

# the CRAP SHOOTER



De Appel, Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 10, Amsterdam

Curatorial Training Programme 95-96

Second edition, May 1996

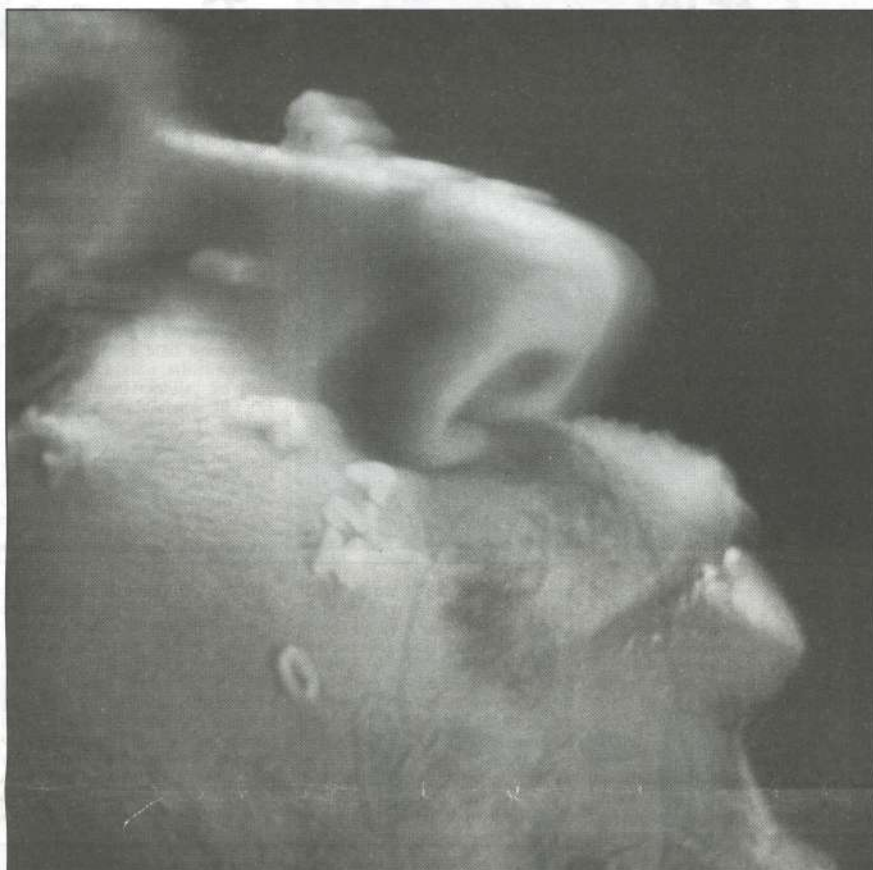
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## IT WAS LIKE THAT FIRST... BEFORE THINGS...

by Sjoukje van der Meulen

The exhibition CRAP SHOOT in De Appel immediately made me think of William Golding's famous novel "Lord of the Flies". The book is about a group of English public schoolboys, aged between six and twelve, who are stranded on an uninhabited island after their plane has crashed. It describes how these well-brought-up English boys are suddenly completely cut off from the civilized world so that they are forced to organize their own lives as best as they can; there are no adults to supervise them and the conditions they are in are primitive. They are not all that successful however. After some time has passed they start behaving less as individuals and more and more like a group; worse still, they change into a sort of savage horde with the leaders quarrelling about who should be chief; they go hunting with such bloodthirsty enthusiasm that in the end they even go as far as to commit murder. In a passage where the boys are blindly pursuing some animal or other - they don't yet know what it is - Golding writes: "The boys are no longer individuals, but one savage, murderous crowd." He then adds: "They are themselves the beast: there is nothing but the tearing of teeth and claws." Golding's book is a metaphor for the danger of disintegration that every culture is faced with; it is a tale of how humans, when they are at the mercy of the cruel laws of nature, lose all respect for civilization and rules. Chaos and basic instincts take their place.

There are a number of striking similarities between the curatorial training programme, the exhibition CRAP SHOOT, and Golding's novel; like the situation on the island, this exhibition by young curators got out of hand - albeit deliberately. With the course in De Appel the reason may also have been that the students lived in an exceptional situation for a period of seven months. Hermetically cut off from the normal world but at the heart of the art world, they spent virtually 24 hours per day hatching their plans for an exhibition. And even though they met many



Halter/Gratwohl, "Speech", 1996

## IT WAS LIKE THAT FIRST... BEFORE THINGS...

different people, they had to fall back on their own resources in the end. They travelled quickly from one place to another, without the possibility for tutors to follow them everywhere. Have these curators become caught up in that closely-knit group situation and slowly but surely lost their personal identity? Was that what happened? Does that explain the violent anarchy of this exhibition?

The comparison with the story of "Lord of the Flies" is, of course, a somewhat exaggerated one. However, it is useful for pinpointing exactly where the exhibition has provoked hostility - because that has perhaps been the most important feature of CRAP SHOOT. The five curators have tried to keep track of current trends in contemporary art, making endless visits to exhibitions and engaging in discussions and interviews with artists, critics and other curators. This in-depth enquiry gave rise to a question about if there are any limits to subversion and whether every subversive act is condemned to be institutionalized, by being adopted almost at once by the dominant art system. Perhaps the situation is still worse, with subversion having become the hallmark of established art.

In this exhibition, the fascination with sabotage and subversion is

displayed in a variety of ways - the art world is genuinely sabotaged. 'Real' art, for instance, is made ridiculous with Kendell Geers' lump of black modelling clay - an appropriation from a sculpture by Gabriel Orozco. But contemporary art institutions are also assailed, with the destruction of the office and ticket booth of De Appel and the costs estimate for the breaking down of De Appel, mentioned in a real estate valuation. The power centre of the art world was infiltrated by the act of shadowing Rudi Fuchs. The radicalism of the curators of CRAP SHOOT lies not so much in that they invited anarchistic artists, who experiment with techniques of sabotage and subversion and whose work is an ongoing attempt to break the rules of art and the art world. Rather, the radicality lies in the fact that they have brought all these artists together and that they carried out their plan in such a coherent fashion. The consistency of their concept is praiseworthy, even if one result of it was an art robbery in the Bloom Gallery. Art does not stick to hard and fast rules; it is neither willing nor able to submit to them. If subversive actions are no longer possible - as these curators and artists would seem to agree unanimously - then there is no alternative but to reinvent the act of sabotage.

What is astonishing is that an

exhibition like this can apparently come about without any of the people involved in any way dissenting. Perhaps it is this lack of any opposition, of criticism or comment on their own concept that reminded me of Golding. For an outsider - even one who has gone through the previous curatorial training programme, like myself - it is difficult to understand how all the curators could have been so unanimous and that the artists went along so willingly with their concept. We had endless disagreements with each other a year ago. One of us was mainly concerned with exploring the social aspects of art; another preferred to focus on the visual culture of TV, films and video, while yet another was interested in dealing with the loss of possessions and identity. Admittedly these differences of points of view converged or, more precisely, were resolved in the exhibition "shift" (the exhibition which was the result of last year's curatorial training programme); but they surfaced again in the catalogue and also in the choice of art works - there was none of the unanimity that one can see in CRAP SHOOT.

"Shift" too was an exhibition curated by a new generation of exhibition makers who - as Saskia Bos put it in the catalogue - were looking for change, "maybe not in a radical way, but like a change of

gear". It was a small but fundamental change: "the combination of factors would not be enough to speak of a new art (...), you could best describe it as a small but crucial change - a 'shift'." It is hard to imagine a concept more different from CRAP SHOOT. The latter is not satisfied with small changes; it calls for revolution. It plays a game with risk, with danger, like the gambling game the exhibition is named after; it experiments, moreover, in quite a radical fashion with the possibilities of sabotage and subversion. "Shift" on the other hand, even though it was also a subversive exhibition, rejected the object and promoted the disappearance of the object. That was one reason why the exhibition offered so few images - the image was erased - it was intended as a commentary on the excess of images in contemporary society. In contrast, however, with the violent statements in CRAP SHOOT, "shift" consisted of friendly comments - sculptures made of perishable materials, photos in which there was almost nothing to see, performances that in an unemphatic way restored the contact with the viewer.

The difference between "shift" and CRAP SHOOT - something like the difference between pacifist resistance and guerilla war - can be illustrated with the work of Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen (CRAP SHOOT), both from Denmark, and Pierre Huyghe from France ("shift"). Both of them aimed to subvert the functioning of De Appel. Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen quite simply smashed up

Photography: Niels Haan

every part of De Appel that served as office space: the ticket booth near the main entrance and the administration areas upstairs. Everything was systematically smashed to smithereens; it was like a huge battlefield with broken computers and tipped-over xerox machines. The wall was covered with coffee stains and hundreds of pieces of paper lay scattered around - it was like the scene after the onslaught in a good action film. The previous year, Pierre Huyghe had disrupted De Appel by shifting all the office furniture. Everything changed place, the xerox machine, the desks, the fax, the telephone and the files. Huyghe made photos of the state of affairs before and after his action. It was a subtle comment on the established routines in an institution like De Appel. Another big difference between the work of Brinch and Jakobsen and Pierre Huyghe, is that Huyghe hung his photos in quite a casual and unobtrusive fashion in the stairwell, in front of the office so that they were hardly noticed by anyone. CRAP SHOOT opposes "shift's" small changes with an explosion, its unemphatic gestures with violence; creativity in the margins is replaced by an assault on the centre. Instead of legitimate comment, an unlawful felony is committed, and the vanished image is transformed into the image of destruction.

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This newspaper  
accompanies the  
exhibition  
**CRAP SHOOT**

### date:

April 12 - 19 May

### time:

Tuesday - Sunday  
12 - 5 pm

### location:

**De Appel**

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 10

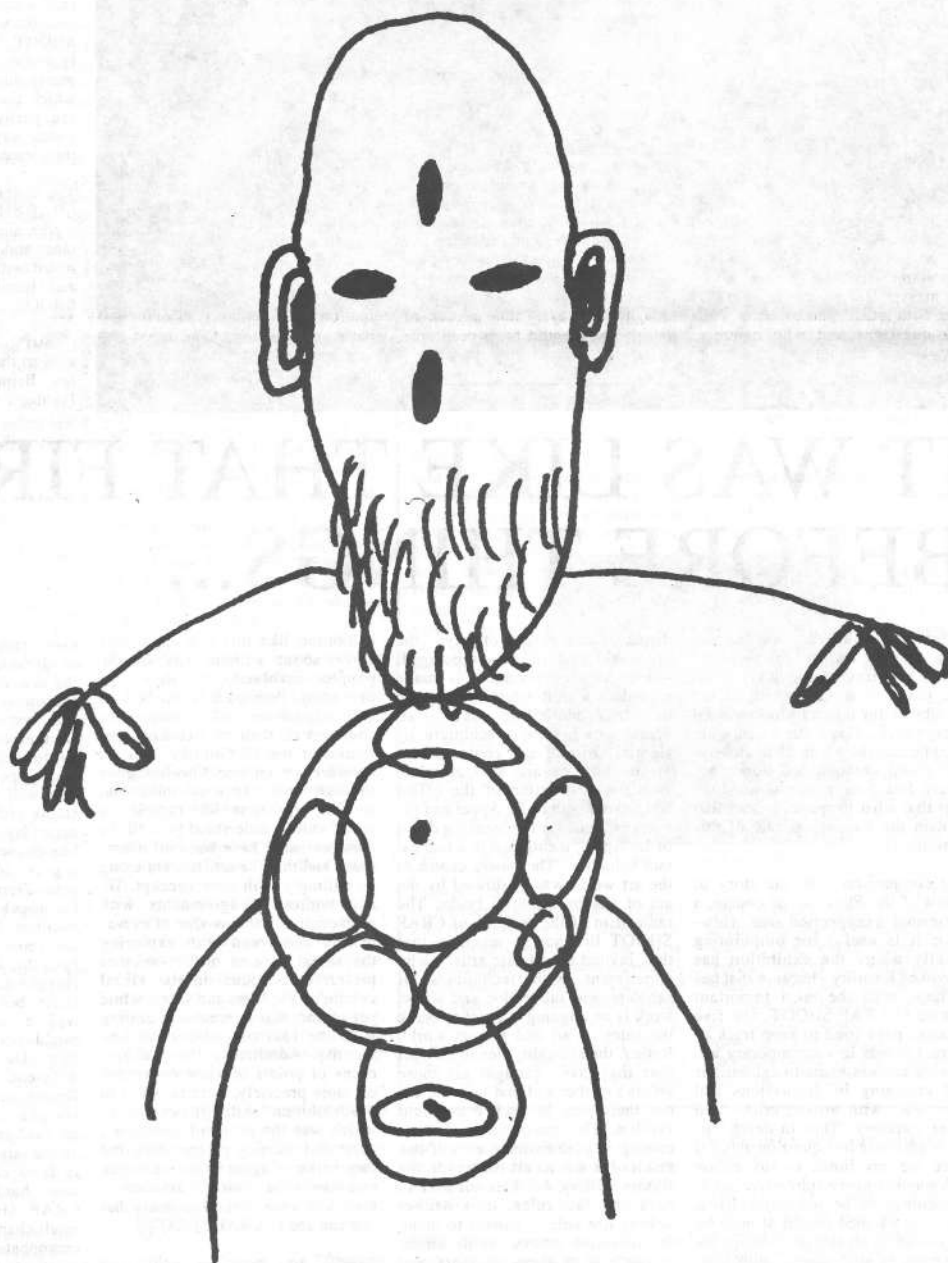
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THIS IS LIKE WHAT  
I SAW BUT I CAN'T  
DRAW TOO WELL



# Beckett's High Noon by Jeroen Eisinga

by Dominique Eigenmann

If old Samuel B. had thought about western or road movies, he'd might have ended up with images like those in the film "40-44-PG" by Jeroen Eisinga. In a no man's land, out there, where cities end and civilisation runs out, where light is pale and high voltage electric lines stare at the end of times, two strange creatures meet. A blind driver and a blind car. Nothing indicates that they arrived together once, the not-blind driver riding his not-yet-deserted car for the delight of functional technology and modern humanism. Nothing tells us the story of their being blinded. Never ask why, stupid question of ancient times. All we see is how they meet, and how, crippled as they are, they live on.

The small car, indifferently, patiently, slowly running in circles all on its own, is joined by the formally dressed young man who walks in opposite direction. When language has dried up and sight's been wasted, blind bodies and machines still communicate. The man's body adjusts itself to the course of the machine, using its noise to position himself on his path, touching it when it passes by, carefully avoiding to be run over. At the end of times man becomes a listener, machine a whirling and silly perpetuum mobile. So they turn on their circle-course like the drowned planets used to. The center remains empty. Car and driver don't go anywhere anymore, but they get along. Melancholy, Hope and Cynicism scuffle in a corner to enter on stage.

Jeroen Eisinga, "40-44-PG", 1996



Photography: Niels Haan

continued from page 1

Nonetheless, "shift" and CRAP SHOOT come from a comparable mentality. As Eric Troncy put it in the first edition of *the CRAP SHOOTER*, they both attempt to escape the exhibition as a routine thing: "in all these more or less official spaces, the exhibitions of young artists are completely instrumentalized, conceived and contrived as a brief period of disorder in a

tradition of autonomous art. The curators of both shows exploited the need to change all that; in order to make a space not only for works such as the burglary at the Bloom Gallery and the shadowing of Fuchs, but also for Tiravanija's bicycles or Koelewijn's doors that he greased in with ointment. These young exhibition makers feel a sense of engagement with artists who come up with new questions and who hammer away at the existing subject-matter

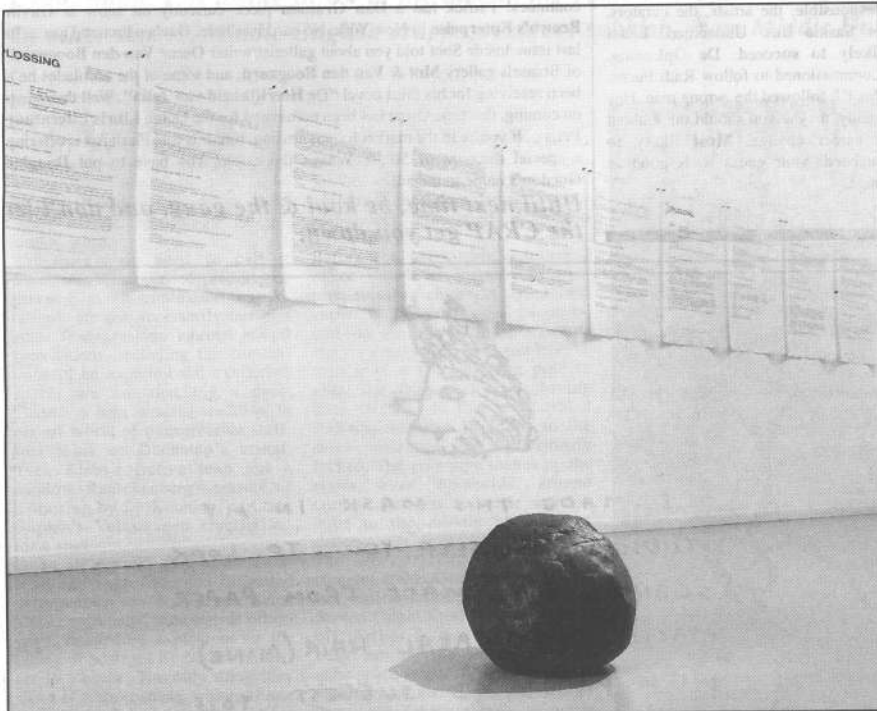
"Lord of the Flies" ends in a very ordinary way. One day, the boys are picked up by a ship. The conversation between the captain and one of the boys is less ordinary however. The officer has no idea of the chaos that has broken out on the island and is astonished when the leader of the boys does not know how many of them have survived. "I should have thought" he says, "that a pack of British boys would have been able to put up a better show than that".

burglary was discovered, a state of affairs that went on till after the symposium the following day: "The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to them now for the first time on the island; great shuddering spasms of grief that seemed to wrench his whole body (-) and infected by that emotion, the other boys began to shake and sob too." The boys have experienced "the end of innocence" and "the darkness of man's heart"...

Like the officer, public and critics have reacted with incomprehension, exasperation and anger to CRAP SHOOT and, like the boy, the curators have left their innocence behind. But unlike him, they have gone beyond the pale in full awareness of what they were doing; they have deliberately sought out "the darkness". Unlike Golding's chaotic horde, the curators have waived 'civilized' forms of behaviour with a purpose. In an age where the museums make it their aim to attract the general public, even for contemporary art, these curators came to share the sense of discomfort that so many young artists feel. De Appel's curatorial training programme gave them the chance to do something about it! They have not bothered about attracting a big public or their own careers; instead, in a quite uncompromising fashion, they have acted in solidarity with the artists and this is also why they themselves helped Maurizio Cattelan with the burglary of the Bloom Gallery.

On their little island in the attic of De Appel, the curators have hatched a plot with art as it is now. They have dared to gamble.

(Translated from Dutch by Donald Gardner)



Kendell Geers, "Maquette for Title Withheld (Private Eye)", 1996 and "Title Withheld (Stolen Idea)", 1996

tranquil continuity." The thing that links the two exhibitions is the commitment of the makers, a certain attitude and a mentality. The art of the nineties calls for different spaces and modes of presentation. Ironically, the need for new forms of presentation is felt very sharply in an institution like De Appel, where art is still paid homage to as an object, outside the world, in white-painted spaces within the western

and limits of art that they experience as oppressive. That is why De Appel was vandalized. On the one hand, CRAP SHOOT has, with good reason, achieved a breakthrough by force, one that has been developed in a conceptually consistent manner; on the other hand, there is the danger of Golding's horde that undertakes actions that are irresponsible and morally inadmissible...

The boy replies: "'It was like that first (-) 'before things'. He stopped. 'We were together then'." Reading these closing sentences, you realize that there is apparently a very precarious balance between the point where a group is still a harmonious entity and where it implodes and becomes something monstrous. The comment that follows reminds one of the strange emotional mood of the curators and artists after the



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**CRAP SHOOT**  
**APRIL 12 - MAY 19**



By Otto Berchem

## Crimes and Misdemeanors

Who would have ever thought it possible? Those sweet boys and girls in De Appel's curators course? **Annie Fletcher**, **Nina Folkersma**, **Clive Kellner**, **Kay C. Pallister**, and **Adam Szymczyk**: so young, so enthusiastic. How could they cause such a commotion? Which is exactly what they've done, with their show **CRAP SHOOT**. As a matter of fact, they've left the Dutch art world reeling. What, pray tell, could cause such a fuss? After all, this is *only art*, isn't it? Could it have been all of the broken glass (**Brinch & Jakobsen**, **Geers**)? Possibly it was the toilet with the security camera (**Halter/Gratwohl**)? How about the Private Eye piece where Rudi Fuchs was followed for five days (**Geers**)? Or, maybe, most likely, it was the cause celebre: the break-in at Bloom Gallery by **Maurizio 'Mo' Cattelan** and those sweet boys and girls. Hmmm. I wonder.

By now you must have heard all about Mo's infamous project. The plan was: for Mo, and the curators, to break into Bloom early Thursday morning, the day before CRAP SHOOT opened; steal the exhibition of **Paul de Reus**, and the entire contents of the office; and then show the boxed goods in De Appel. Easy. They did it in less than 40 minutes. With spectators too! Across the street, in a van, sat two guys watching, drinking coffee. How's that for a neighborhood watch?

## When the CRAP hits the fan

Whenever there's a panel discussion the day after a show opens, there's usually a good chance that it's going to be pretty damn boring. You know the type. The artists are usually hung over and have nothing to say. The audience is usually hung over and has nothing to ask. Fun, fun. Well the fab 5 of the De Appel's curators course wanted to be different, and by golly - they were. Sitting up there like sacrificial lambs waiting for slaughter, the curators and artists, along with chair **Stuart Morgan** prepared themselves for the worst. What they got was ... well, let's say they got what they deserved. It may not have been informative, but it got high marks for sensationalist entertainment. **Man Of the Match**: art critic, come fashion writer, **Paul Groot** for his bizarre curiosity in **Kendell Geers'** wardrobe, and performing a remarkable impersonation of a Philistine.

## Bloomers, Bleepers, and Blunders

Yes, everyone is going on about CRAP SHOOT here in Amsterdam. They're going on about responsibility, borders, that age old chestnut 'is it art?'. But, really, I think they're missing out on some of the good stuff. Like how one of the curators missed the Bloom heist. Why? Was it due to some disagreement with the project? Surely not. Poor Adam Szymczyk couldn't make the experience of a lifetime because he had a bad case of the flu. Better luck next time Adam!

It gets better. For his work Private Eye, **Kendell Geers** hired a local Private Detective to follow the Stedelijk's very own **Rudi Fuchs**. The local sleuth was picked from the yellow pages because of his name: **De Oplossing**, Dutch for the solution. What a solution he turned out to be. After following and photographing who he thought was Rudi, our man with the secret plan discovered he was on the wrong trail. Who was he following? Inside sources say it was the head of **Shell**, sponsor of the **Peiling 5** show, currently at the Stedelijk. It goes on: with **Kendell's** work '160 cm', where he had all of the doorways in De Appel dropped to that inconvenient height, more than a fair share of people have banged their heads - if there weren't enough potential lawsuits on hand! There's more. In what might be a case of 'what comes around, goes around', **Mo Cattelan's** work "A pig" was stolen from the maze in De Appel, on the day after the opening, only to be returned the following day. Strange, but true.

## CRAP SHOOT superlatives

Now that the second curators course has come to a close, maybe it's time to sit back and reflect. So, with that in mind, **Inside Shot** has come up with its own list of CRAP SHOOT superlatives. **Class clown**: **Mo Cattelan**. Do I really need to explain? **Best dressed**: **Kendell Geers**. A shoe in with that outfit with fatigues that's left everyone talking. **Best hair**: **Henrik Plenge Jakobsen**. Shoulder length blonde hair that would leave any one of **Charles Angels** envious. **Class couple**: **Halter/Gratwohl**. The culinary dynamic duo. **Most popular**: **Rudi Fuchs**. A man so popular that he's followed everywhere. **Class recluse**: **Jeroen Eisinga**. He didn't

break anything, he was nowhere to be found during the panel discussion. The true dark horse of CRAP SHOOT. **Best body**: **Brinch & Jakobsen**. With that bit of exhibitionism on last issue's cover, they win pants down. **Most assertive**: **Stuart Morgan**. That suit. That barely audible mic. He still managed to keep an unruly mob from rioting in De Appel during the panel discussion. **Least understood**: a tie between **Bloom Gallery** and the curators. The Bloomers suffered because **Mo Cattelan** thought they wouldn't mind being ripped off. The curators are quickly finding out how 'tolerant' Dutch culture really is. **Most articulate**: 3 way tie. **Kendell Geers/curator Clive Kellner/Anand Zenz**. For his points from the floor during the panel discussion, **Anand** is an easy choice. Same goes for **Clive's** convincing performance from the panel. **Kendell** gets it because he was the only one with a sense of humor. **Least articulate**: **Mo Cattelan**. Yes it's true, he is speaking a second language, but ... ol' **Mo** could have come up with something to say during the panel discussion. **Quietest**: **Paul de Reus**. Has anyone heard a word from this man whose stolen work was the object of such scandal? **Worst timing**: **Adam Szymczyk**. What a time to get flu, the day of the heist. **Most outspoken**: 'critic' **Paul Groot**. For his deafening and emotional tirade at the panel discussion, this one is a no brainer. **Class cheerleader**: **Karin Feenstra**. Art critic for the **Financieel Dagblad**. With all those squeals of delight at **Paul Groot's** condemnation of CRAP SHOOT, this too is a no brainer. **Most hard breaks (ins)**: **Annet Gelink** and **Diana Stigter**, directors of **Bloom Gallery**. What a way to start the day, finding yourself in the thick of an art work. **Most responsible**: the artists, the curators, or **Saskia Bos**. Undecided. **Least likely to succeed**: **De Oplossing**. Commissioned to follow **Rudi Fuchs**, this P.I. followed the wrong man. Hey buddy, maybe you should think about a career change. **Most likely to succeed**: your guess is as good as mine.

## De Appel Curator Comparisons

### CRAP SHOOT

### SHIFT

#### THEFTS

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Bloom Gallery                              | 1. Maria Lindbergh's left wallet work |
| 2. Maurizio Cattelan's "A Pig"                |                                       |
| 3. Kendell Geers' Private Eye Report (1 page) |                                       |

#### EXPLOSIVE WORKS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Brinch & Jakobsen's smashed Ticket Booth | 1. Roman Signer's exploding box performance |
| 2. Brinch & Jakobsen's smashed Office       | 2. Gregory Green's bombs                    |
| 3. Kendell Geers' brick work                | 3. Ross Sinclair's guitar riffs             |

#### TOILET WORKS

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Halter/Gratwohl's seeing eye Toilet | 1. Maria Lindbergh's laughing Toilet |
|--|--------------------------------------|

#### BLINDFOLDED ARTISTS

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Jeroen Eisinga in "40-44-PG" | 1. Roman Signer in exploding box performance |
|---------------------------------|--|

#### WARDROBE DISPLAY

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Halter/Gratwohl's jackets | 1. Elin Wikström's outfits |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|

#### SURREPTITIOUS WORKS

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Kendell Geers' P.I. piece | 1. Douglas Gordon's "Kissing with Ambarbital" |
|------------------------------|---|

#### OFFICE WORKS

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Brinch & Jakobsen's smashed Office | 1. Pierre Huyghe's photographed office |
|---------------------------------------|--|

#### ENTRANCE WORKS

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Maurizio Cattelan's mirrored Floor | 1. Job Koelewijn's Vick's vapor Rub window |
|---------------------------------------|--|

## Miscellaneous Slap Shots

**Jane and Louis Wilson** should take notice: there seems to be a babytwin boom in the art world these days. Go to an opening in Amsterdam and chances are you'll spot **Artimo Foundation's** **Gijs Stork** and his wife **Sybrege**, with their twin daughters **Anna** and **Helena**. The Stork's aren't alone either. Artist **Bill Breckenridge**, currently showing at **Sabine Wachters** in Brussels, and his wife **Susan**, are expecting twins this September ... **Patrick Painter Update**: As reported here **Patrick Painter**, of **Painter Editions**, seems to have a tendency to show his work at Galleries that are owned by brunettes. Well, the trend continues! **Patrick** has a **Dan Graham** piece currently on show at **Gavin Brown's Enterprise** in New York. No surprises here, **Gav's** a brunette too ... In last issue **Inside Shot** told you about gallerist/writer **Oscar Van den Boogaard**, of Brussels gallery **Mot & Van den Boogaard**, and some of the accolades he's been receiving for his third novel "De Heerlijkheid van Julia". Well they keep on coming, this time **Oscar** has been nominated for the Dutch **Libris Literatuur Prijs** ... If you're in the market for advertising, rumor is that **Flash Art** is offering a special discount of 50 %. What's the catch? You have to put **Douglas Gordon's** name in the ad!

Until next time, be cool & the gang, and don't let the CRAP get you down.



I MADE THIS MASK IN MY STUDIO TO HELP YOU TO LOOK SCARY. IT'S MADE FROM PAPER MACHÉ AND REAL HAIR (MINE) WITH PAINT. I SUGGEST YOU WEAR AN OVERCOAT WITH IT WITH THE COLLAR UP - THIS WILL INCREASE THE FEAR FACTOR. MAYBE YOU COULD GROWL A BIT - LISTEN TO YOUR DOG, LEARN FROM HIM.



Jes Brinch &amp; Henrik Plenge Jakobsen, "Ticket Booth", 1996



Photography: Niels Haan

"please mind your head") isn't exactly terrorism. It's part of the show's pattern of systematic disruption of the structures that be, like Geers' building evaluation document that details De Appel's potential as a piece of real estate, or his replication of Gabriel Orozco's very personal body-weight ball, substituting his own weight and subtlety it "Stolen Idea". Or the results of Geers' attempt to steal Rudi Fuchs' privacy: the lengthy and remarkably uninformative report submitted by an incredibly inept private eye that the artist hired to follow the legendary Fuchs for five days provides fortuitous comic relief.

Jeroen Eisinga's film loop "40-44-PG" provides gratuitous risk devoid of suspense as Eisinga walks in circles, blindfolded, while being circled by a driverless VW Beetle. Halter/Gratwohl, in their video piece "Speech", provide the cathartic spectacle of the two artists spitting alphabet soup at each other, accompanied by the deep rumbling amplified sounds of scraping spoons.

The most extreme work in the show, however, because of its implications in the real world of art's support structures, is a piece by Maurizio Cattelan that was only on the premises for one morning. Without knowledge or consent from either the Bloom Gallery or De Appel, but with the help of the show's curators, Cattelan removed the entire contents of the Bloom Gallery - office equipment, files, exhibition (Paul de Reus' sculptures and photographs) and all, lock, stock and barrel, as it

were - from the gallery and relocated everything, carefully packaged, in the exhibition at De Appel. As one curator explained, "they had to take everything because they weren't sure how secure things would be when they left". They also had to return it when the Bloom girls weren't amused. What remains is documentation and an institutional disclaimer.

Let's remember that we're talking about a game of chance, not a true crime. Gambling has long provided a metaphor for risk-taking art. These guys are working within a tradition, while calling the bluff of the new theoreticians. So maybe we should just call it a new stage in the behavioral development of Conceptual art. Having a tantrum, walking in circles, emptying a gallery, going to childish, scatological, ultra-intelligent comic extremes, art is making a last-ditch desperate attempt at renunciation. And at demolition, with a touch of apocalyptic millennial post-deconstructive angst. Don't forget, this is an exhibition that addresses issues of privacy and property, of social contexts and institutional support structures. This is a collaborative project that culminates within a maze inside De Appel's biggest gallery. Its core is deliberately anticlimactic, perforated by Kendell Geers' snide hole (titled "Dutch Wife"), and inhabited by Maurizio Cattelan's small furry mechanical piglet with a wriggling snout and a party balloon, ceaselessly patrolling the space. And oinking furiously against the situational odds.

# GOING FOR BROKE

**Crap:** noun. 1. A losing throw of the dice in the game of craps. 2. Vulgar. Excrement. 3. Vulgar slang. Nonsense. Worthless. In other senses, Middle English *crappe*, residual rubbish, from Middle Dutch *crappe*, probably from *crappen*, to tear off.

by Kim Levin

The young curators who put CRAP SHOOT together may not have known quite what to expect from the artists they chose, but they knew exactly what they were doing, right down to the etymology of the crucial word.

But there's no need to call it terrorism. Violations of property or privacy, or of contextual expectations, are not necessarily terrorist acts. Transgression against social conventions, including the conventions of an experimental exhibition space, are not that big a deal. There's a long modern tradition in the art world of transgressive stuff. Just think of Duchamp's urinal, Yves Klein's fictive leap out a window, Rauschenberg's erasure of a drawing by De Kooning, or Chris Burden's Volkswagen crucifixion, for a start.

In an art context, bad-boy acts of territorial aggression and simulated delinquency are not on the same plane, politically, morally, or otherwise, as random explosions or the taking of hostages by fanatic believers in a cause. The only thing they share is gratuitousness, which, if one cares to recall André Gide's antihero Lafcadio, may be the defining, if not redeeming social characteristic of an aesthetic act.

The first throw of dice is Maurizio Cattelan's mirror on the floor at the doorway. Replacing the doormat at the entrance with a mirror is a wily, but hardly terroristic move, though stepping on it could cause someone with acrophobia a moment of illusionistic terror. It's a disorienting announcement that De Appel is being turned upside down.

The second throw: Jes Brinch and Henrik Plenge Jakobsen's trashed glass-cube ticket booth, prologue for the orgy of choreographed chaos upstairs in their very convincing but completely simulated destroyed office space.

Before you get to this demolished office - with its overturned furniture, smashed computer and photocopier, coffee splashes on the walls, and sea of memos and documents strewn across the floor - you have to step over a fat plumbing pipe to climb the dingy back stairs, having been rerouted to that unrenovated stairway because the door to the main staircase is mysteriously locked. The grey pipe snakes up the stairs, over thresholds, around corners, and into a crude wooden cube in the middle of the first gallery.

The cube, a room within a room, contains Halter/Gratwohl's functioning toilet, which begins where Steven Pippin's toilet-as-camera left off. Artists in the 90s have been busy turning the so-called white cube space into a site for social acts and interactions. Why not antisocial ones too? Taking a crap, to put it crudely, in a displaced toilet in the middle of an exhibition, is hardly the norm. Especially while unexpectedly observing your own asshole on a closed-circuit video monitor. To put it politely, excrement is literally circulating through this show.

Then there are the lowered doorways, thanks to Kendell Geers, which you have to duck under. Lowering the doorways so inattentive viewers can shake up their brains (while providing warnings to



Halter/Gratwohl, "Analysis", 1996

Photography: Niels Haan

LEZINGENREEKS

# Film & Fotografie

Filmtheater Rialto organiseert ieder jaar een lezingenreeks in het kader van Film temidden van de Kunsten. Dit voorjaar heeft de reeks fotografie tot onderwerp. In een serie van vier lezingen worden de verschillende aspecten van de relatie tussen beide kunst disciplines en hun geschiedenis behandeld. Na iedere lezing wordt een film vertoond die aansluit bij het onderwerp van de lezing.

## Het programma

- |                     |           |   |
|---------------------|-----------|---|
| <b>1. do 2 mei</b>  | 20.00 uur | <b>Johan van der Keuken:</b> over cineast/fotograaf Johan van der Keuken. |
|                     | 21.30 uur | <b>Het witte kasteel</b> van Johan van der Keuken. NL 1973                |
| <b>2 do 9 mei</b>   | 20.00 uur | <b>Albert Wullfers:</b> Van daguerreotype tot digitaal beeld.             |
|                     | 21.30 uur | <b>Sauve qui peut (la vie)</b> van Jean-Luc Godard. F/CH 1980             |
| <b>3 do 23 mei</b>  | 20.00 uur | <b>Dirk Lauwaert:</b> De signatuur in film en fotografie.                 |
|                     | 21.30 uur | <b>La captive du désert</b> van Raymond Depardon. F 1990                  |
| <b>4. do 30 mei</b> | 20.00 uur | <b>Pauline Terreehorst:</b> Foto's en fotografieren in de cinematografie. |
|                     | 21.30 uur | <b>Blow-up</b> van Michelangelo Antonioni. I/GB 1966                      |



toegang lezing + film:

f17,00 / f13,00

toegang enkel lezing:

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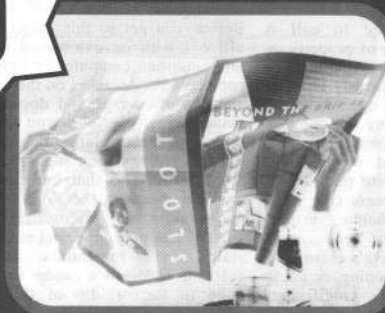
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# LIFE IS UTTERLY MISERABLE BECAUSE OF YOU PERSONALLY

Issues of injustice are passé: you complain of compassion fatigue. When in your car, you curse the traffic. A sacrifice for you is not buying what you know is tainted. A luxury is buying it anyway. If your hypocrisy is illuminated you smirkingly quip *lighten up*. Your desires are steeped in boredom: neophilia overrides ever appreciating what you might know well. Thinking, for you, is something that one can do too much of - it's the only thing that you do in moderation. When you choose to perform the indefensible, you moan that you were tired if there is no one else to blame. Howling in a storm of self-constructed anguish, the worst of your traumas would always centre upon yourself. Events of importance leave you cold whilst you remain obsessed with the oft repeated minutiae of your trivial existence. You effete surrender to a reliance on hope so as to hobble any active involvements, just as you satisfy yourself with demonstrations of potential: validation through action would be too radical and dangerous. The course of your life has no qualitative difference to that of any other animal, save for the quirk that you have the cleverness to make pseudoconscious noises about your predicament. It has been a studied effort for you to take the cultures available and banalise them into the specious rhetoric that glosses the veneer of your comfort seeking. Happiness becomes the catch-all legitimiser for any personal indulgence. Compassion is something that you might theoretically advocate but in practice it's *fuck-thy-neighbour-for-fear-that-they-fuck-thee*. Puerile minds would sneer at the semblances of reason that are contorted to be your considered approach. You, of all, have options to change and yet all you do is consolidate your privileges; in the face of difficulty you use these privileges to evade any cause. Conformism and mediocrity are the comforting norms: any deviation is couched in bleated excuses of why you had no choice. You seek to sustain the unsustainable by grouping with the equally flip-minded and then insisting that your collectively held lies define some universal truths - with the remarkable coincidence that you emerge at the centre of things. Paralysis is what you aspire to if you thought your motives through. The complete form of this would be death. Rarely do questions fill your mind since you prefer to just preen your complacency with a mass of facile truisms. Accept it, the future cannot lie with your kind. Then spend the rest of your life lying to yourself about knowing this. Forever defensive, you misconstrue openness for weakness and leap to exploit any trusting offer. For fear of thinking you hide behind tradition. For fear of commitment you utter only platitudes. For fear of feeling, you wallow in sentimentality. For fear of affirmation, you lean on cynicism. Expedience becomes the term for doing now what seems most personally profitable. Planning is the cunning to ensure that this remains so. When things are well things are as they should be; when something does not suit you it becomes a monstrous injustice: that the two are different sides of the same thing is carefully elided. Your wants overwhelm others' needs. The inequities are gloated upon with the teleological argument that they demonstrate the natural order of things. Ordure more like. Give something more than detritus back you bastard.



# Stefan Halter and Franz Gratwohl interviewed by Dominique Eigenmann on February 28/29 and March 4 1996.

**What role does the unconscious play in your art?**

**Gratwohl:** The unconscious is the realm unreachably by reflection. **Halter:** Or where intuition transforms reflection. **Gratwohl:** Transforms it into an experience. (Pause) But we're crazy about reflecting. (Laughs) (...) But reflecting, the way I understand it, doesn't mean thinking before acting. It means thinking while you're acting. In that way this kind of reflection is always 'flowing'. Flowing is a state of constant, active forgetting. In the course of its progress the flow keeps making mistakes. (...) In our work-process we reflect as long as it takes for an image to come - an experience or a physical sensation - at any rate something non-verbal. We speak as long as we can. You might say that we play language with reflection. **Halter:** Or stroke it. **Gratwohl:** ... until it reveals something else. **Eigenmann:** What do you do with the image once it's there? **Gratwohl:** The image is an icon. The icon is a condensed image which packs as much information as possible into as few signs as possible. **Halter:** And the signs are densely packed because they tell stories. Icons can be seen as a contrast to the logo: the icon is ambiguous in the extreme, because it contains a lot of stories, because it is vastly thought-provoking. The logo, although easy to understand, isn't productive: a sign stands for just one story. **Eigenmann:** How can we characterize the moment at which an image, an icon, emerges in your artistic process? **Gratwohl:** If the image is already a revelation, there's no need to reflect on it. It is powerful enough as an image. And if it is not powerful enough, we simply go on reflecting.

**What makes an object an oracle for you? And what language do oracles speak?**

**Gratwohl:** An object becomes an oracle by being found. By allowing itself to be found. **Halter:** Objects definitely cannot crossbreed if they do not merge. For something to become an artistic object, it is not enough to assemble it. It has to want to merge, it has to fit together. The 'objet trouvé', the object or the installation must itself want to be like we find it. The artist's will must be extraneous to this act of finding. (Pause) I am interested in how objects see themselves, how things represent themselves, regardless of an artist's intention. **Gratwohl:** Take our money-egg, the 'machine déstruite', for example. It wasn't a case of deciding to use money to build an egg or a house or what have you. What did happen was that when we had been thinking and playing around long enough, there came the time when the money wanted to be an egg. Strange as it may sound, this was decisive for our method: at a certain moment the money whispered to us that it wanted to be an egg, it was broody. And that whispered message is what we were calling an image or an icon before; it was an oracular utterance. Money and egg crossbreed, revealing themselves as unsuspected forebears.

**Which is active in the artistic process, the artist or the object?**

**Halter:** The more powerful the oracle, the more powerful the object. The more the artist speaks, the weaker the oracle. (...) Artistic work has a serving function. (Pause) **Gratwohl:** I think it is dangerous to separate subject and object. The unconscious suspends that separation. The thing that confronts us - the object - is perceived by the unconscious as an organ belonging to the ego. You can see it in our 'machines', which are not something separate from people, but suddenly reveal themselves as part of your own body! **Halter:** The oracular utterance, the moment at which an object reveals itself, is the binding force. The moment at which the border between 'I' and 'You' vanishes.

**Halter:** Roland Barthes says that when one perceives that the artist has gone on thinking after the immediate image - the oracle - the shock moment of his art diminishes. (Pause) **Gratwohl:** That's right. But on the other hand when we walk around galleries we often say: here at last is an artist who has given some thought to the matter! (Pause) **Halter:** You can't accuse an artist like

Van Gogh of not thinking enough. That instinctive quality is what his art is all about. But to anyone who paints monochromes in this day and age I would say: you don't think enough.

**What part does laughter play in your art, and what about shock?**

**Gratwohl:** A good joke is a pleasant shock ... (Laughs) **Halter:** A shock is an unpleasant joke. (Laughs, pause) Laughter brings about an understanding which might not be rationally possible otherwise. Laughing means understanding on another level. (...) **Gratwohl:** Foucault said that the deeper he penetrated the gruesome layers of history, the more he had to learn to laugh. (...) I don't think that Freud was right, in his study on jokes and the unconscious, in saying that the joke has a repressive function, that we only laugh in order to distance ourselves immediately from the taboo. In my opinion, though, laughing provides one of the few possibilities of understanding something without repressing it. (Pause) And that is because laughter is a form of physical expression, physical understanding, even when, or although, reason represses. Laughter means that the body has laughed, the body has thought. Reason and the body are shaking with laughter, if you like.

illusion: the walls and beams have been crushed, but you're still not free. **Gratwohl:** The whole point of playing is to feel good. Playing is a way of not being frightened.

**What is the significance of the beholder in the oracular context of artist, object and beholder? Why do you exhibit?**

**Halter:** Without the beholder there is no oracle. **Gratwohl:** The artwork is a slave for sale on the art market, hoping to be bought in order to prove its truthfulness. (Laughs) **Halter:** And the artist hopes to prove his relationship to the artwork. (Laughs) That's why he signs it. **Eigenmann:** But why do you exhibit? **Gratwohl:** Confrontation. Visitors can give me a new look at our things. **Halter:** The art object must be public - at best it ought to have an influence on the public confrontation.

**What, to you, is the difference between public spaces, art spaces and private spaces?**

**Halter:** If a museum does not succeed in being a public space, it is nothing. A junkyard. **Gratwohl:** "What else are the houses of art than the graveyards of our culture?" **Halter:** Obviously, in a museum one exhibits in an art context. The museum is to objects what the frame is to painting. (Pause) That's why you have to set about things differently. (Pause) Galleries, in turn, are market-places, feeding troughs. (Pause) **Gratwohl:** You're obviously fairly sheltered in art spaces; you can take a relatively large number of liberties because the framework says: this is

of truth. When perception is regarded as truth, when perception is frozen, one is building truth. **Halter:** When someone says there is no truth, he should be asked if that assertion is true. The crucial question is often: is something physically true, does it possess physical truth or is it a mental construct?

**How does encounter differ from familiarity in art?**

**Gratwohl:** Deleuze made a nice comment on this when he said that recognition is the opposite of encounter. That is what we expect of the objects which find themselves in our work: it is not simply a case of recognition, but of encounter. The same applies to the beholder. We are always seeking a break. People should recognize things in our objects or installations, but there must also be a break, so that things are no longer recognizable but compel a new encounter. In our work you should be able to encounter, say, "money", the very money you usually only recognize. Normally speaking, you recognize a goat's skull. So there must be a break somewhere, enabling you to encounter it afresh. (Pause) For that reason we spent a long time searching for objects which people simply cannot help recognizing - because they are so commonplace. (Pause) **Halter:** The fact is that the entire art market is orientated towards recognition and logos and not towards encounter. The foremost goal is to be recognized. If you're recognized you have style, and I don't believe it is merely by chance that people often tell us we have no style. **Gratwohl:** The most one can demand of an artist is to have no style. Most of the really well-known artists found their style at a certain point and

with other artists. We are looking for artists who are willing to regard their art as a means of communication, and for exhibition contexts which will allow artworks to communicate with one another.

**How does your art relate to history and to time?**

**Gratwohl:** Our art is primarily concerned with stories, with fragments, and less with linear history. And if it has anything to do with time, then chiefly with our own time, of course. But always in the way we associate it with another period. (Pause) By that token I think it is important to be anachronistic in one's own time, to make anachronistic exhibitions. **Eigenmann:** To be anachronistic at the service of the times. (Pause) **Gratwohl:** That also implies a relationship to history. When a fragment of history is associated with the present, it always reaches beyond the mere present. It uncovers a perception or a truth which is anachronistic, really. (...) **Eigenmann:** I notice that you are chiefly fascinated by what is relatively unhistorical in history, by 'the way things have always been'. Archaic tales, myths, anthropology. Buried history. **Gratwohl:** Yes, I suppose it's true that we're not all that interested in history itself. We are interested in stories closely connected with the body, the physical aspect of history. **Halter:** We are interested in basic conditions of life which are not tied to a historical context.

**What relationship does your art have with the apocalypse?**

**Gratwohl:** Our society still believes in the linear apocalypse, in total annihilation. In our art the apocalypse is not something that destroys the world but something that destroys our conceptions of the world. For if destruction is not aimed at those conceptions, it turns into resentment of the world and must destroy it. We therefore regard the apocalypse as annihilation, catharsis and rebirth. A new horizon emerges behind the debris. Art is apocalyptic when it is both revelation and terror. (...) To me, the 'Dionysos' object represents a relationship to destruction. Individual death always plays a role in art as destruction.

**Are you interested in questions of value?**

**Gratwohl:** Our first aim is always a radical devaluation - in order to find out what values are useful to our concept. (...) That is why our works are so often about money: because money is the key to value in this society. **Eigenmann:** The absoluteness of the era, as Georg Simmel said. Since everything has become comparable in terms of money, money itself is incomparable. **Halter:** That is why money is such an extremely topical material in art. **Gratwohl:** Money is one of the most important extensions of the body. Money is like a vital current flowing through our bodies. But because of that, the body is always in danger of having that vital current cut off. (Pause) You might also say that the body is an extension of money.

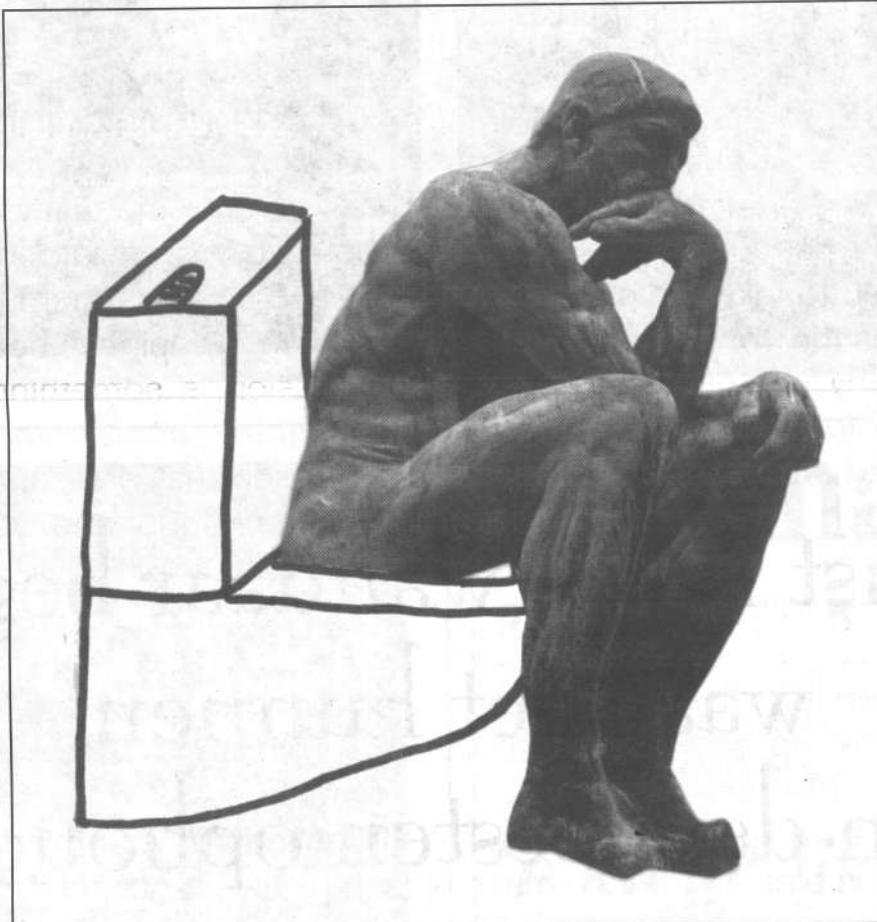
**What is the relationship between body and idea in your art? Do you find it easier to love objects or ideas?**

**Gratwohl:** We like it best when an idea embodies itself. (Pause) Actually, the idea is what we are always trying to get rid of. What is spawned is the object; the idea is what is still brooding inside us. **Halter:** We are certainly not interested in developing ideas in art if that means having an intention and then executing it and illustrating it. Ideas and objects must develop of their own accord. **Gratwohl:** Certain ideas fascinate us because we suspect that there must be a body that belongs to them or goes with them. (Pause) Sometimes embodiment comes before the idea in the development of an object and an idea; sometimes the idea comes before the body. **Eigenmann:** When embodiment comes first, you might say that the object is in search of its idea. **Gratwohl:** We had the idea of the money-egg, for instance, long before we started thinking about money and money-flows; as an object it gave us ideas about how money really functions. **Halter:** Embodiment is transformation, for the right body re-transforms ideas. **Gratwohl:** We are interested in the body's wealth of ideas. (...) Ideas still have a semblance of truth. That is why we want to attribute ideas to the body and truth to perception. (Pause) The way Nietzsche developed a philosophy of corporeality in opposition to the classical philosophy of ideas for which there are no bodies.

**What do you think is more important in art: finding the right questions or the right answers?**

**Gratwohl:** Of course, if you don't ask a lot of good questions you won't get the right answers. **Halter:** I'm more interested in answers, especially answers which give rise to new questions. There are typical question-artists, artists who regard questions as paramount. I want to hear answers in art at last, not always just questions! (Pause) The money-egg is an answer. Our works are answers. **Eigenmann:** Perhaps art is a typical art of answers in any case, whereas bad philosophy, I would say, is an art of questions. **Gratwohl:** Questions can be the right ones but remain totally non-committal and inactive. Answers, though, are always active and binding. **Halter:** They bind, like strings: you immediately ask yourself whether what the answer is telling you, is correct? Does it work? **Gratwohl:** Questions, you might say, dwell in the realm of ideas, and answers in the realm of the body, of perceptions.

(Translated from German by Ruth Koenig)



Halter/Gratwohl

**Halter:** Laughter is a release.

**What qualifies as a game in your art or the artistic process?**

**Gratwohl:** Anything can happen in a game, anything is possible. And that's what we are interested in: possibilities, not truth. Possibilities are alive, constructing is lifeless. **Halter:** By that token our art is opposed to seriousness. **Eigenmann:** Georges Perec says that he loves people who are intelligent before they are serious. **Gratwohl:** I love people who are intelligent before they think. **Halter:** Adults are unable to play like children. When you grow up you have to play different games. **Gratwohl:** You can juggle with possibilities when you play. **Halter:** Of course, you have to play properly. Playing properly means having a proper game structure. You have a proper game structure when it allows for all possibilities - but not everything functions by a long chalk. (Pause) Without game structures, chaos is all that's left. **Eigenmann:** Can we say that your motto is not to destroy but to play? **Gratwohl:** Yes, even when for us the name of the game is often 'crash'. **Halter:** Destroying is easy. But the question is what to do with the debris? When we destroy, it is in order to construct. (Pause) Destruction is not a very useful means of liberation. Usually, it is an

art. Sometimes one wishes that some artists could be forced to stage their work in public space. They would be much more exposed there than if they had put their stuff together in a museum. **Halter:** In our opinion the same applies to so-called terrorist activities in art spaces. There is little point in launching a bomb attack in the museum.

**What is perception? What is truth?**

**Gratwohl:** The activity implied by 'perception' - taking something in - demonstrates to me that it is a physical act, not a mental, purely intellectual one. Inasmuch as it is physical, perception is never an exclusively conscious activity. After all, the body often perceives in a way of which the mind is not conscious. Unconscious perceptions are physical deposits - they are there, but have no presence. (Pause) That is the crux of our work: we are always searching for things which we register not only intellectually but physically too. It's a kind of yardstick: the more something challenges us physically, the more exciting it gets. And by excitement I mean physical tension as well. **Eigenmann:** Should your works be taken at face value? As assertions? Like money asserting itself as an egg? **Gratwohl:** You could put it like that. But you might also say that perception is the preliminary stage of the illusion

from that day forward did nothing but repeat themselves. (Pause) But the way we work means starting over and over again.

**Why do you work as a team?**

**Gratwohl:** Because working alone would be even more boring. (Laughs) **Halter:** When you work alone you either generate a current with yourself or with the picture you're painting. When two people collaborate, two flows meet and form a current in which an exchange can take place. **Gratwohl:** But it would be wrong to think that we produce twice as fast because we're a twosome. **Eigenmann:** Actually, I have a feeling that you produce twice as slowly because you're a twosome. (Laughs) **Gratwohl:** You could be right. **Halter:** But four times better. (Laughs, pause) **Gratwohl:** I think the decisive factor in our collaboration was our shared extreme interest in communication. We're both fond of talking, we're interested in language, we like the mental jumping around that can occur in conversation. Being so involved in examining perceptions, we find it incredibly exciting to have two perceptions, two perceptions with something in common. **Eigenmann:** In analogy to what you were saying before, you need two perceptions which not only recognize but encounter each other. **Gratwohl:** We are interested in working



Halter/Gratwohl, "Stove Heating SF 2000"

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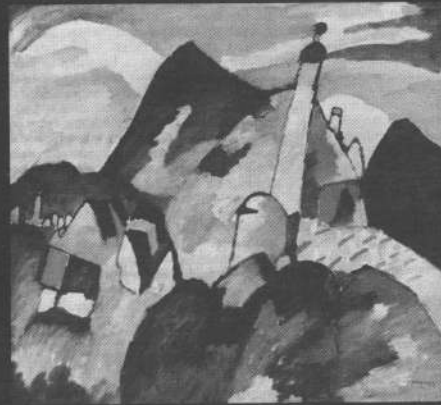
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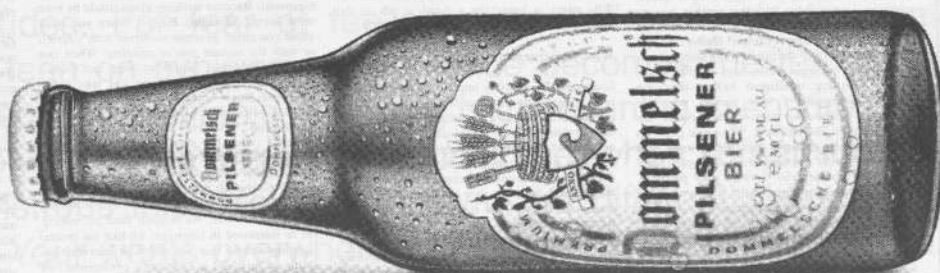
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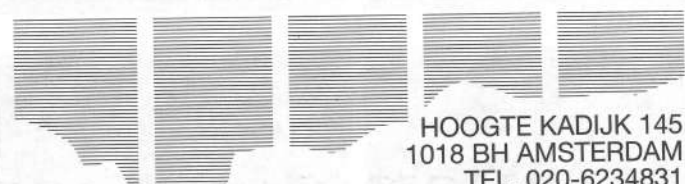
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## QUOTATIONS FROM

CHAIRMAN JEROEN EISINGA

★

On The Correct Handling of  
Contradictions  
Among the People

109

Learn to "play the piano". In playing the piano all ten fingers are in motion; it won't do to move some fingers only and not others. But if all ten fingers press down at once, there is no melody. To produce good music, the ten fingers should move rhythmically and in co-ordination. An artist

should keep a firm grasp on its central task and at the same time, around the central task, it should unfold the work in other fields. At present, we have to take care of many fields; we must look after the work in all the areas,

and not give all our attention to a few problems, to the exclusion of others. Wherever there is a problem, we must put our finger on it, and this is a method we must master. Some play the piano well and some badly; and there is a great difference in the melodies they produce.

110

We must learn to "play the piano" well.

"Have a head for figures." That is to say, we must attend to the quantitative aspect of a situation or problem and make a

111

basic quantitative analysis. Every quality manifests itself in a certain quantity, and without quantity there can be no quality. To this day many of us still do not understand that they must attend to the quantitative aspect of things — the basic statistics, the main percentages and the quantitative limits that determine the qualities of things. They have no "figures" in their heads and as a result cannot help making mistakes.

112

23. INVESTIGATION  
AND STUDY

Everyone engaged in practical work must investigate conditions at the lower levels.

113

To take such an attitude is to seek truth from facts. "Facts" are all the things that exist objectively, "truth" means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and "to seek" means to study.

114

not  
To behave like "a blindfolded man catching sparrows", or "a blind man groping for fish", to be crude and careless, to not indulge in verbiage, to not content with a smattering of knowledge.

115

To link oneself with the masses, one must act in accordance with the needs and wishes of the masses. All work done for the masses must start from their needs and not from the desire of any individual, however well-intentioned. It often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such cases, we should wait patiently. We should

116

not make the change until, through our work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out. Otherwise we shall isolate ourselves from the masses. Unless they are conscious and willing, any kind of work that requires their participation will turn out to be a mere formality and will fail.

117



unchecked and allow them to monopolize the field. Mistakes must be criticized and poisonous ideas fought wherever they creep up. However, such criticism should not be dogmatic, and the metaphysical method should not be used, but there should be room to make the dialectical argument. What is needed is scientific analysis and convincing argument.

## 6. IMPERIALISM AND ALL REACTIONARIES ARE PAPER TIGERS

All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful.

Just as there is not a single thing in the world without a dual nature (this is the law of the unity of opposites), so imperialism and all reactionaries have a dual nature —

Inevitably, the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will give expression to their own ideologies. Inevitably, they will stubbornly express themselves on political and ideological questions by every possible means. You cannot expect them to do otherwise. We should not use the method of suppression and prevent them from expressing themselves, but should allow them to do so and at the same time argue with them and direct appropriate criticism at them. We must undoubtedly criticize wrong ideas of every description. It certainly would not be right to refrain from criticism, look on while wrong ideas spread

Look! Were these not living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers? But in the end they changed into paper tigers, dead tigers, bean-curd tigers. These are historical facts. Have people not seen or heard about these facts? There have indeed been thousands and tens of thousands of them! Thousands and tens of thousands! Hence, imperialism and all reactionaries, looked at in essence, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, must be seen for what they are — paper tigers. On this we should build our strategic thinking. On the other hand, they are also living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers which can devour people. On this we should build our tactical thinking.

74

the policy for promoting the progress of the arts and the sciences and a flourishing culture in our land. Different forms and styles in art should develop freely and different schools in science should contend freely. We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. They should not be settled in summary fashion.

909

Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the "poster and slogan style" which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts.

*Ibid.*, pp. 88-90.\*

Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is

904

## 7. DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN

People of the world, unite and defeat the U.S. aggressors and all their running dogs! People of the world, be courageous, dare to fight, defy difficulties and advance wave upon wave. Then the whole world will belong to the people. Monsters of all kinds shall be destroyed.

82

GLUTTONY  
GREED  
SLOTH  
ENVY  
WRATH  
PRIDE  
LUST  
CAR CRASH

(MAKE YOUR CHOICE AND  
THEN CHOOSE ONE OTHER  
IN CASE YOUR FIRST  
CHOICE IS UNAVAILABLE.)

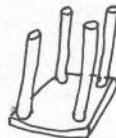
David Shrigley

LAST YEAR WE  
GAVE YOU THE DIAMOND BLOOD  
WRENCH. THE IDEAL GIFT.  
THIS YEAR WE  
ARE GIVING YOU A PLASTIC  
SPOON OR SOMETHING. NOT  
GREAT, BUT WHAT DO YOU  
EXPECT? YOU HAVEN'T EXACTLY  
BEEN A 'VALUED CUSTOMER',  
YOU'RE ALWAYS 'SHOPPING AROUND'  
IN SEARCH OF 'BARGAINS'  
(WHATEVER THEY ARE). YOU'RE  
BEHAVING LIKE A TOTAL  
SLUT. MERRY XMAS + A  
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

ADVERTISEMENT

David Shrigley

LIE



NOW THAT THE STOOL IS UPSIDE  
DOWN WE CAN SEE THAT THERE  
IS NOTHING ON ITS UNDERBATH  
NO WRITINGS, NO DRAWINGS,  
IT WAS ALL JUST A BIG  
LIE.

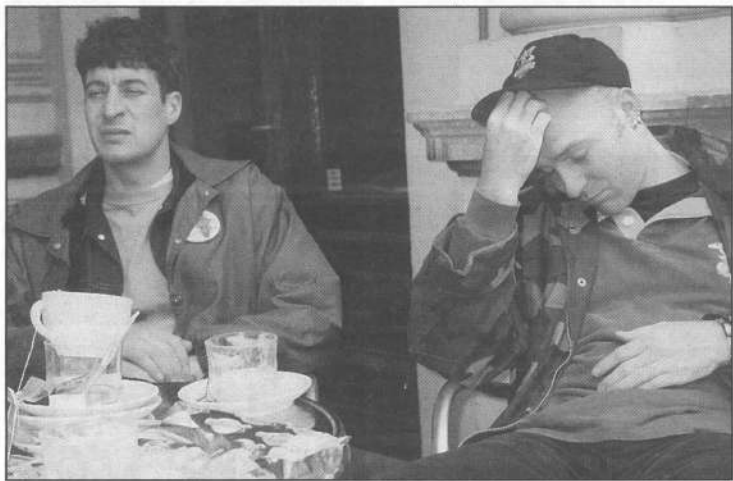
David Shrigley

## LISTEN?

WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN.  
FOR EVERY HIGH THERE IS A  
LONGER, MORE INTENSE, LOW.  
THOUGH YOU ARE TODAY ON TOP  
OF THE HILL, INEVITABLY YOU  
WILL ONE DAY BE IN THE VALLEY.  
FOR EVERY CITY THERE IS A UNITED  
FOR EVERY MOMENT OF PLEASURE,  
FOR EVERY DELICIOUS MORSEL  
YOU HAVE EATEN, THERE IS A  
BILL IN A BROWN ENVELOPE  
WHICH MUST BE PAID.  
IF YOU CANNOT PAY THE PRICE  
YOU SHOULD ORDER SOMETHING  
CHEAP LIKE SOUP (\$1.20 INC. BREAD)

O—O

David Shrigley



The calm before the storm? Class clown Maurizio 'Mo' Cattelan and Best dressed Kendall 'camouflage' Geers enjoy a quiet moment before the CRAP SHOOT panel discussion.



## "the CRAP SHOOTER" accompanies the exhibition CRAP SHOOT April 12 - May 19, 1996 De Appel, Amsterdam

### Participating artists:

Jes Brinch & Henrik Plenge Jakobsen  
Maurizio Cattelan  
Jeroen Eisinga  
Kendell Geers  
Halter/Gratwohl  
Special Guest Artist: Anand Zenz

## CRAP SHOOT is curated by the Curatorial Training Programme 95/96:

### Curators:

Annie Fletcher (Dublin)  
Nina Folkersma (Amsterdam)  
Clive Kellner (Johannesburg)  
Kay C. Pallister (London/New York)  
Adam Szymczyk (Warsaw)

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and to everyone we might  
have forgotten.

Design: de Overkant,  
(Tom Bouman, Inge Schaap)  
Druk: Drukkerij Dijkman B.V.



# Alka-Seltzer

by Kay C. Pallister

Blinking awake, a womb like drum pounds in your head. Reminiscences from the night before slowly freeze-frame through your shattered memory. Hysterically funny scenes of people you know behaving uncharacteristically flick past your aching mind's eye. Worse, you then remember things you said. Beyond that, a sensation of dread sends blood to fill your face, did you really do those things? You are shaken and tired, you can't even remember if you had a good time. The whole night slowly unravels, walking through your apartment, you realise the place is trashed. Some of the party guests are still strewn. Typically you begin to notice nonsensical things are missing or destroyed. The departing drunken guests have thrown your bath mat out of the window to the street. Crackers with ketchup are balanced on beer cans. Someone has been sick on the curtains. The fridge door is broken off and the thing is defrosting over trodden tortilla chips and upturned cat litter. The smell takes weeks to disappear. The neighbours are livid. Yes, the dubious consequences of holding a 'successful' party.

This familiar feeling bares an uncanny resemblance to the feelings I have, now that CRAP SHOOT has

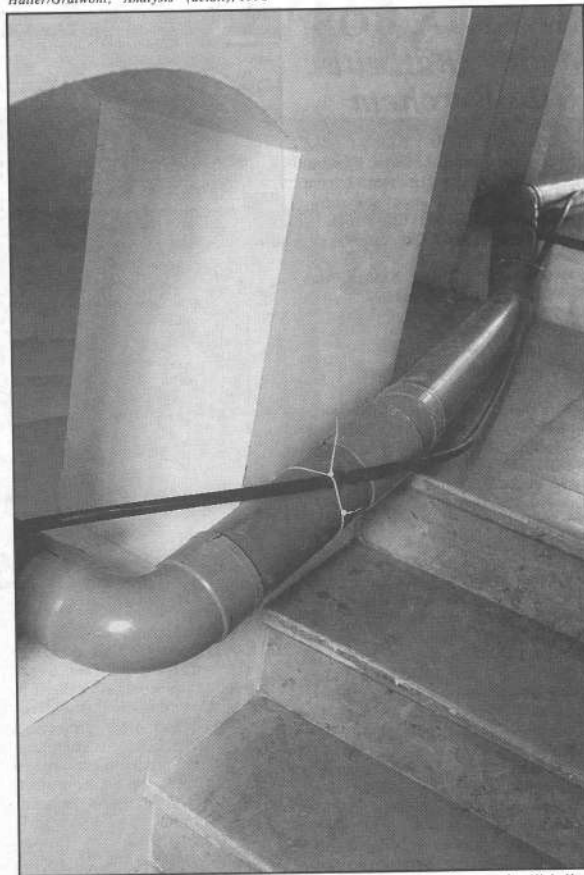
opened. The aftermath is still unfolding. In the first reviews, the artists and curators (of which I am one) have been condemned by most of the local press as irresponsible and childish. Of course, instead of talking about the show as a whole and the accompanying newspaper, which has many articles about our motivations and ideas, they just want to make it clear we can't get away with it (what?). Too late, the milk is spilled and you can see it, its very physical existence fills De Appel to the brim.

*Hold on a moment, the fax has just spat out a review from NRC Handelsblad, (a respectable daily Dutch broadsheet) and I am told by a Dutch ally that it is a rave review, it seems the tide is turning.*

Time is passing. I can see that the whole picture is falling into place. CRAP SHOOT is a show which visitors either hate with a vengeance (on their way out various visitors have verbally made their disgust known to the staff at the reception, "we will come back when there is some art to see" being one of the tamer remarks). On the other hand, some beam with excitement, they laugh and write embarrassingly complimentary remarks in the visitors book. Surely this polarity in opinion is worth something. As for the projects themselves, I think the

physical experience of walking through De Appel is undeniably demanding on the viewer. Firstly, the crisp glass cloistered ticket booth is agape, splintered glass and strewn papers replace the usual order. The perversion of eighties design cubic spaces continues with the re-routing, now the visitor is forced to use the classical spiral staircase, the only remnant of the original guts of the building. There is the installation of fully functional plumbing through the stairwell, which has to be stepped over at various intervals, and of course the bloody annoying lowered doorways by Geers. Fresh air and sun in one room, coming through the broken window, pitch black in another. An electronic animal calls to you from the centre of layered walls, after walking through the corridors you finally discover incongruous contents in the small white space with curved walls. The scenes change in every instance. Wide eyed awareness is a prerequisite. The content of the exhibition reveals itself in a situation which is not passive, what people make of it is for them to decide. There are some opinions in other articles in this newspaper, but if you can, I would urge you to come and make your mind up for yourself and remember this is an art exhibition.

Halter/Gratwohl, "Analysis" (detail), 1996



photography: Niels Haan

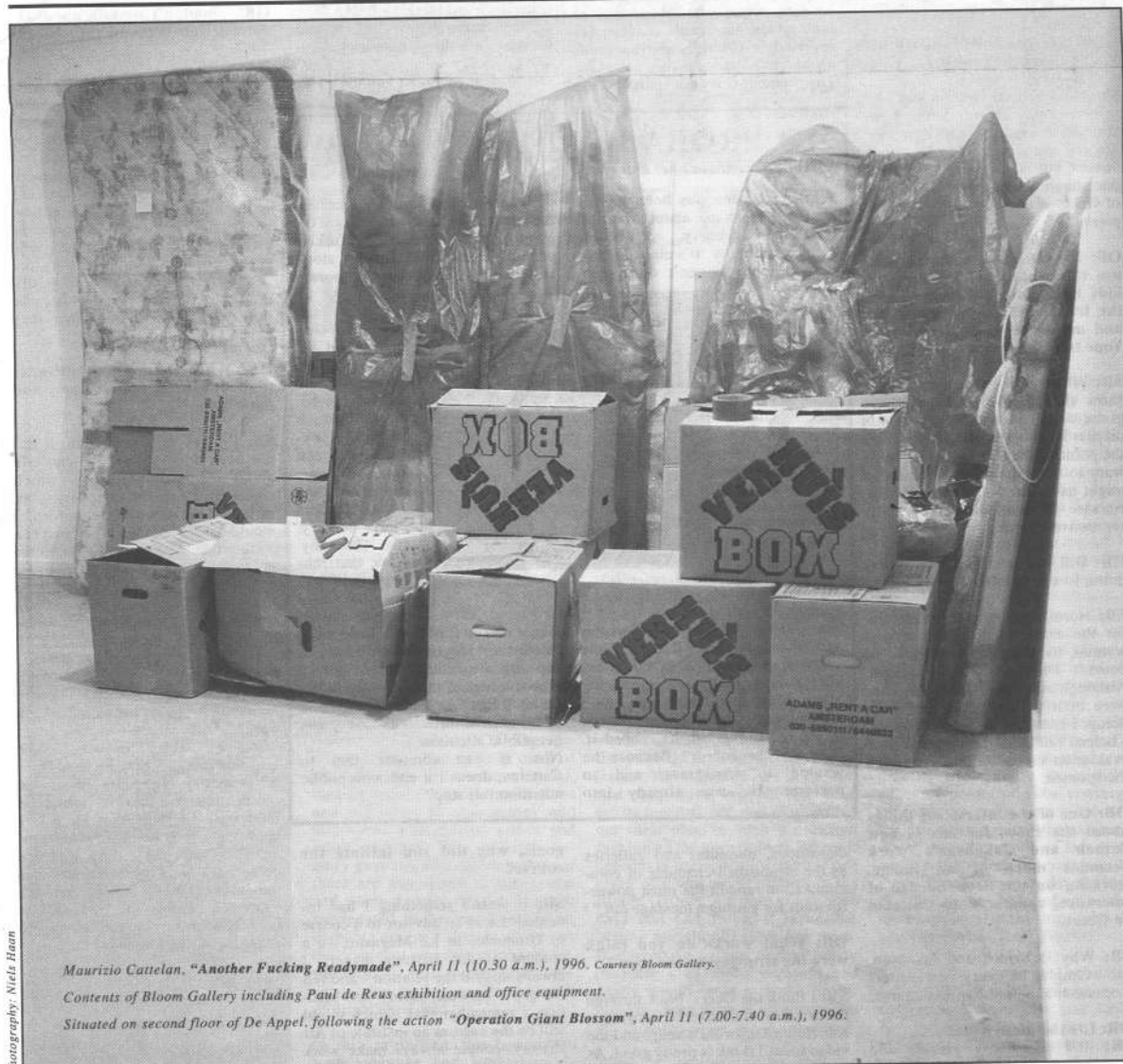
## THE TRICK OF REASON

By Henk Slager

In the introduction to his text "The Trick of Reason", the nineteenth-century German philosopher Hegel discusses the question of the relationship between the criminal and the artist. Hegel's position is clear. According to him, authentic artists cannot be but criminals and act accordingly. Hegel insists that the work of the artist is criminal since it revolts against authority of God, State and Society. Therefore all artists are criminals because they refuse to comply with, or are unable to conform to the prevailing law, order and morality. In Hegel's view, society should discipline artists by turning them into academic artists. Not until then will artists stop being intruders.

Thus, the nimbus of criminality hovers over all individuals, who do not only distinguish themselves from all others but also have the contours of intruders. What do they want? Who invited them? How should they be addressed? These are questions posed by the others, the so-called professional masters. However, the artist's individual life style and morality does not connect with the work created. What counts are the subjective-objective mental conditions for creating certain works of art.

Consequently, the creation of the work of art will entail a certain criminality. After all, the masterpiece is a piece of 'bravado' because of which the artist will defeat all rivals and chain them to the chariot and drag them, as meek dogs, through the triumphal arch of fame. This work of art, born out of resentment and hate, has the nature of a veiled and sublimated crime since it blocks off the road for all other artists. After all, these artists are doomed and damned necessarily to mere imitation or destruction.



Maurizio Cattelan, "Another Fucking Readymade", April 11 (10.30 a.m.), 1996. Courtesy Bloom Gallery.

Contents of Bloom Gallery including Paul de Reus exhibition and office equipment.

Situated on second floor of De Appel, following the action "Operation Giant Blossom", April 11 (7.00-7.40 a.m.), 1996.

## SASKIA BOS a chit chat with Otto Berchem

**Saskia Bos:** I have a lot of good things to say about the show. I've had it with all of the criticism. I have good things to say about the show, and the CRAP SHOOTER. Which is, I think, maybe just as important.

**Otto Berchem:** But Saskia, the question is - did you know?

**SB:** No, I didn't know.

**OB:** When did you find out?

**SB:** I was in Germany. I came back on Thursday, but I had a meeting outside of Amsterdam. I was called before the meeting. It must have been about 4:00 pm. It was Gerrie van Noord who called me ...

**OB:** Who also didn't know...

**SB:** Who also was not informed. She was totally confused, she said "I have to tell you something. They've broken into Bloom Gallery ... this is impossible. The police are involved" etc. I had this meeting, and knew I couldn't do anything, then I went to De Appel and we discussed the whole thing with Cattelan. What I wanted to hear were the content arguments, the real artistic reasons why he did it. He spoke about what I would say is appropriation, and the need to make that appropriation in reality, and the need to bring something into another space, from one space to another. I remember asking myself, over and over, why he had not written a letter to ask if he could bring the show from one place to another, why didn't he involve them consciously, willingly, knowingly. He said "no, because I had to transgress this line. I had to do something without their consent". It was the surprise that he was interested in. It was a pretty calm meeting, because I wanted it to be calm. The excitement of it was already big enough with the others. So we really discussed, for hours, about "why did you leave the note 'Don't worry. Everything is OK. You will see everything again soon', why didn't you leave another kind of note?"

Then I was shown the space, because I wanted to know what he would exhibit. First the curators wanted to show a photograph, but Cattelan wasn't interested in that, he wanted to show the ladder. The ladder he used to break into Bloom with. On Friday, the day after, I decided that - because I had to draw the line afterwards, as an institution, I had to say NO. This is a transgression that we don't condone. Although as a person, if I had been a critic, I could have thought about it in a different way. Maybe Cattelan should have codified his message better, if he had wanted it to be a 'tongue-in-cheek' piece.

**OB:** Did you have to protect the institution?

**SB:** I don't think I had to protect the institution, I had to BE the institution. I said "now I have to draw the line in retrospect" - because we hadn't discussed this in the curatorial course - like what would happen if we would do a robbery? They couldn't discuss it with me, because they knew I would have said no. So they couldn't. So they didn't.

**OB:** Wouldn't the ladder have been more interesting than a room with a newsclipping and a couple of hastily written statements taped to the wall?

**SB:** You can not say "we don't agree

Kendell Geers, "Title Withheld (Brick)", 1996



with this project", and at the same time give the artists a wink and say "nice little project". I would rather have an empty room. So it was a case of censoring the work, after the fact. If you were to compare this with the Fuchs project, or other projects, I was uninvolved, but I was completely aware. And I guided them through the process. With the Fuchs project, I saw it on the night before the opening, and ... I must say I was a little wary, weeks before, when the curators showed me the P.I.'s business card. I thought "isn't this a bit weird? Shouldn't this guy be more like James Bond, like invisible?"

**OB:** Have you been in touch with Fuchs about the project?

**SB:** No, I had said to him that I had some naughty curators around, and then I discussed that with him, like I always wondered if you should censor, but at the same time I said one shouldn't. In the end, this work of Geers is another form of portrait painting.

**OB:** Do you see the show as, I'll use this metaphor: leaving your kids home for the weekend with the fridge full, keys for the car, and money to go to the movies. Your trusting them.

**SB:** Which doesn't mean, with the show that they made, they were given *carte blanche*. They should discuss it with me, and I should see the point. If they would have said "I want to do a show of Jan Knap", I might have had problems with that, because the work has some really regressive imagery.

**OB:** Did you ever imagine things going to the point that they have?

**SB:** Normally I have responsibility for the artists, but in this case I wanted to take a step back, of course. They have invited them. Although all along I knew who they were inviting, what they had been doing. I knew about the brick piece. I helped facilitate the project of the evaluation of the building through the sponsor.

**OB:** One of the interesting things about the show, for me, is how Brinch and Jakobsen's work becomes more of an image, working on one level/border of tolerance, compared to Cattelan or Geers.

**SB:** Why is Brinch and Jakobsen, for example, in every newspaper? Because it's the most spectacular ...

**OB:** It's the most visual ...

**SB:** It's the most visual, and

therefore I also criticize their project because I think it's overly narrative. One wonders if there's a conscious disinterest in metaphor. I think Kendell Geers' brick through the window is the strongest of the 'broken works'. It relates to the street, it's a clear message, in one room, it's absolutely an icon for hate, or aggression towards an institution. It works that way for a lot of people. There's a clever argument by Haacke, when he's been attacked that he always does these things within institutions. About co-optation. "According to Haacke, co-optation occurs when the intentions with which our action is taken are reversed in practice, and one ends up serving the opposing interests. The problem is that in spite of these

works. Also, Jeroen Eisinga's room is pretty strong.

**OB:** In a way, Eisinga is removed from the show as a whole, he's the dark horse, the unknown in the dark room. He's the most autonomous part of the show... What were some of the reactions to CRAP SHOOT that you have gotten?

**SB:** I never would have thought that our 77 year old book keeper would break into tears (when he saw the smashed ticket booth). It was such a beautiful and emotional reaction. He said: "how could you do this?" He was crying, he said "maybe it has to do with my age ...". I was very moved by this, because it was a beautiful reaction against all cynicism, or pseudo Philistine reactions, to use your words, people standing up for the 'so - called silent majority', like this critic did. This was an authentic reaction by an old man who sees a lot of shit around in the world and thinks "why is this necessary?"

**OB:** Let me pick up on a point that was made by a critic: are you a monster maker?

**SB:** Do you remember that? He said "you're creating little monsters here". I said "I'm not interested in making clones", if I would be interested, then they would make different shows. They would make my shows. Which I can do. It's not the goal of my curatorial training. They do what they think is necessary, that's what I mean by guidance. That they present their way of seeing the contemporary situation, assessing what artists of their generation are thinking today. I can do that, through my eyes. I want them to do it through their eyes.

**OB:** You mentioned some of your

about artists that have already died because they cannot talk back to you. When I saw what was happening at Le Magasin, I thought "this is something that's really needed. It's a very bright idea." I applied in '91 to the Ministry to do such a course. I also think that it helps any institution that does it. If you were to talk to Nick Serota, at the Tate, why he does it together with the Royal College, he would give you the same answer as me. He'd say "it also challenges the curators that you have in your own institution". It makes everyone very much alive. This is good. This is a dialogue.

**OB:** How were you challenged by the curators of CRAP SHOOT? How do their positions about the role of the curator differ from yours?

**SB:** I think whatever generation you are working with, the curator should step back behind the artist. And let the artists be, and decide, and shine. Even if it's not so coherent. This is almost a theme show. I'm always a little bit wary of the 'theme show' because the individuality of the artists is always a little bit damaged by too much coherence in the show. He gets to be part of a group that maybe he doesn't want to be part of. On the contrary, the public, they're always very happy because they can understand why you did the show. I think also the critics, in the newspapers, they love coherent shows. It's like a show of landscape painting. We can criticize the show and say "how many sunsets can you have?" ... How many broken windows belong?

**OB:** Shouldn't we talk about the comparison between the 60s and 70s?

**SB:** Some newspaper critics seem to canonize the art of the 60s and 70s. Why? Because it's already in the art history books ... even though they don't understand it. They haven't witnessed, and they haven't experienced that. If you read what they write about now, I am sceptical about how they would have reacted then. I think in contrast to the courageous curators, because they are courageous, and the artists too, that the critics are the chickens because they lean on a history that they haven't lived.

**OB:** What about these attitudes that "it's been done before, and done better" ...

**SB:** I'm not of that opinion. It has not been done before. We can talk about a spiraling history, which comes back into the same areas, but this has not been done before. I would have wanted to have been at a lecture that Wim Beeren gave to the curators after the show opened. He came up with his magazine, made in 1969 about the *Op Losse Schroeven* exhibition. I'm amazed that those people said that this (CRAP SHOOT) was just like the 60s and the 70s. First: they (the curators) were not born yet. Also Wim Beeren laughed, he said "when were you born?" One said "68", the other said "71". His show was in '69. Can you imagine how he felt? He is 67 years old. He comes out of that 'from this, came this' which is modernism. I think that there is a spiraling cycle in history anyhow. Which is not a new story, that you come back into the same attitudes maybe every 30 years. Why not? It's happened before. 30 years back is the 60s with Fluxus, and another 30 years earlier you have Da Da.

## MO PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW

Saskia Bos continues her chit chat

While everyone has been getting bent out of shape about Maurizio Cattelan's robbery of Bloom Gallery, and how "it's all been done before", they haven't once mentioned the first Art robbery. Time to do some homework, Saskia Bos tells all about the work by Ulay ...

Saskia Bos: Ulay did this for two reasons. There was a painting by Spitzweg, who was Hitler's favorite painter. Spitzweg was the bourgeois painter, more than Bidermeyer. The subject matter was 'the poor poet'. It showed the unfortunate condition of the artist. Ulay thought that it was incredibly hypocritical that Hitler was so in love with this painting. Even though this is '74, not '34, he robbed it. Why did he rob it? Because he wanted to transgress, and to perform. He was already into

performance by then. He recorded the whole thing. He then brought the painting into the home of a Turkish person. That whole Turkish story, which now is so contemporary because of all the fires and events in Germany, had yet to happen. He already saw the tension between Turkish people working there, and that they were going to be the Jews of the late 20th century, in Germany. Now, that robbery, you can say, is very content based.

But it makes it maybe a little more interesting. Maybe he didn't have to rob it, he could have put a reproduction of that painting in the home. But he wanted public attention, and through a robbery you get public attention. Now if you compare that to Cattelan, doesn't it end with public attention full stop?



Maurizio Cattelan Photography: Otto Berchem

distortions, museums and galleries as the established channels of communication remain the most powerful tools for getting a message out."

**OB:** What works do you think were the strongest in the show?

**SB:** I think the Geers' brick through the window, the lowered doorways, and Halter/Gratwohl's soup, and the video toilet I think is pretty good. As

goals, why did you initiate the course?

**SB:** It wasn't something I had invented. I was an advisor to a course in Grenoble, in Le Magasin. As a student of Art History myself, I always missed the relation - and felt the gap - between theory and practice. I remember that, which might still be the case, at an institute of Art History, people always make work