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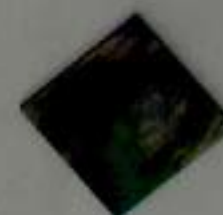
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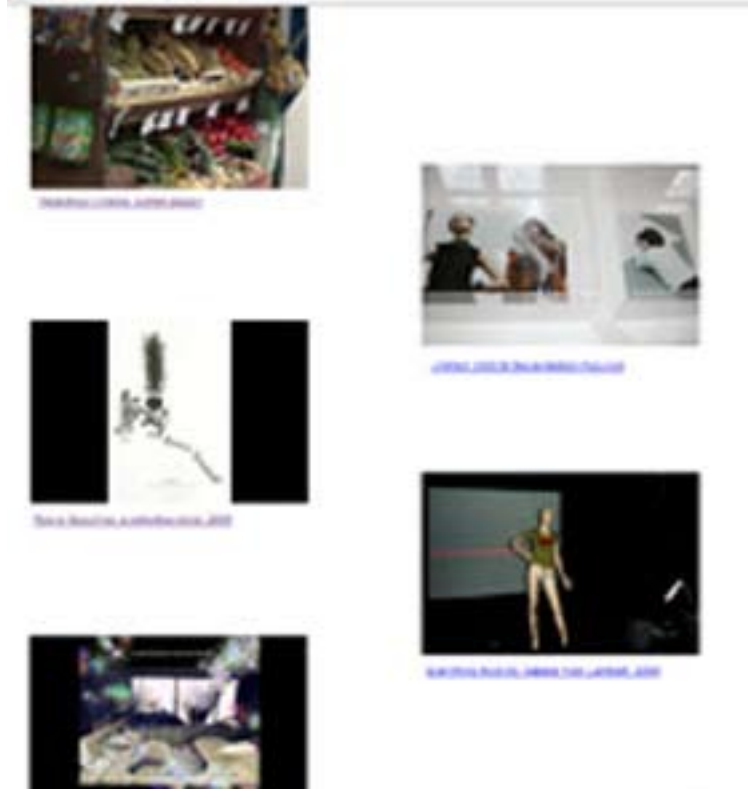




the musical ends up being about a nobody who could be anybody becoming a somebody for everybody.



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STEPHEN WILLATS
LEE WILLIAMS



Empty wide space



People want to be someone. But the really exciting challenge is to become no one. And where will you find no ones? In nowhere. Where things are exploding.

Switch on and off

Sturtevant, Claire Fontaine, Bernadette Corporation, Reena Spauling, Jutta Koethler, Tiqqun

Idea for an exhibitionless practice

Idea for an exhibition, that doesn't need to take place, to do two things. Establish "an imageless art practice" and through its construction bring together artists and groups that question the existing formation of art, individual and group exhibition formats, and the ready-made artist.

What is an imageless art practice?

To work out what an imageless practice is I want to adopt methods from film and theatre, with also reference to the structure of a novel, by organising my thinking and text in the form of "Out-Takes" and "Rehearsals". To try out different styles, to pose questions, and to go down different threads of thinking, to gravitate towards a type of text that captures "an imageless art practice". Can any text become this vehicle or is there a specific and as yet undefined text and writing? And can only text embody an imageless art form? Whatever this entity is, I propose linking establishing an imageless art practice with establishing a new platform outside obsolescence and stasis that ruptures the replication of the existing order.

Traps

Yet we also need to ask ourselves is this yet another trap, another objective and hope we can never achieve, another delusion that belongs to the conservative momentum towards reinventing existing platforms? Or are we caught in a trap by simply imagining it is possible to find a route out of Obsolescence and stasis?

Sturtevant and Claire Fontaine's material are traps, they draw the viewer in until they realise they are part of a set of ceremonies.

Take. 1

This scheme looks at the orthodox exhibition format as an embodiment of obsolescence and stasis, but also the possibility of an exhibition as a route out of obsolescence and stasis.

Where the exhibition is the space of visibility and power, and where the press release operates as a mediation of the exhibition representing both the exhibition and passage to another formation. The press release, transfers stable information from one exhibition to the next, conveys popular information on the exhibition form, mediating between public space and the exhibition. It says exhibition without its material form.

The exhibition pools practices that develop similar procedures and methodologies. And what they all have in common is a deliberate strategy to deflect and obscure what is taking place. They operate underground, out of view, they are invisible. They are a form of archaeology and institutional critique that instead of building a description of an institution undermines and liquefies fixed facts and forms of the institution. The starting point is that there appears to be a link between practices that operate across all aspects of the elements and attributes that make up the exhibition form - comprising artists, artists name, exhibition, display, press release, books, performance; A network that links together all the parts. The sum of the attributes of the orthodox art world seen in the round, the sum of the material qualities that comprise the presentation of art as a totality to undermine that totality and destabilise that totality, this is the material totality and the limit of what is possible, and through its destabilisation and mutation something else is glimpsed.

Take 2

It is the framing of this totality that is revealed in Sturtevant's repetitions, exposing thinking attached to physical form and ceremony, and in doing so questioning the very nature of thinking, and in the late works giving space to thinking, to make evident that we do think, through showing the act of thinking, and not what to think or to regulate thinking.

In that respect we are looking at stratified practices. Meaning that camouflaged, secret works and activities take place whether the viewer is conscious or not, where multiple practices nest into each other - art works, text, theory, lecture, art work, performance, readings, music. So the surface shell, the surface that meets the viewer, pushes into visibility that at the same time obscures the real act. This shell pushes into the limit of what is possible within the orthodox exhibition, and behind that, activities push against these limitations, an illusion of something static and visual, within the matrix of existing attributes, and a program of activities to open out that rigidity.

Take 3

Bring together into one imaginary space practices (Sturtevant, Claire Fontaine and Bernadette Corporation) who appear to be doing something similar, that merge and overlap and bleed into each other, that put in the way obstacles to understanding the language and concepts used to describe art. By grouping together these practices highlights the limitations of static forms in capturing and displaying practices occupied with framing the very historically specific edifice and ceremonies and rituals that we are part of when we evoke "The Art world". These both highlight the limits of the tools at our disposal and how to glimpse new platforms from within the space of obsolescent forms.

Take 4

At any point on entering the art World we consolidate and fix in place the existing order through replicating its constituent parts - artist, artwork, exhibition - gelling together and reaffirming that order, where even to think and put into words this problem gels together this order. This problem seems to be most clearly materialised in both the fixed positions of the individual and group show model. We are trapped in a matrix of obsolescence and an exit is not obvious, and maybe isn't even possible. When the choice from existing workable examples and strategies are very limited and almost non-existent, maybe Bernadette Corporation offers a usable strategy. The example I want to look at is that point when Bernadette Corporation project came to an end and appeared to mutate into two new groups called Reena Spauling and Claire Fontaine. Then the continuous mutation of the different manifestations of Renna Spauling from a project by Bernadette Corporation that provides the clearest example of a type of subterranean asymmetrical strategy, blurring the difference between individual and group show. The shift of Reena Spauling from a novel into a gallery, then into an art group, with unknown persons moving from one group to another, carrying out multiple task, If we take the strategies developed by Bernadette Corporation and Claire Fontaine we can then go onto to look at formulating a strategy for exiting stasis. So we can ask again how is it possible to engage in obsolescence without replicating its forms that opens out into another platform. Is it possible for a scheme to cut through this obsolescence, and turn it inside out, and arrive via a distorted geometry into another platform? A form, movement, shape shifting that avoids being pinned down, that moves on before we recognise its characteristics and have time to think about what is happening.

Take 5

What is possible within this matrix? The limits of what is possible giving the appearance that nothing can be said or is possible within the given order, and instead breaks down and limits what is possible even further. In contrast to sweeping statements made by realist and political practices that give the illusion that something can be said, but has no effect, yet at the same time generates a space parallel to the World.

Take 6

Shape shifting

The Art World which is shaped by product, branding, capitalism and market forces is rarely discussed, it is as an embarrassments lurking in the background, primarily, because to talk about these issues lead to difficulties and complexities that are both uncomfortable and extremely difficult to address. Nevertheless if we take the step to confront these problems how is it possible to find a satisfactory means that resolves the problem of art mirroring Global Capitalism? Where on a certain level art is the clearest example and symbol of Global Capitalism; yet we want to use the space of art to evaluate this framework from inside, against the background of the exhaustion and dead-end of critical regulated thinking. There are a cluster of groups and practitioners who confront these problems and whose very strategy is to blur and test out the fixity of art as a ready-made, to frustrate the perpetual replicating of the identical format from one exhibition and project to the next, the fixing, naming, replicating, limiting language and thinking to the existing order, where we end up opposite to the critical position against the stasis of the existing order and its political system. How is it possible (or even rationale and sensible) to organise an exhibition that capture these practices, which is difficult when the exhibition format treat fixed entities, unless it takes a fluid and performative approach. Here the surface form are fixed to obscure fluid constant changes hidden from view although the surface outward appearance are repeatedly swapped, exchanged, moved, where we have constant change in stark contrast to difference and clarity.