

MOBILE DOCUMENTA

By crossing into this zone you agree to step outside a Euro-centric tradition of art, Globalisation, Colonisation and Biennials in order to develop another model, which we will call post autonomy



DAVID
GOLDENBERG

2012

DOCUMENTA

by DAVID GOLDENBERG

2012

MOBILE DOCUMENTA
Fordham Gallery 2009
MOBILE DOCUMENTA 2
Tank Gallery 2010
TEMPLATE - MOBILE DOCUMENTA
Chisenhale Studios 2011

MOBILE DOCUMENTA

A new work by David Goldenberg
for Fordham Gallery
November 6th & 13th 2009, 12 – 3pm



Fordham



A public sculpture – exhibiting Fordham gallery as a mobile public sculpture, exhibiting the platform/ stage as the space of culture, in the form of a series of manouvers and configurations.

A public speech – a reading of Frederick Schiller’s “The Aesthetic Education of Mankind”, over 6 hours.

A public text – Mobile Documenta

Mobile Documenta

The new project by the London based artist, curator and writer David Goldenberg brings together threads of ideas examined in recent projects – Fordham at Netwerk, Aalst, Belgium 2006; Istanbul Biennial (in collaboration with k2 info lab) 2007; Dtn 2, Artist Anonymous, A-foundation, Liverpool, 2008; Dtn 3, The Climate for change, Fact, Liverpool, 2009; Yourspace, Vanabbemuseum, The Netherlands, 2009; - looking at the “Logic of participatory practices”, the role of a Euro centric tradition of art against a Global context, along side strategies for “establishing the space of Post Autonomy”, where Post Autonomy constitutes a programme of activities and thinking leading out of the Postmodernist malaise, and an ongoing interrogation of the Euro-centric tradition of art.

Mobile Documenta is intended as a sequence of activities that takes place in a range of forms that question a stable and normalised reading of culture. What I understand by a Mobile Documenta is in the form of an “idea” and a “material form” that embodies a Mobile Documenta, so this text begins to sketch out some of these ideas. In both cases a Mobile Documenta encapsulates the disengagement of contemporary culture from its past function, and imagines the effect of staging a Documenta in different cultures and countries. The mental image of Documenta is intended here as a frame or limit that is necessary to traverse in order to develop another model of art, which, I want to claim here, opens up into the space of Post Autonomy, where Post Autonomy exists as the language and agenda for mapping and recognising a new model of art.

Since Fordham gallery currently exists in a mobile form, it is suitable to begin to think about a Mobile Documenta here. This sequence aims to piece together how it is possible to build a new Model. From the outset, it is intended to chart a realistic picture of contemporary culture, the issues and problems faced in establishing a new model, including the actual room for material change within the existing model, alongside locating and understanding those ideologies and claims that deny the possibility of change, without reverting back to a nostalgic Modernism.

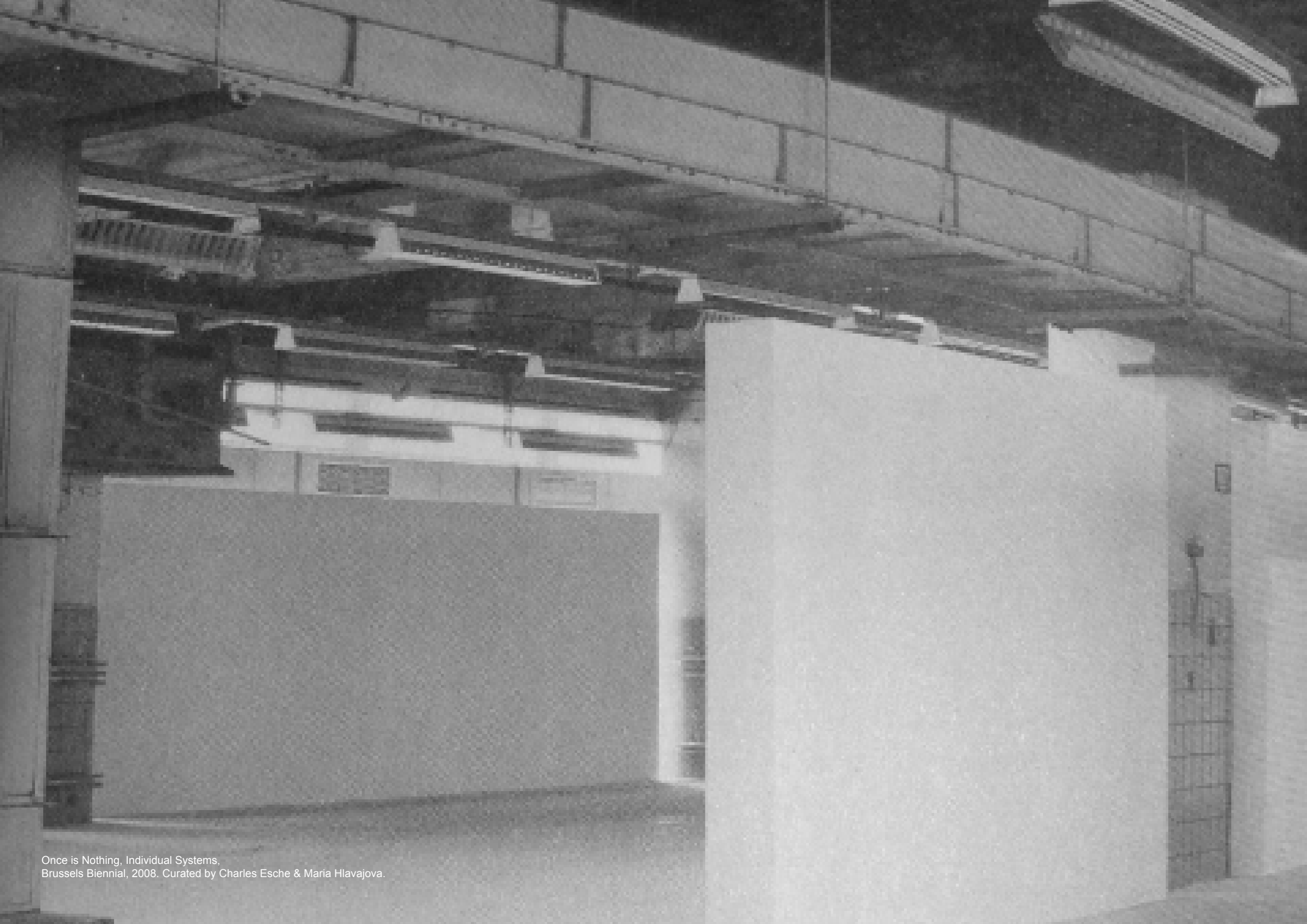


The image/interface of Documenta is intended as an idea and a framework showing a total view of contemporary art, but also as a project we can point to that addresses the question of a Euro-centric tradition, of art's relationship to a Global context, the Colonial mechanism of contemporary art, multiculturalism, the role of Politics within contemporary art.

Our point of departure for understanding Documenta – i.e. contemporary art in its totality, is through a reading of Oliver Marchart's book examining the recent history and ideology of Documenta in the Belgian theorist and philosopher Dieter Lesage's text "The Next Documenta". The text outlines a convincing analysis of the purpose of the existing structures for displaying and presenting contemporary culture, which, in turn, colours and influences any statement made by a work within that system.

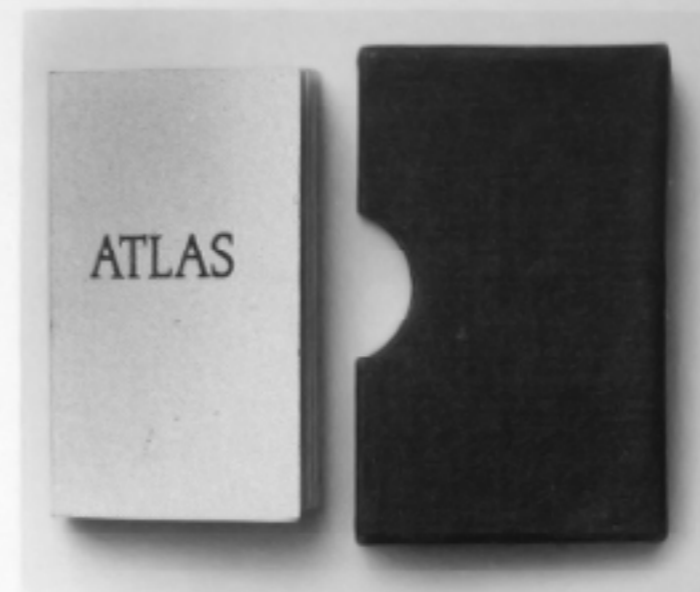
"In his book Marchart describes museums, biennials, and other large-scale art exhibitions such as the documenta as hegemony machines, functioning not unlike the World's Fairs that have contributed significantly to the project of nation-building since the mid-nineteenth century. Following the reflections of Antonio Gramsci in Quaderni del carcere, Marchart defines hegemony as a precarious balance between dominant and subaltern forces that, through the networks of society's institutions (museums, biennials, and large-scale exhibitions), establishes a momentary primacy of certain forces. These forces can always be overturned, depending on shifts in an ongoing "war of position." The concept of hegemony can be explained as the way in which consensus is produced as a primordial means of securing the dominance of certain forces. Every institution, which may at some moment seem to consolidate dominant bourgeois culture, may at another point be useful for a counter-hegemonic project—one that could eventually establish another hegemony. Following Laclau and Mouffe's radicalization of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Marchart points out that subjects and subject positions are only the effects of hegemonic discursive formations. The progressive and emancipatory potentiality of institutions as discourse producers provides the main reason why they should not be abandoned, as a great many leftists have done out of a belief that institutions as such necessarily consolidate petty bourgeois culture. Marchart strongly argues for such a potentiality, citing the hegemonic shifts in discourse that were successfully produced by Catherine David's documenta X (which politicized the field of art) and even more so by Okwui Enwezor's documenta 11 (which de-occidentalized the field of art)."

From eflux "The Next Documenta" 2009.



Once is Nothing, Individual Systems,
Brussels Biennial, 2008. Curated by Charles Esche & Maria Hlavajova.





What actual room exists for material change within the existing Euro centric tradition of art?

To address this question, the current project brings together a loose selection of mental images, Broodthaers' idea of the "imaginary museum"; manifestations of Fordham gallery over the last 10 years, including its current ambivalent and fragile status; and, finally, the image of Documenta.

Above all the thinking behind the recent project is the image/interface of Documenta, where an idea of the role of a Euro centric tradition of art coalesces in the construction of the Nation State and identity, and where the imagined passage towards the space of Post Autonomy is through Documenta.

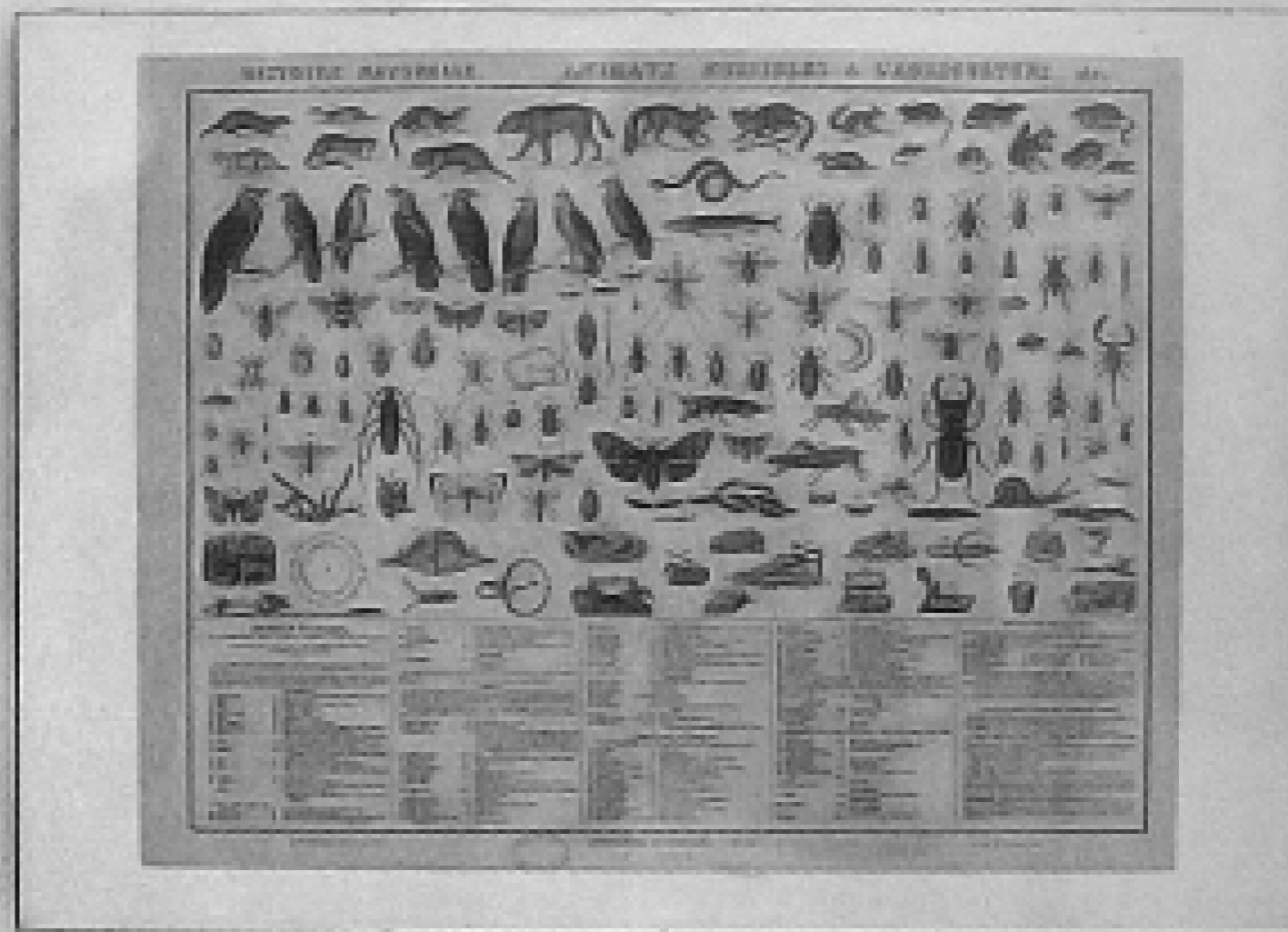
In order to start the process of imagining the space of Post Autonomy and begin to construct a Mobile Documenta, it is necessary to revisit the question of model to copy, replication and duplication, to understand the claim for a new model of art?

The project continues thinking into participatory practices through examining "the role of participatory practices in the UK" as a key political tool for gelling together different cultures and classes; the appropriation of participatory practices by institutions under the new institutionalisation programme since 2004. *(Please see David Goldenberg's texts on participatory practices written for Fillip n° 8, in collaboration with Patricia Reed, and n° 10, in collaboration with Markus Miessen).*

To address the specific role of participatory practices and contemporary art in England, the blurred understanding of whether art constitutes material objects, theory, philosophy or politics; the role of autonomy; the role of art to knit together society in the form of a cultural state, materialising Post Autonomy; the role of the enlightenment, leading on to speculation on whether the enlightenment continues to exist and how we are to understand the construction and thinking about art beyond the enlightenment and historical moment that gave rise to a Euro-centric tradition of art, there will be a complete reading of Frederick Schiller's text "The Aesthetic education of mankind", in other words, **we will look at the beginning and end of the Enlightenment**, the space that gave rise to the thinking and objects understood as art.



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LETTER I.

By your permission I lay before you, in a series of letters, the results of my researches upon beauty and art. I am keenly sensible of the importance as well as of the charm and dignity of this undertaking. I shall treat a subject which is closely connected with the better portion of our happiness and not far removed from the moral nobility of human nature. I shall plead this cause of the beautiful before a heart by which her whole power is felt and exercised, and which will take upon itself the most difficult part of my task in an investigation where one is compelled to appeal as frequently to feelings as to principles.

That which I would beg of you as a favor, you generously impose upon me as a duty; and, when I solely consult my inclination, you impute to me a service. The liberty of action you prescribe is rather a necessity for me than a constraint. Little exercised in formal rules, I shall scarcely incur the risk of sinning against good taste by any undue use of them; my ideas, drawn rather from within than from reading or from an intimate experience with the world, will not disown their origin; they would rather incur any reproach than that of a sectarian bias, and would prefer to succumb by their innate feebleness than sustain themselves by borrowed authority and foreign support.

In truth, I will not keep back from you that the assertions which follow rest chiefly upon Kantian principles; but if in the course of these researches you should be reminded of any special school of philosophy, ascribe it to my incapacity, not to those principles. No; your liberty of mind shall be sacred to me; and the facts upon which I build will be furnished by your own sentiments; your own unfettered thought will dictate the laws according to which we have to proceed. With regard to the ideas which predominate in the practical part of Kant's system, philosophers only disagree, whilst mankind, I am confident of proving, have never done so. If stripped of their technical shape, they will appear as the verdict of reason pronounced from time immemorial by common consent, and as facts of the moral instinct which nature, in her wisdom, has given to man in order to serve as guide and teacher until his enlightened intelligence gives him maturity. But this very technical shape which renders truth visible to the understanding conceals it from the feelings; for, unhappily, understanding begins by destroying the object of the inner sense before it can appropriate the object. Like the chemist, the philosopher finds synthesis only by analysis, or the spontaneous work of nature only through the torture of art. Thus, in order to detain the fleeting apparition, he must enchain it in the fetters of rule, dissect its fair proportions into abstract notions, and preserve its living spirit in a fleshless skeleton of words. Is it surprising that natural feeling should not recognize itself in such a copy, and if in the report of the analyst the truth appears as paradox?

Permit me therefore to crave your indulgence if the following researches should remove their object from the sphere of sense while endeavoring to draw it towards the understanding. That which I before said of moral experience can be applied with greater truth to the manifestation of "the beautiful." It is the mystery which enchants, and its being is extinguished with the extinction of the necessary combination of its elements.

LETTER II.

But I might perhaps make a better use of the opening you afford me if I were to direct your mind to a loftier theme than that of art. It would appear to be unseasonable to go in search of a code for the aesthetic world, when the moral world offers matter of so much higher interest, and when the spirit of philosophical inquiry is so stringently challenged by the circumstances of our times to occupy itself with the most perfect of all works of art--the establishment and structure of a true political freedom.

It is unsatisfactory to live out of your own age and to work for other times. It is equally incumbent on us to be good members of our own age as of our own state or country. If it is conceived to be unseemly and even unlawful for a man to segregate himself from the customs and manners of the circle in which he lives, it would be inconsistent not to see that it is equally his duty to grant a proper share of influence to the voice of his own epoch, to its taste and its requirements, in the operations in which he engages.

But the voice of our age seems by no means favorable to art, at all events to that kind of art to which my inquiry is directed. The course of events has given a direction to the genius of the time that threatens to remove it continually further from the ideal of art. For art has to leave reality, it has to raise itself boldly above necessity and neediness; for art is the daughter of freedom, and it requires its prescriptions and rules to be furnished by the necessity of spirits and not by that of matter. But in our day it is necessity, neediness, that prevails, and lends a degraded humanity under its iron yoke. Utility is the great idol of the time, to which all powers do homage and all subjects are subservient. In this great balance on utility, the spiritual service of art has no weight, and, deprived of all encouragement, it vanishes from the noisy Vanity Fair of our time. The very spirit of philosophical inquiry itself robs the imagination of one promise after another, and the frontiers of art are narrowed in proportion as the limits of science are enlarged.

The eyes of the philosopher as well as of the man of the world are anxiously turned to the theatre of political events, where it is presumed the great destiny of man is to be played out. It would almost seem to betray a culpable indifference to the welfare of society if we did not share this general interest. For this great commerce in social and moral principles is of necessity a matter of the greatest concern to every human being, on the ground both of its subject and of its results. It must accordingly be of deepest moment to every man to think for himself. It would seem that now at length a question that formerly was only settled by the law of the stronger is to be determined by the calm judgment of the reason, and every man who is capable of placing himself in a central position, and raising his individuality into that of his species, can look upon himself as in possession of this judicial faculty of reason; being moreover, as man and member of the human family, a party in the case under trial and involved more or less in its decisions. It would thus appear that this great political process is not only engaged with his individual case, it has also to pronounce enactments, which he as a rational spirit is capable of enunciating and entitled to pronounce.

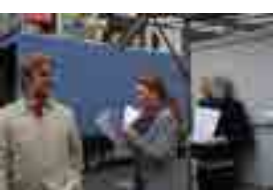
It is evident that it would have been most attractive to me to inquire into an object such as this, to decide such a question in conjunction with a thinker of powerful mind, a man of liberal sympathies, and a heart imbued with a noble enthusiasm for the weal of humanity. Though so surprise to have found your unprejudiced mind arriving at the same result as my own in the field of ideas. Nevertheless, I think I can not only excuse, but even justify by solid grounds, my step in resisting this attractive purpose and in preferring beauty to freedom.











MOBILE DOCUMENTA 2

Online talks
Tank Gallery

**Tank Gallery,
The Ladywell Tavern 80 Ladywell Rd SE13 7HS
23rd, 24th and 25th April 2010, 1 pm onwards**

A series of durational events in the form of periods of concentration and readings, looking at actualising Post Autonomy.

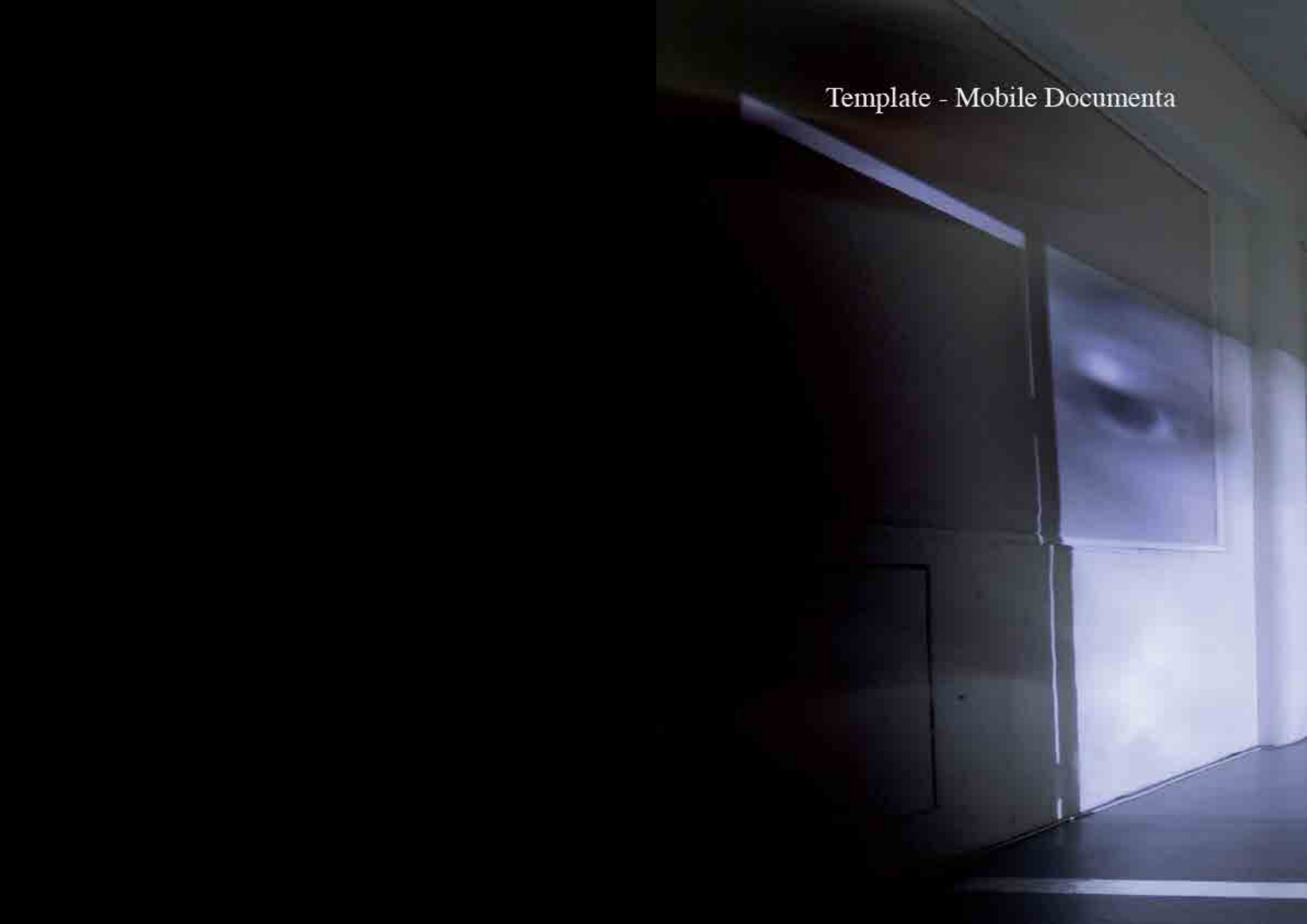
Reading from a text by Dieter Lesage: "The Next Documenta".

The existing model of art has collapsed, so we need to set up a waiting room while assembling ideas for another model.

How do we materialise a new model of art? What actual space exists today for realising a new model of art in the current trajectory of art? To answer these practical questions it is necessary to go back to analyse the existing make up of art or Euro centric tradition of art, to look at its shape and attributes, to understand that field, before going on to ask the question "what space exists for change in order to impliment a new model we call Post Autonomy?" To do this, we plan to use a text by the Belgian philosopher Dieter Lesage "The Next Documenta", plus supporting texts to stimulate a discussion leading on to actions with participants.



Template - Mobile Documenta



TEMPLATE

MOBILE DOCUMENTA

The Floor plan as a visualisation of Post Autonomy, as a discourse on Biennials, Globalisation and Colonisation.

Content

**Introduction to the image
of Mobile Documenta**

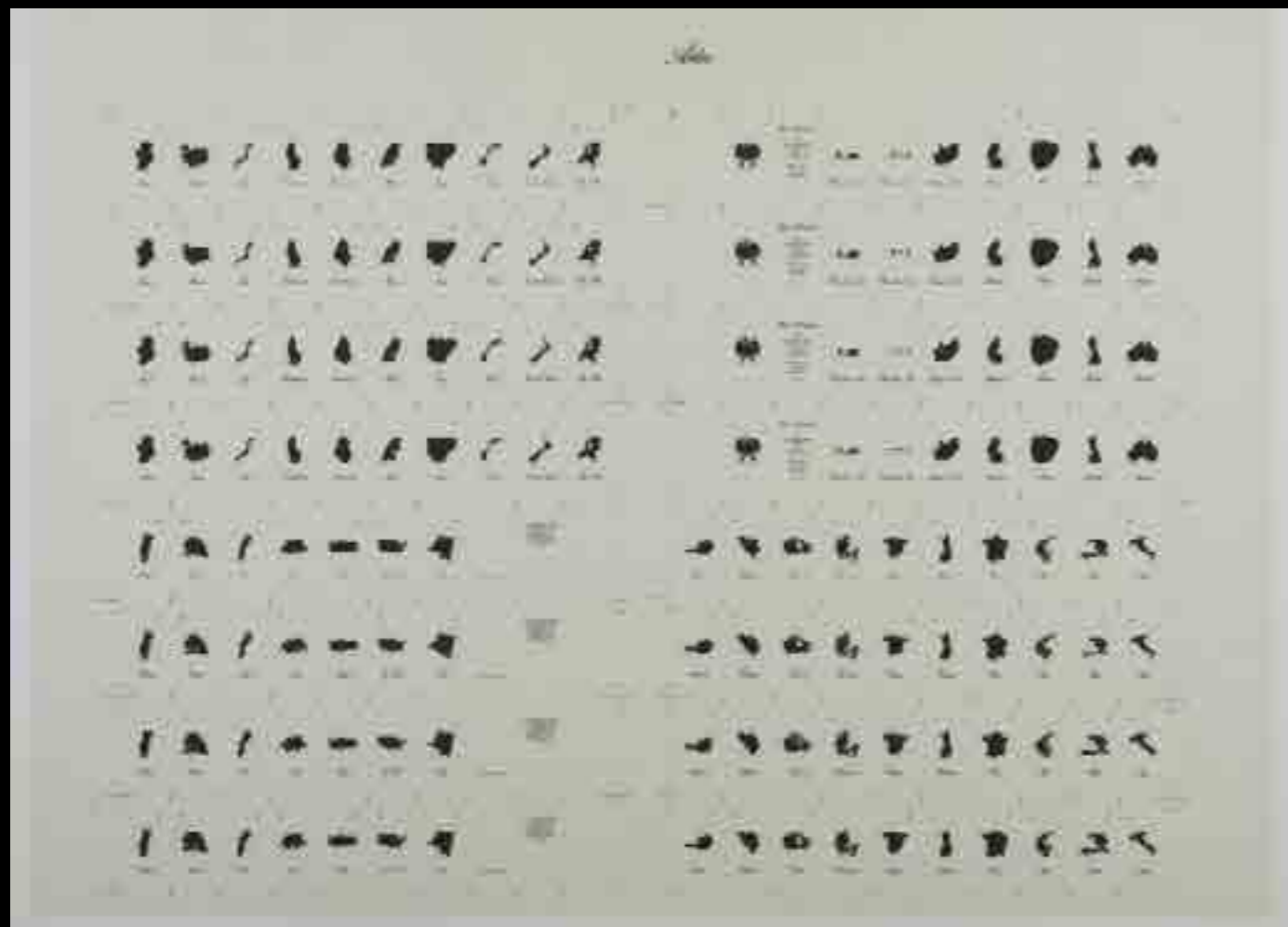
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**Key problems we asked
ourselves**

Summary of the project

Index of elements





Marcel Brodthaers - Atlas



Aby Warburg - Mnemosyne Atlas

Introduction to the Image of a Mobile Documenta

MD was set up as a series of ongoing reflections into Dieter Lesage's text on Oliver Marchart's book about Documenta 10/11 and 12. The text offers the clearest archaeology of cultural power inherent to the Western culture industry, whether Museums or international exhibitions of art, a clear analysis of the spatial territorial role of art, how change takes place within that industry, and how power is understood and takes place in the form of discourse production.

Key problems we asked ourselves

"How do we use a set up we have built to facilitate the trajectory through and beyond the limitations and restrictions of the existing system of art?"

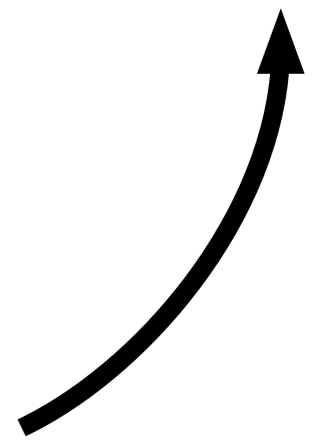
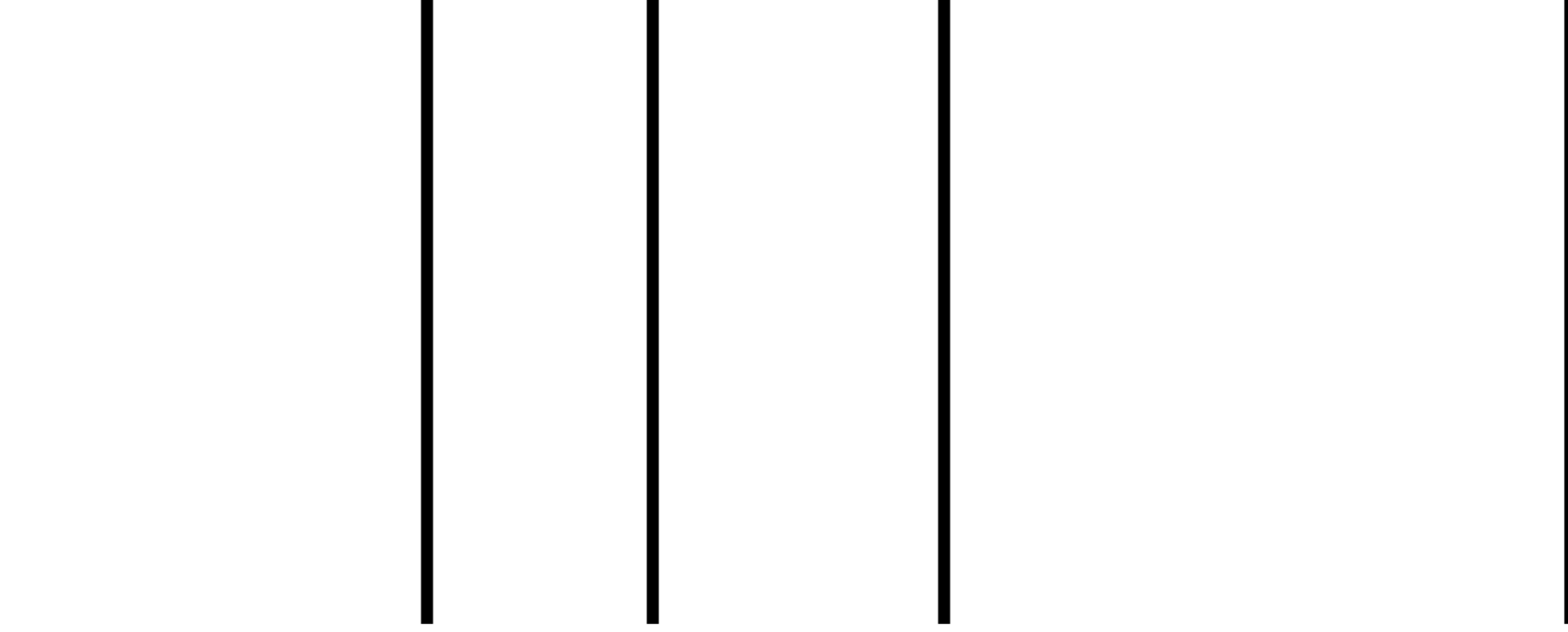
"How do we not only break away from the ideology of the single author/artist position but also from the ideology of the group exhibition?"





Use the new model
of PA to break out or
away from Euro-centric
and traditional histories - baggage
dead ends - & cultural
hasards

appears everywhere









The set up, a project under the title Template - Mobile Documenta - allowed us to assemble together a model of the current limited and restricted system of art, i.e. the euro centric tradition of art - so the set up became a way for presenting the material for working through these problems and developing other possibilities.

The project sought to develop and resolve issues that arose during the project staged in Belgrade in October 2010, plus the project for Yourspace, Vanabbemuseum in 2009 - whose overall purpose was to look at a start to begin to think and stage a project materialising Post Autonomy within the material fabric of the existing limitations and problems of the system we currently use to stage and present art.

What does this beginning look like and what are the key issues that we can fix to be able to proceed forward?

The key issue we wanted to address is the still acknowledged and unresolved function of all major international art events as mechanisms of colonisation to distribute art within a Global context. How to examine the inherent problems and contradictions of the art system - a project that is neither a show of a single artist nor a group show, how to construct a situation which doesn't take up and extend these inherent mechanisms? And of course the obvious problem is how do we simply locate the content to reveal this complexity? Our solution was not to show art works but to show exhibitions.

We start our project under the assumption that all methodologies for examining the problems of the art system have either failed, don't work or are just tokenistic gestures. This is not us being unduly pessimistic but simply adopting hardnosed observations of what we see happening in the art world.

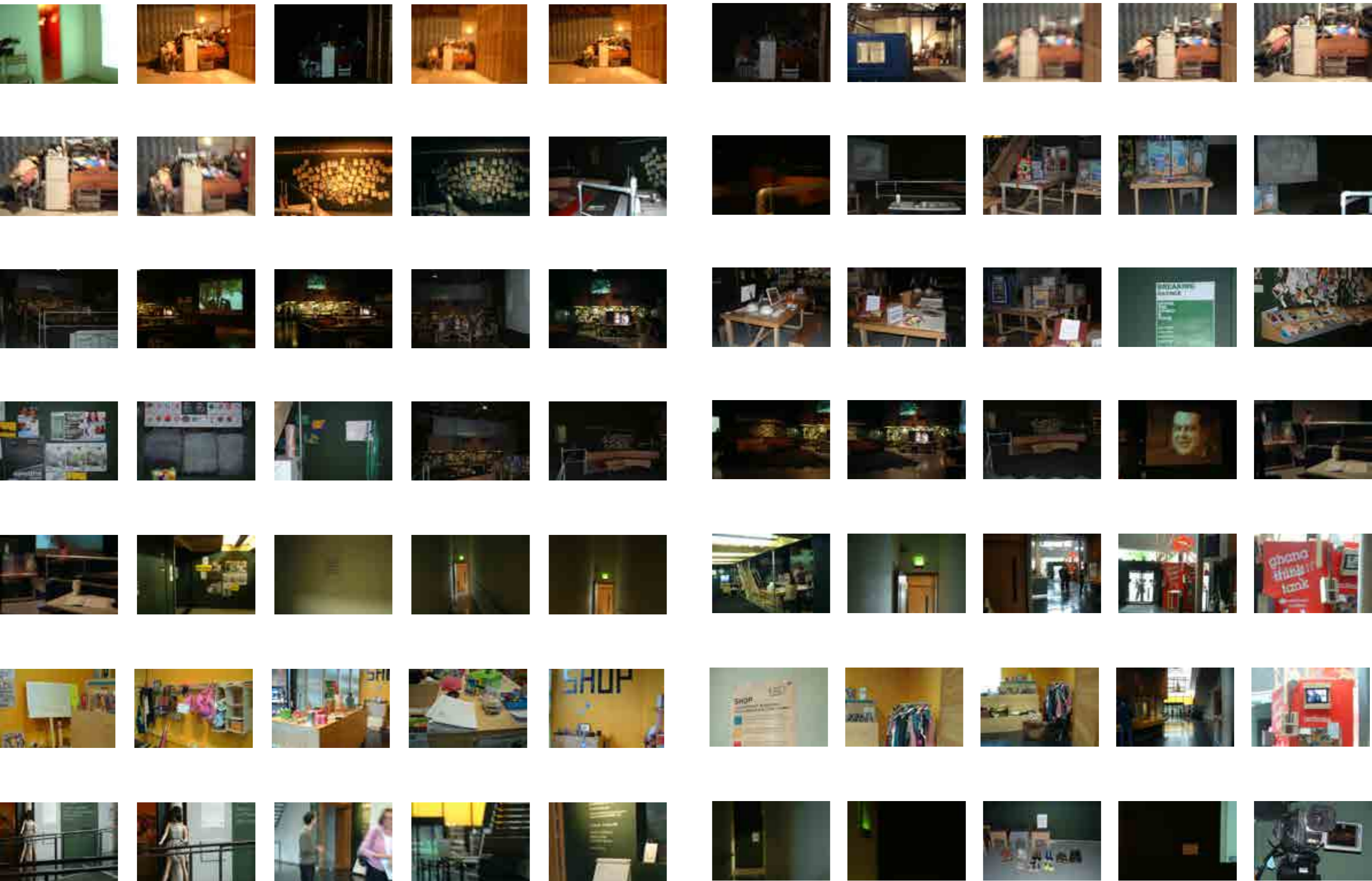
Modernology



“Why did the apparent production of knowledge - not give rise to a reflection on the place of Documenta itself, within the imperial organigram, as a global interface between artists and galleries, collectors, curators and museums worldwide - an interface whose function consists in organising the global flows of artists, artworks and capital? And the question then is whether Documenta 11 succeeded in generating a regime of flows that could be qualified as anti-imperial?”

Cultural Resignation Today:
On over-identification and over statement
by Dieter Lesage

Slide from Stage 2 in developing Post Autonomy,
by David Goldenberg



Elisabeth Penker
1st Nation Pavilion

Configuration 1, 2, 3

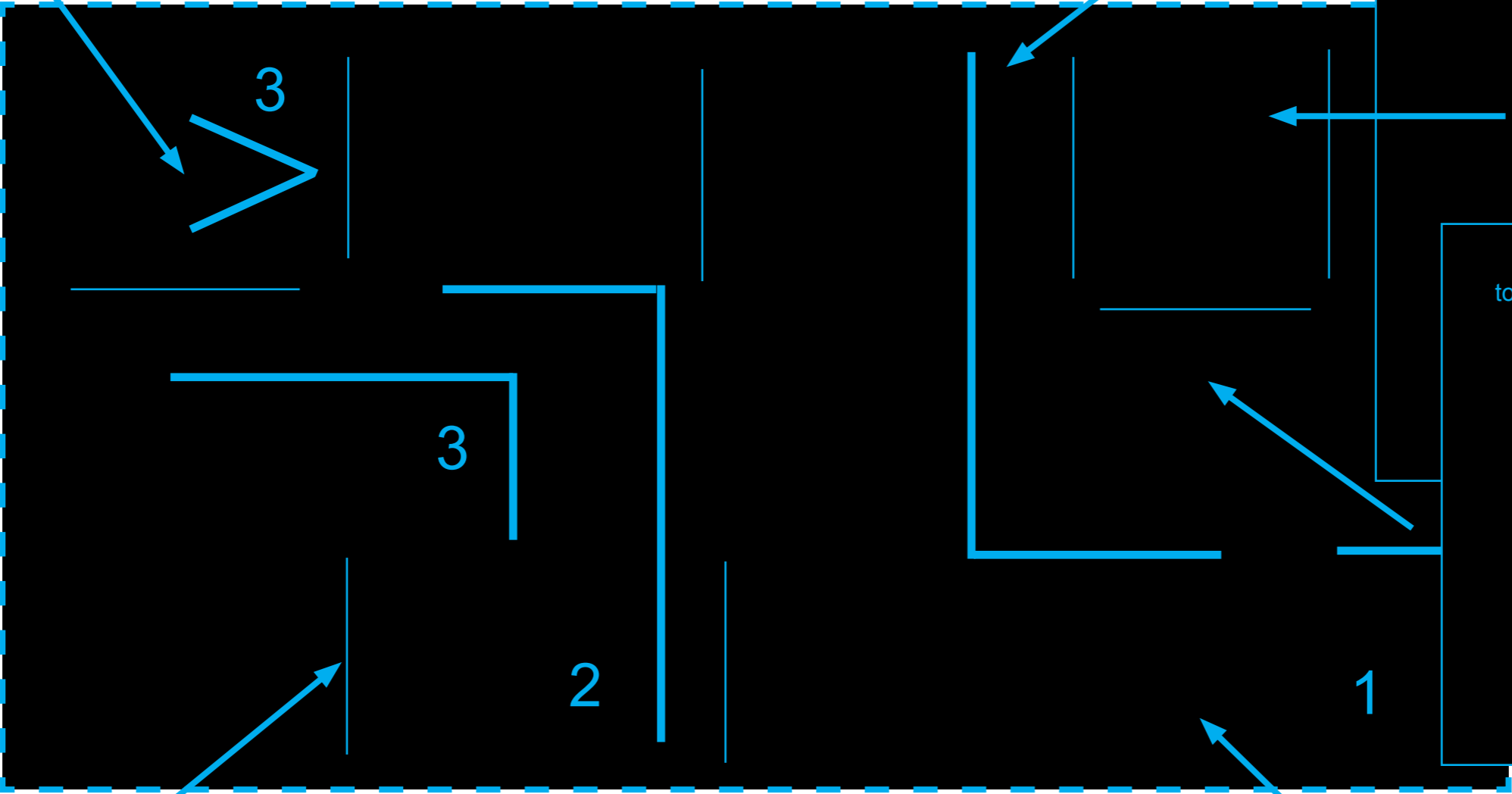
Excerpt 3
Documenta

Excerpt 2
Florian Pumhösl
Modernology, Triangular Atelier

Excerpt 1
Cooperation, not Corporation
ITS-Z1, Belgrade, Serbia

Eleana Louka
took over **DTN** to produce a new work
A Foundation - Liverpool Biennial

Students from Gent School of Art
took over **Back to back**
to produce a new work



Brussels Biennial Floor Plan

Yourspace - Floor drawing

Floor Plan from the catalogue of
Once is Nothing

Yourspace - Floor drawing

Mapping Post Autonomy

Visualisation Room

The project brought together excerpts from 4 exhibitions

Cooperation, not Corporations, ITS-Z1, Belgrade, Serbia, 2010
Once is Nothing, Individual Systems, The Brussels Biennial 2008
Florian Pumhosl's **Modernology**, Documenta 2007
Elisabeth Penker's **1st Nations Pavilion**, 2009

Floor Plan

The main structure comprised elements in the form of a broken series of grid lines in silver tape, from the floor plan for Charles Esche's project for the Brussels Biennial "Once is Nothing". This looked at Visualisation of the symptom of Post Autonomy i.e. attacks against art's autonomy, and questions about Biennials and the reason for replicating Biennials and other short term exhibition formats.

Screens

The other main form comprised wooden screens on wheels, taken from Florian Pumhosl's work Modernology for Documenta 2007. The work made reference to the set of issues posed by Documenta 12 - "What methodologies work today for understanding and examining contemporary art?" and, the central thread, "What is the link between different cultures?" in order to find material evidence for the mechanisms of colonisation and globalisation.

The screens as mobile architectural elements.

The wooden screens allowed us to go on to assemble together a framework for staging the other two key works.

The wall reconstructed where Eleana Louka presented her work in "Cooperation, not Corporation" - a work that showed documentation from DTN that looked at how to think about developing new thinking derived from the existing material form of art by discussing participating practices.

And finally a section showing documentation from Elisabeth Penkers exhibition 1st Nation pavilion, a set up that sought to offer an ideal context for resolving all forms of Colonisation

Slideshows and Videos

Against the surface of the screens we also presented a slide show series "Culture State" by David Goldenberg, and backs by Eleana Louka, to develop the screens as a surface to collect together multiple discourses.

Configurations 1&2

We started the project by organising the material into one configuration where all the assembled material worked together and made sense, followed by a series of activities to examine what this material is and how it can be used, and what information is necessary for the material to say something about Biennials and Documenta; followed by experiments into developing the material into another configuration - i.e. how to clarify the material and ideas further and then how to use the material to think about developing the existing structure beyond its limitations and restrictions.

How do we get these elements to work?

One way we thought we could start to think about this configuration is the suggestion made since 2008, that when we talk about PA we also discuss Biennials, Documenta, issues of Globalisation and colonisation. If the above is true, what does this mixture look like?

Another key set of issues is the basic fundamental question “how are we able to arrive into thinking and language i.e the discourse of Post Autonomy, inside and outside of art?” What this basically means is that if we have been living through a period of Neo-Liberalism, the end of the political, Post Modernism, this is to say that thinking has stopped, there is no longer a platform or stage available for this to occur. So we need another new platform where thinking is again possible. This train of thinking allows us to materialise the proposition announcing the beginning of Post Autonomy, showing that thinking, concepts, methodologies that led to the culmination, conclusion and collapse of the trajectory of art are no longer useful for thinking through what I call the period for the transformation of art, or even the second stage of art.

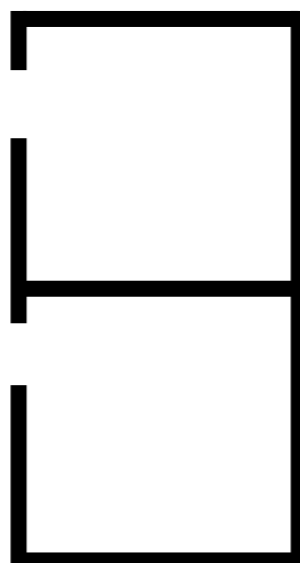
Bringining the two interpretations of Post Autonomy together shows that the scenarios opened up by Post Autonomy allow the possibility to pose complex questions that have not been posed about art before, while at the same time allowing the possibility to chart the attacks against the system of art and solutions that allow us to imagine and construct solutions.



SUPERIMPOSITION OF
POLITICAL FRONTIERS
AT THE TURN OF EACH
CENTURY BETWEEN
YEAR 0 AND YEAR 2000
ON THE EUROPEAN
PENINSULA AND ITS
SURROUNDINGS







This publication has been produced on the occasion of the exhibition

The Scenarios of Post Autonomy

David Goldenberg

September 19th - October 9th 2012

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Cover and layout design: Ioana Pioaru, David Goldenberg

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Printed and bound in Romania
printpress.ro



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