wild West scenes on her body with plastic animals and figures: cowboys on horseback, tomahawk-wielding Indians, collections of cacti and wrongdoers swinging from the gallows, incorporated into grandiose landscape backdrops, in front of atmospheric sunsets. In these photographs Grau/Grot continue to record culturally transferred images of longing. They pick up elements of those images in a playful and ironic way, but at the same time unmask the mechanisms whereby they are constructed. With the installative arrangement they furthermore refer to the emotional dimension of this exploration, the obsessions and seductive power of these pictorial worlds.

91.02_I (cf. 91.01_P)

Fusshygiene [Foot hygiene]

Film installation: 4 Super 8 projectors, 4 white enamel bowls, 4 cruciform projector stands made of gilded metal, 4 films (all Super 8, b/w, no sound, 8:00 min., camera: Andrea Saemann)

The installation Fusshygiene [Foot hygiene] is closely connected to the eponymous live performance which Grau staged at a street intersection on the Bundesratsufer in Alt-Moabit in Berlin. As part of the preparation for her project the artist walked from this place in the direction of each of the four points of the compass for as long as it took for her to come across a cow or a heap of cow dung, which she then shovelled into a bowl with her bare hands. This action was filmed each time. For the exhibition Grau now develops an installative work which interleaves these “documentary” shots spatially and temporally with facets of the performative basic concept. She arranges the four film projectors on the floor in the form of a cross and directs each one towards a point of the compass. The bowls set up at a distance of two metres in front of the projector lenses serve as supports, with the films being projected on to the concave insides of the vessels. By having recourse to the media transmission of how the “material” was acquired, Grau refers to a period before the live performance, thereby revealing factors in her working process. This bears clear characteristics of procedural guidelines which the artist formulates on the basis of her research on the spot, and also consistently follows. In addition, the function of a commentary is intrinsic to the installation; Grau uses it to direct our gaze on to the marginal zones of her artistic practice, on to those performative actions that are carried out not before the public or in production circumstances.

91.01_P (cf. 91.02_I)

Fusshygiene [Foot hygiene]

Concept: A group of eleven artists develop performances and installations for the public arena. The selection of the place follows from the idea of exploring a given situation (everyday life, infrastructure, population, politics) by a random process: one person with bandaged eyes aimed at a map of the town with a pencil. The street so arrived at, the Bundesratufer in Alt-Moabit in Berlin, is in each case the starting point for the artists' work. The origin of the project *Fusshygiene* [Foot hygiene] is an orthopaedic business. The owner tells Pascale Grau that the premises used to be a dairy farm and a cow was kept in the inner courtyard. Many years ago, at the street intersection in front of the shop, this cow had stood on the foot of a milk deliveryman with such force that from then on he had to wear an artificial foot. As chance would have it, he opened an orthopaedic business on this very spot. On the basis of this item of local history and the knowledge that cow dung has many applications in medicine, domestic life and rituals, Grau developed the concept of the performance. Using the city map and the telephone she searched in each direction of the compass – from the point of view of the said intersection – for the nearest cow. This resulted in four treks through the town lasting half an hour to the south (the Tiergarten), approximately two hours to the East (Schlachthof Ost – eastern abattoir), three hours to the north (show farm for schools) and four hours to the west (a farm). At each place she collected fresh cow dung and had this action filmed with a Super 8 camera.

For the actual performance the audience was brought to the Bundesratufer, a riverbank at centre of Berlin, by boat. Grau scattered gold pigments in the shape of the points of the compass on the intersection. At each point there was an enamel bowl containing cow dung. Every quarter of an hour the artist scooped the cow dung on to the intersection with her bare hands, then stepped barefoot into the ever expanding pile of dung, devoting fifteen minutes to each point of the compass.

Material: cow dung, 4 enamel bowls, gold pigment

Duration: 60 minutes

Situation: The performance event at the Bundesratufer, Alt Moabit, and in the Berlin HdK [Berlin University of the Arts] involved eleven live performances and installations. The public were conveyed from place to place by passenger boat. Along the street short and longer-lasting performances as well as interactive installations were presented. The exhibition for its part was held in the entrance hall of the HdK. The whole project was initiated by the workshop "Cleaning the House" at Marina Abramovic's.

Comment:

"On the asphalt a cross made of gold sand formed a field. At the four ends of the cross there were enamel bowls with cow dung. The performer carried the contents into the middle, and stepped into them. I was wearing new shoes that were hurting me. Barefoot in the cow dung, what a wonderful idea in view of my sore feet. The presence of the performer lingering in the dung lasted for some time. Whether the warm smell of stables existed only in my head or whether it was in the air I can no longer say." (Dorothee Daphi, Hamburg, 2009)

89.01_P

Wie eine Frau has a cow ... a lovestory [As a wife has a cow ... a lovestory]

In collaboration with Andrea Saemann

Concept: Grau/Saemann transpose the text by Gertrude Stein which appeared in 1926 in the book *a book concluding with as a wife has a cow a lovestory* with lithographs by Juan Gris into a sequence of scenes. The two artists present performatively what Gertrude Stein produces with her language: instead of simply calling the things by name, they also set the text moving, give it linguistic and bodily rhythm. They act in such a way that the “designated” things are formed from the words themselves. They work out the text with their bodies: sitting on stools they measure out – in choreographed sequences of movements – a square laid out with artificial grass, the two of them dance in beat with the words, speak the original text in chorus and recite it each on her own. One artist sings and trumpets through a vacuum-cleaner hose, while the other plays snatches of folksongs on the accordion. They pull white banners out of milk churns, then clear them away back into them. In word and with their skin they metaphorically and literally rub against the rolled-out cowhide lying on the floor. As a climax the cow appears “in the flesh” in a projection.

Material: slide projector on a trolley, slides, cowhide, 2 chairs, 2 milk churns, vacuum-cleaner hose, accordion

Duration: app. 30 minutes

Situation: The original production of the performance took place in the attic of the Künstlerhaus Vorwerkstift in Hamburg. With this first collaboration the artists, whose artistic position could be unambiguously established neither in the theatre nor in the fine arts, presented themselves to a wider public for the first time.

Comment:

“Pascale Grau and Andrea Saemann are exiles from the stage design course at the university. Their theatre-related works have certainly taken on an ever more idiosyncratic character in the course of their studies. And the impetus of the theatre must at some point have led to both women no longer just preparing objects for a stage set, but integrating themselves into such stage sets, especially as female subject-objects. [...] in the film room of this house we experience their performance as a role-parody game directed against the patriarchal equation women = cow. Text by Gertrude Stein who as early as 1927 treated this equation poetically, rejecting the male discourse logic implicit in it. Very entertaining, and musical in a Swiss kind of way!” (Bernhard Johannes Blume, in *HFBKBP Connection*, 1992)

Abstract SNSF/DOResearch- Project at ICS ZHdK from Pascale Grau 1.4.2010-31.3.2012

"archiv performativ. A model-concept for the documentation and re-enactment of performance art

Archives need to be established in an active way and also must provoke activities to stay culturally relevant as medium of storage and memory. This is especially true for the archiving and passing on of performance art and will be conceptualised by the project 'archiv performativ' in an exemplary model of mutual interrelations between documentation and re-enactment. This model will grant more relevance to artistic research than usually in traditional, institutionalised archives.

Seven significant collections/archives will be investigated about their practices and criteria of collecting by means of cultural and qualitative analyses. Further data will be generated by semi-structural interviews with artists, researchers and art educators, and will then be evaluated to define the specific requirements of the potential users. New parameters for the processing of performance art in time-based archives can be modelled then and provided to the praxis partners: within a 'model archive' which will be shown temporarily in the *Ausstellungsraum Klingental* (praxis partner), four teams of artists/curators will be hosted for one and a half months act and discuss the requirements. The results will be incorporated into a conference with talks and performances in the *Theater Kaserne Basel* (main praxis partner).

A catalogue of criteria will be developed based upon the empirical, qualitative and practice-lead artistic research and cultural-analytical evaluations. It is intended to describe the standards for the quality of documents and the different materials and strategies which would be necessary for an 'archiv performativ', in which the performative interrelations of theory and praxis are represented in a paradigmatic way.

The criteria will be compiled in a handbook for potential users, which will propose recommendations for archiving from a theoretical perspective. This is to result in a standardized archiving practice and improved networking between archives. The project 'archiv performativ' wants to close the gap between performance and documentation in the research field. It will provide a fundamental contribution to the current discussion about time-based art and the possibilities of archiving. In doing so the current theoretical discourse on methods of conservation and documentation in related practical fields will be included.