

Find and Tell: Activating the Archive

Edited by
Pauline Gähwiler
Franziska Gödicke
Eva Sun Meier
Jakob Schäfermeyer
Sacha Toupance
Maurus Wirth





**Letzipark
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47°23'12.9"N
8°29'54.2"E**

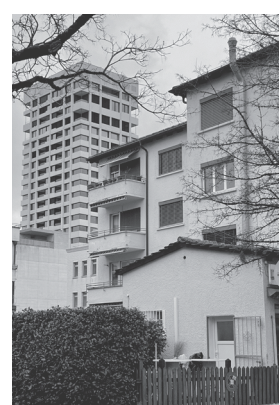
ABM-Haus

**Altstetterstr. 149
8048 Zürich
47°23'15.3"N
8°29'13.5"E**

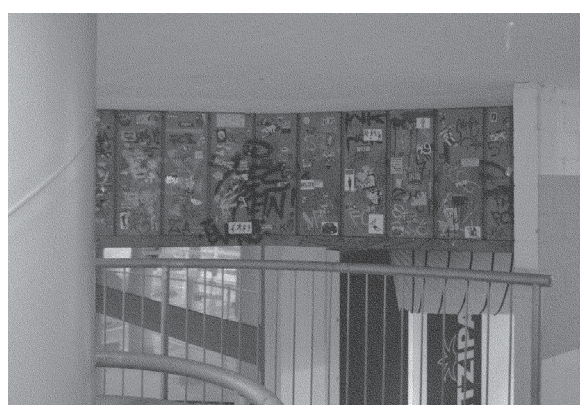
**Former
Koch-Areal**

**Flüelastr. 29
8047 Zürich
47°22'51.6"N
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Letzipark Einkaufszentrum

How is Culture Made, and Who is it For?	Editorial	04
Sleeping with the Enemy: On Participatory Art	Essay	06
Place and Actor: On Exhibition and Authorship	Essay	10
ABM-Haus	Site	12
Que collector? Collections, Exposition et Archive	Essay	16
Rote Plakate	Intervention	20
Gedanken zu einer Intervention	Essay	36
Tag und Nacht nur 1 Gedanke	Essay	40
Züri Isch Ois	Intervention	44
Archive Fever: On the Tyranny of the Spreadsheet	Essay	58
What Now?	Conversation	62

How is Culture Made, and Who is it For?

Re-iterating this question posed by Group Material already throughout the 80's and 90's, our group of six exposed itself to the urban realm. Carefully observing the area around Lindenplatz in Zürich-Altstetten, we confronted both the archive and the streets. After collecting tags, stickers, billboard slogans and graffiti on the streets, we started to research the discourses they addressed in the online archive of the Schweizerische Sozialarchiv. In doing so, numerous narratives and counter-narratives emerged from the margins. The 'Right to the City' quickly became an apparent theme. We pursued written and visual witnesses of subcultures like the FCZ ultras, the squatters of Koch-Areal and the story of a butcher opening a tea room (later a renowned rooftop restaurant) to serve his community. Instead of bringing all those debates to a museum or archive, we took the archive into the urban realm. As a result, we found ourselves commenting, contextualising, or adding to the given scenery – but never editing it. After documenting these interventions, they are archived now in this publication and might even find their way back to the database of the Schweizerische Sozialarchiv. We deem the cycle of our *modus operandi* to be closed for now, that is, until we observe a new debate that provokes us to comment.

However, we still discuss our *modus operandi*, the examined discourses, and our interventions as possible answers to our initial question. In this publication, all our different views are present in individual essays, a joint conversation, and between the lines of our interventions. Finally, both the immateriality of culture and the materiality of space is shaped by everyone. In the blurriness of the term itself, culture is the sum of all productive and reproductive human activity, construction and care, celebration and grudge, joint forces and individual fights. As a heterogeneous group, like Group Material, we are happy to contribute to and experience all of the above.



Part 1. The Value of Participatory Art

In the first part, the development of the artist association Group Material, founded in 1979, will be used to outline the possibilities of participatory art practices to create common value for the general public.

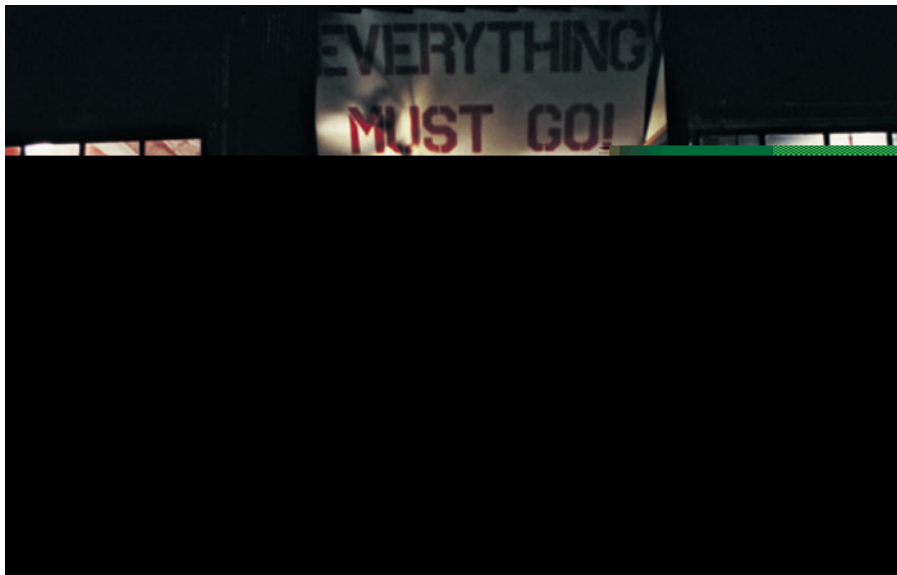
From the outset, Group Material challenges the exclusion of certain demographics and classes from participation in art in existing institutions. They also question the dominance of market logic in the art world. In this way, they look for ways in which art can become an agent for social communication and political change. In particular by involving artists, curators, teachers, working people and groups that are usually excluded and whose habitus is distant from the institutional art scene.

On September 20th, 1980, a press release was issued announcing the opening of a ground-floor art gallery (alternative space) called Group Material in Manhattan's Lower East Side. At the time, they were convinced that the space (an alternative gallery) would be an important part of establishing credibility and attracting the attention of the wider community. Motivated as well as financed, the gallery was initially run by 15 members consisting of former art students who worked normal day jobs. The gallery

- a ***Consumtion: Metaphor, Pastime, Necessity,*
by Group Material (1981), New York**
- b **Group Material Members Mundy McLaughlin and
Julie Ault Making Democracy Wall Posters**

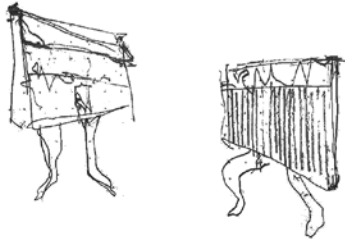
was intended to bridge the gap between everyday life and the elitist, aesthetically distinct existing art institutions. Several exhibitions were organized, in which a large number of diverse artists showed their works on socially relevant topics in group exhibitions such as *Food and Culture* (June 27 - July 11 1998), *Consumption* (March 21 - April 20 1981) or *The People's Choice* (January 9 - February 2 1981). In the latter, artifacts of the people living in the neighborhood were exhibited.

The financial resources were raised collectively, whereby the acquisition had to be generated elsewhere. A clear demarcation against the market logic, which, however, does not attempt to establish an alternative form of revenue generation. This raises the question of whether other value parameters might also be taken into account in this voluntary commitment, such as the establishment of one's own career, one's own artistic portfolio and so on. Value creation is therefore not only monetary but cultural and social capital also play a role. The inclusion of the neighborhood as a reflection of the general and non-artistic strata of the population shows the ideal of wanting to strengthen art as activism against existing exclusion and patterns of oppression by uniting diverse groups. The resulting question, however, again concerns



a





The following opinion piece argues that exhibition format and curatorial/artistic authorship are strongly related. In an analysis of Group Material's exhibition history, the significance of their shift from the format of the storefront to a more nomadic style of exhibiting is examined. In a second step, I define the Swiss Social Archive as an institution that enables public curatorial authorship. Finally, I demonstrate that our interventions in the public realm are experiments in exhibiting that invite new forms of authorship.

Part 1. The Storefront and the Streetfront *"We are not curators, we are artists who are representing, re-representing other people's work, in a context that is making ... 'a piece.'"*

In 1980, as a first step in spatializing their practice, Group Material opened their Lower Manhattan storefront. The storefront on 244 East 13th Street went on to host 9 exhibitions before closing in 1981, after 10 of Group Material's original 13 members had left the group. As Alison Green writes in *Citizen Artists: Group Material* (2011), "internal group discussions ... revealed there were those who wanted to be activists, those who wanted art careers and those — the ones who continued to work as Group Material — who were interested in activism and art." (Green, *Citizen Artists: Group Material*, 19).

The storefront on 244 East 13th Street was a formal act of spatializing their artistic practice in an attempt to align their inner bureaucracy with a physical place. The gesture of founding a space to exhibit their work echoes the institutional formality of a gallery or museum space. Group Material members rejected calling themselves curators in the traditional, institutionalized sense; their engagement in curatorial formats was inherently artistically experimental and inquisitive.

Tim Rollins described the storefront as "not a space but a place, a laboratory of our own." (Green, *Citizen Artists: Group Material*, 18) Despite their 'anti-curatorial', or rather in practice 'off-curatorial', approach to exhibition-making, the format of the storefront failed to align with their vision of exhibiting participatory art. The formats that followed included the street, the subway car, and the nomadic occupation of established museum and gallery spaces. These physical paradigms were more aligned with their manifesto.

Group Material's work *DA ZI BAOS* (1982) adopted the format of exhibition in public space. The billboard posters evoked critical positions on a range of topics simply through their arrangement next to each other and their placement in the public realm. By transforming the street into a museum, the randomness of city situations augmented the messages of the posters. New meanings were created through spontaneous, unplanned association; this was the art piece.

- a The Storefront, Lower Manhattan, New York
- b *DA ZI BAOS*, by Group Material (1982), Union Square, New York



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Part 2. The Swiss Social Archive and the Public as Curator

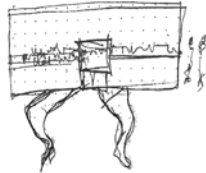


The Swiss Social Archive itself is simply an archive; fundamentally, it functions like any other archive: collecting, protecting, cataloging, organizing, publishing. The work is subjective, accepting nearly all material they receive, cataloging matter based on general terms and topics. This method of structuring the archive is, as a result, analogous to how the public interacts with the archive's material. The archive is a pool of information and records that is activated by the public's inquiries. Through this, the public gains a new role: that of the curator.

Harald Szeemann, the curator of the exhibition *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) at Kunsthalle Bern, questioned the autonomy of the curator. Through this exhibition, he novelized the image of the "authorial curator as an autonomous and creative producer of culture, who organized exhibitions independently of institutions." (Richter, *Artists and Curators as Authors*)

Szeemann questioned the power of the institution as a "producer of culture" by placing himself, as a curator, in its stead. His position provides further insight into the authorial mechanics of the SSA. In the case of the Archive, the institution acts as a collector and platform. The curatorial authorship belongs to the public. Constellations between documents, arranged according to the SSA visitors' respective agendas, are, in themselves, the exhibitions that the institution enables. In this case, the platform lends curatorial authorship to the public.

Part 3. Experiments in Exhibiting that Invite New Authors



Our interventions at Koch-Areal and Letzipark can be seen as experiments into what happens when the exhibition platform is transplanted to the public realm. In the case of Koch-Areal, the act of curating our site, laden with discussions around occupation vs. development projects, and our findings from the SSA, further demonstrates that the format of the exhibition invites new understandings of authorship.

Like Szeemann's work at the Kunsthalle Bern, the exhibition evolves from exhibiting works to exhibiting the exhibition itself. What becomes interesting in this redefinition of the exhibition is that the process of producing the exhibition is put into focus. With this attention to process, the platform and space in which the exhibition takes place becomes pivotally important. There exists the potential to use the preconditions of the space in a way that aligns with the curatorial or artistic authorship, instead of adopting the contextually-anonymous "white cube" exhibition style.

By questioning the format and place of exhibition, we automatically begin to reassess the role of the author. The two are, hence, intrinsically linked. In creating more public forms of exhibiting, the dynamics and definitions of artist/curator/spectator become malleable, and new authors are invited.

- c *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, by Harald Szeemann (1969), Kunsthalle Bern, Bern
- d *Rote Plakate*, by Pauline Gähwiler, Eva Sun Meier, Sacha Toupance (2024), Koch-Areal, Zürich



c



d

schweizer du bist auch europäer

Heute
Donnerstag, 20. April, 20.15 Uhr,
Auditorium Maximum der ETH

Conférence publique
de M. Raymond, Aron
professeur à la Sorbonne, Paris:

Perspectives européennes des années 1960

(Dieser Vortrag tritt an die Stelle des in unserem Flugblatt angekündigten Doppelreferates der Herren Prof. L. Erhard und Minister Dr. H. Schaffner, das infolge unerwarteter Verhinderung des deutschen Bundeswirtschaftsministers ausfallen muß)

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wieder mit PD Frau Dr. Sene (Archäologin und Kunsthistorikerin)

Meteoraklöster Griechenland
vom 20. Mai bis Juni, 1965
mit Hrn. Prof. Dr. E. Schäfer, Göttingen

Jug. Makedonien
vom 2.-18. Juni
mit Frau Dr. H. Christoffel, Kunsthistorikerin, Freiburg

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20.15 Uhr, im Zunfthaus zur
«Zürcherleuten», Limmattal 40,
Zürich 1

spricht über diese grundsätzliche Frage:
Dr. iur. Hans W. Kopp (Zürich)

Jedermann ist freundlich eingeladen

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STS Société Turco-Suisse

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vom 12.-28. Mai
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a

a The Binder Family Announces the Closing of the Tea Room Binder, Ad-page, NZZ, 1961

b Iconic Design of the ABM-Warenhaus by Atelier Ernst und Ursula Hiestand, 1963

c Restaurant Zum Ochsen, ca. 1925

d Tea Room Binder, ca. 1961

e ABM and Zürich's First Rooftop Restaurant, Dachrestaurant Binder, ca. 1962



b

1907 Restaurant Zur Schmitte
 1919 Restaurant Zum Ochsen
 1947 Tea Room Binder
 1960 Demolition and New Construction
 1961 ABM and Dachrestaurant Binder
 1969 Dachrestaurant changes Tenant
 1977 Renovation of the Dachrestaurant
 1980 Zia Theresa
 2010 SportXX
 2015 Dosenbach
 2023 – Vacant

run by fam. Binder, Butchers
 run by fam. Binder, Butchers
 run by fam. Binder, Butchers
 planned by Karl A. Zink, Architect
 run by ABM fam. Binder, Butchers
 run by Arnold and Erike Kielkopf-Merz
 planned by Felix Saladin, Designer
 run by Karl Binder Jr.
 run by Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund
 run by Deichmann SE



c



d



e



f

f	2024	Current Condition, Altstetterstrasse 149/ Badenerstrasse 669
g	2023	Current Condition, Staircase
h	2023	Current Condition, Rooftop Terrace
i	2024	Current Condition, Ground Floor, Altstetterstrasse 149



g



h

The discourse around the property Altstetterstrasse 149 stems from contradictions about its well-connected, strategic location in Altstetten yet state of its vacancy. A feasibility study was conducted by Halter AG in 2015 and encompassed investigations into how the empty building could be repurposed more profitably. The study was commissioned by LiB-AG and considered scenarios that included maintainable, renovation, and demolition. The expected programs for the building have, until now, remained as residential and retail, yet the property lies unchanged in its state of vacancy since 2023. Its intriguing location yet future shrouded in indecision invites us to consider new ways in which it can be activated.



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Nous interrogeons dans ce texte notre parcours à travers le matériel artistique du collectif Group Material qui constitue notre objet d'étude, et la manière dont, en nous plongeant dans leurs archives et en collectant ce qui nous intéressait, nous avons composé la base d'une recherche qui nous a incité à intervenir nous-mêmes en tant que collectif sur le territoire public zurichois.

Dans les premières minutes du documentaire *Les statues meurent aussi* réalisé par Alain Resnais, Chris Marker et Ghislain Cloquet diffusé en 1953, la caméra prend soudainement la place de l'œuvre exposée dans un musée. Le point de vue est celui de l'objet, placé sous une vitrine, et nous voyons les visiteurs et visiteuses nous découvrir et nous contempler. Le décentrement opéré par la caméra est accompagné d'un discours qui propose une même opération : là où nous voyons l'objet décontextualisé et isolé sous sa vitrine comme étant « pittoresque », l'artiste l'a composé comme vecteur de sens et capturé dans un réseau de significations propre à sa culture. Cette compréhension nous échappe. Une transformation s'opère. Lorsque le régime de visibilité de l'objet est transformé, la lecture que nous pouvons en faire se déforme. Quelque chose s'insère dans la médiation entre nous, spectateur-trices, et l'objet regardé, de sorte que notre façon d'engager avec lui se trouve conditionné par sa mise en scène.

Cette tension se trouve au centre de certaines propositions du collectif Group Material. Dans l'exposition *Americana* (1985) ce sont des objets issus de la culture et de la consommation de masse qui couvrent les murs de la galerie et occupent l'espace d'exposition. Le programme est un travail précis de curation, décontextualisation, composition et juxtaposition. En plus de ces transformations des régimes de visibilité de ces objets banals, une couche de critique sociale s'ajoute par une tension provoquée par ce travail d'articulation. Une exposition précédente avait déjà démontré la force de ce travail de juxtaposition. L'exposition *The People's Choice - Arroz con Mango* (1981) invitait cette fois les habitant-e-s du quartier à participer à la composition. « We would like to show things that might not usually find their way into an art gallery : the things that you personally find beautiful, the objects that you keep for your own pleasure, the objects that have meaning for you, your family and your friends. (...) If there is a story about your object, write it down and we will display it along with the thing you have chosen to show », précisait le tract d'invitation distribué au voisinage de la 13th Street, où se situe la galerie d'exposition du collectif. Cette fois, ce sont des objets qui ont une histoire personnelle, qui existent dans un lien sentimental et émotionnel avec leur possesseur-euse ; que ce soit un rapport de souvenir, de collection ou de domesticité. Ces artefacts sont sortis d'une forme de banalité et deviennent des enjeux d'intérêt et de regard public.

- a *Les statues meurent aussi*, directed by Alain Resnais, Chris Marker and Ghislain Cloquet (1953), Still
- b *Americana*, by Group Material (1985), Whitney Museum, New York

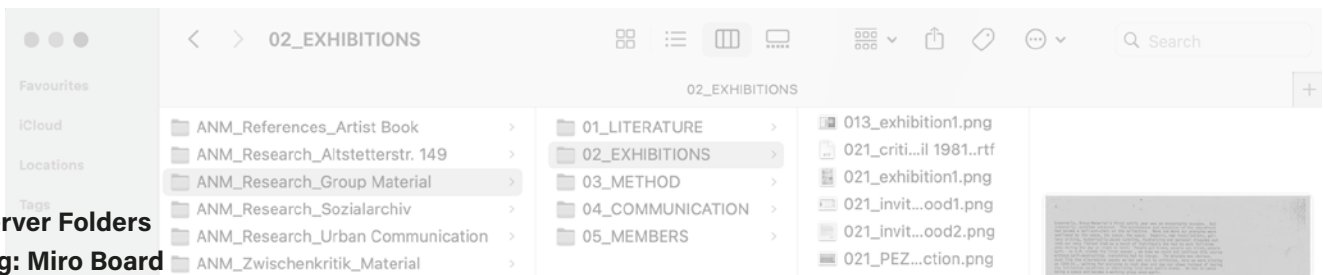


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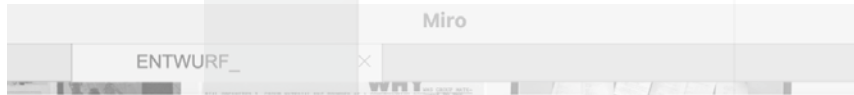


b

c



c Filing: Server Folders
d Collecting: Miro Board
e Noting: Exhibition Index



000_exhibition index

Open with TextEdit

010_Group Material opens storefront at 244 E. 13th Street, Lower East Side, 1980.

011."Inaugural Exhibition", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, oct. 4-27, 1980.

012."The Salon Election of '80", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, nov. 4-11, 1980.

013."ALIENATION", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, nov. 22-dec. 21, 1980.

021."The People's Choice (Arroz con Mango)", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, jan. 10-feb. 1, 1981.

022."It's a Gender Show", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, feb. 14-mar. 9, 1981.

023."Revolting Music", The Machinist's Union Hall, New York, march 17, 1981.

024."Consumption: Metaphor, Pastime, Necessity", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, march 21-april 20, 1981.

025."Facere/Fascis", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, may 2-june 4, 1981.

026."Atlanta: An Emergency Exhibition", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, june 14-30, 1981.

027."Eat This Show", Group Material, 244 E. 13th Street, New York, july 11, 1981.

028."Enthusiasm!", Group Material Headquarters, 132 E. 26th street, New York, oct. 31-nov. 28, 1981.

029."M5", Interior bus advertisements, Fifth Avenue bus lines, New York, dec. 10 1981-jan. 10 1982.

031."DA ZI BAOS", 14th Street and Park Avenue South, Union Square, New York, apr. 16, 1982.

032."Works on Newspaper", Group Material Headquarters, 132 E. 26th Street, New York, march 25-may 1, 1982.

033."Primer (for Raymond Williams)", Artists Space, 105 Hudson Street, New York, may 29-july 17, 1982.

034."Luchari: An Exhibition for the People of Central America", Taller Latinoamericano/The Latin American Workshop, Inc., New York, june 19-july 9, 1982.

035."Revolutionary Fine Arts", Taller Latinoamericano, New York, apr. 14, 1982.

041."Subculture", Interior advertisements, IRT subway trains, New York. Concurrent exhibition held at Taller Latinoamericano, New York, sept. 1-30, 1983.

051."Timeline: A Chronicle of U.S. Intervention in Central and Latin America", P.S.1, New York, jan. 11-feb. 8, 1984.

061."A.D.: Christian Influence in Contemporary Culture", Work, New York, jan. 11-feb. 8, 1985.

062."Americana", 1985 Whitney Biennial, lobby gallery, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, march 21-june 9, 1985.

063."Democracy Wall", Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, Wales, apr. 27-may 25, 1985.

064."MASS", various locations: Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles; Artspace, Sydney Australia, and others, 1985-1986.

071."Messages to Washington", Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC, sept. 1-oct. 12, 1985.

072."Alarm Clock", "The Other America", Royal Festival Hall, London, nov. 7-dec. 19, 1985.

081."Liberty & Justice", Alternative Museum, 17 White Street, New York, feb. 22-mar. 22, 1986.

082."Arts and Leisure", The Kitchen, 519 W. 19th Street, New York, may 24-june 14, 1986.

091."Resistance (Anti-Baudrillard)", White Columns, 325 Spring Street, New York, feb. 6-28, 1987.

092."The Castle", "documents 8", Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, june 12-sept. 20, 1987.

093."Constitution", The Temple Gallery, Temple University, Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, oct. 1-nov. 14, 1987.

101."Inserts", Advertising supplement to the Sunday New York Times, may 22, 1988.

102."Democracy", Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster Street, New York, sept. 1988-jan. 1989.

103."Democracy: Education", Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster Street, New York, sept. 15-oct. 8, 1988.

104."Democracy: Politics and Election", Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster Street, New York, oct. 15-nov. 12, 1988.

105."Democracy: Cultural Participation", Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster Street, New York, nov. 19-dec. 10, 1988.

106."Democracy: AIDS and Democracy: A Case Study", Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster Street, New York, dec. 19, 1988-jan. 14, 1989.

111."AIDS & Democracy" aka "Elegy", Vollbild AIDS, RealismusStudio, Neue Gesellschaft fur Bildende Kunst (NGBK), Berlin, dec. 16, 1988-feb. 13, 1989.

112."Unisex", The Center Show, The Lesbian and Gay Community Center, New York, june 1-dec. 1, 1989.

113."Shopping Bag", Shopping bags distributed in local shops and department stores, D&S Ausstellung, Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany, oct. 14-nov. 26, 1989.

114."AIDS Timeline", Matrix Gallery, University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, nov. 11, 1989-jan. 28, 1990.

121."Your Message Here", Billboard project, Collaboration with Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago, feb. 23-mar. 30, 1990.

122."Democracy Poll", Insert in Der Togesspiegel, U-Bahn station, billboards, and an electronic billboard, RealismusStudio, Neue Gesellschaft fur Bildende Kunst (NGBK), Berlin, june 26-july 5, 1990.

123."AIDS & Insurance", Exterior bus advertisement, sponsored by Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT, sept. 1-30, 1990.

124."AIDS Timeline", Matrix Gallery, Wadsworth Athanaeum, Hartford, CT, sept. 30-nov. 18, 1990.

125."Collaboration" aka "Economics: Oberlin Project", "Social Studies: 4+4 Young Americans", The Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, oct. 26, 1990-jan. 13, 1991.

126."AIDS Timeline" (New York City 1991), 1991 Whitney Biennial, lobby gallery, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, apr. 19-june 23, 1991.

127."Cash Prize", Advertisements in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, In Public: Seattle 1991, The Seattle Arts Commission, Seattle, Washington, dec. 17-20, 1991.

131."Tomorrow", Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, CA, oct. 8-dec. 31, 1993.

141."Democracy Wall", In And Out Of Place, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, oct. 19, 1993-jan. 23, 1994.

151."Market", Kunstverein München, Munich, may 6-june 18, 1995.

161."Program", Three Rivers Arts Festival, Pittsburgh, PA, june 7-23, 1996.

191."AIDS Timeline", University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, nov.11 1989-jan. 28 1990.

d

e

commenting

documenting

archiving

17

Ces réflexions ont constitué le cadre de notre approche. D'un côté, la découverte de Group Material nous a confronté à un travail d'archivage discontinu, irrégulier et parfois contradictoire que nous pouvons résumer en deux citations de Julie Ault, membre de Group Material qui s'est attelée des années plus tard à cette tâche monstrueuse et qui en décrit les principaux défis. La première questionne directement la nécessité d'une archive et le potentiel d'actualisation qu'elle permet : « the archive has the capacity to construct relationships between Group Material present and future » (Ault, ed., *Show And Tell: A Chronicle Of Group Material*, 211). La seconde anihile toute possibilité d'une archive neutre ou objective : « Looking back, I realise while telling the story of Group Material these past years I have unwittingly told some lies » (Ault, *Remembering and Forgetting in the Archive*, 265). Dans nos recherches, nous avons éprouvé ces deux affirmations, à la fois parce que nous trouvions des documents qui se contredisaient ou des pistes qui ne menaient nulle part, mais également parce que le matériel que nous collections avait une force critique puissante dont l'écho était encore suffisamment intense pour nous diriger vers la direction d'une action dans l'espace public qui constituerait notre travail de recherche. Les Sozial Archiv représentaient un prétexte parfait pour constituer nos collections. En parcourant cet outil de recherche, nous avions une bibliothèque riche que nous pouvions orienter à notre guise. C'est dans cette tension entre un fond de données solides et une activité artistique de référence que nous avons commencé à composer nos interventions. Les deux interventions suivent ce même principe de sortir des documents des Sozial Archiv et de les exposer publiquement. En nous prêtant à ce jeu de rôle et en nous organisant à la manière de Group Material, nous avons fini par composer nos propres collections et constituer nos propres archives - elles aussi contradictoires, contenant des pistes abandonnées et des variantes de projet inexplorées.






















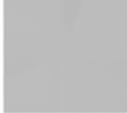

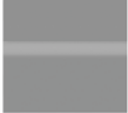

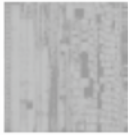




- f** ***The People's Choice (Arroz con Mango)*, by Group Material (1981), 13th Street, New York**
g **Digital Asset Management: Adobe Bridge**





f


HIVES


Content: ARCHIVES +


					
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Preview

Publish



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The Koch-Areal is an area of around 30'000 square metres in the Altstetten region. It used to belong to the commercial firm Koch Wärme AG before it was bought by UBS and was left empty for years. As early as 2013, first forms of occupation of the abandoned site were organized, almost immediately putting pressure on the city, which quickly bought the land for 70 million Swiss francs. Over the years, the occupations developed into organisations led by various activist collectives active in Zürich. Between 100 and 150 regular occupiers have been active on the site in recent years, organizing various events that have welcomed a large number of visitors: cinema, exhibitions, bicycle repairs, workshops, concerts, cultural and festive events. The occupying groups formulated political and utopian demands. Since 2018, Zürich's bourgeois parties have organized themselves to oppose the situation: FDP, SVP and the former CVP, now "Die Mitte", have developed an initiative to put pressure on the city to sell the site once again and plan a project to bring the current occupation to an end. The city council eventually gave in and a proposal was put forward and approved by the Zürich electorate with 72.2 per cent. In February 2023, after years of alternative history, a massive deployment of approximately one hundred police officers, fire engines, a dozen vans and a helicopter took over the Koch site. A few weeks later, demolition work began. By 2026, social housing and a commercial building in the form of a 70-meter high tower block will take over the site, a project being driven forward by Green City Zürich, two cooperatives and a property developer.



a



b



c

a	April 2022	Occupied Koch	Koch-Areal, Zürich
b	March 2023	Construction Site	Former Koch-Areal, Zürich
c	1989-1990	AIDS Timeline Exhibition	MATRIX Gallery, University of California



MELE





Bub



The site is now undergoing construction work. Media attention to the occupation is waning and part of the press is struggling to identify new occupation activities, lest it be concluded that the takeover of the Koch by the public authorities signalled the end of such large-scale occupations in Zürich.

Today, the construction site of the Koch is surrounded by high walls made of panels with "No trespassing" signs posted everywhere. Part of the fencing has already been replaced by colored boards in response to the frequent graffiti. On the south-east side of the site, there is still an open strip of white boards with a tag "VERDRÄNGUNG HAT VIELE GESICHTER GESICHTER." An electrical distribution box from the construction site has been placed in front of the graffiti, partially obscuring the word GESICHTER. We intervene in this dialogue. In the same process of superimposition, our intervention is added as a new layer, in response to the phrase as well as the act of obscuring it. *The exhibition AIDS: Timeline* (1989) by Group Material appears to us as a reference, with the wooden security barrier in front of the panels serving as a horizontal marker and graphic reference for the spatial arrangement of our intervention. We researched the history of occupations and spatial revolts in Zürich. Using the Social Archive, we designed a banner that is wrapped around the box to reveal part of what the phrase was referring to: *Verdrängung hat viele Gesichter*.

researching



N O P Q R S T U V W

02



03



06



Suchbegriff

mehr Suchoptionen... | Hilfe

Suchen

Titel

a

- a Poster Template, Following the Search Mask of the Schweizerische Sozialarchiv
- b Rote Plakate, Final Result



b













Ein Einblick in die Gedanken und Ängste bei der Ausführung einer Intervention im öffentlichen Raum. Welche Ängste haben wir? Welche Gedanken machen wir uns, wenn wir denken, etwas zu tun, was gegen die 'Regeln' verstösst?

**5:59 Uhr, 11. März 2024
Tram 2, Zürich**

Ich sitze im Tram und beobachte die beiden Männer gegenüber von mir. Sie tragen Arbeitskleidung. *Arbeiten sie auf der Baustelle am Koch-Areal? Gehen Sie jetzt zur Arbeit? Sind wir zu spät? Wahrscheinlich steht in meinem Gesicht geschrieben, was wir vorhaben. Jeden Moment werden sie mich darauf ansprechen.* Ich erreiche meine Endstation. Ich muss hier aussteigen. *Werden sie mir folgen? Laufen wir dann zusammen zur Baustelle? Dort werden sie mich sicher festhalten und die Polizei rufen. Ich werde festgenommen und muss eine Busse bezahlen, die so hoch ist, dass ich meine Miete nicht mehr bezahlen kann. Ich werde aus meiner WG ausziehen und wieder bei meinen Eltern wohnen müssen.*

Doch die beiden Arbeiter steigen nicht aus. Sie fahren weiter und ich fliege nicht auf. *Noch nicht.* Ich überquere schnellen Schrittes den Fussgängerstreifen und biege in die nächste Strasse. Dabei gehe ich nicht auf direktem Weg zum vereinbarten Platz. *Wenn mich die Polizei bereits beobachtet, ist das doch weniger auffällig. Oder?* Langsam dämmert es und ich ziehe mir die Kapuze tiefer ins Gesicht. *Soll ich die Kapuze besser absetzen? Es regnet nicht. Ist das nicht zu auffällig, wenn ich mir die Kapuze ins Gesicht ziehe? Gibt es viele Überwachungskameras in Zürich? Die Jacke ist mir ohnehin zu gross. Ich habe keine dunklen Jacken und musste mir eine ausleihen. Eine helle Jacke ist viel zu auffällig, oder?*

**6:15 Uhr, 11. März 2024
Anemonenstrasse 42, Zürich**

Ich komme am vereinbarten Treffpunkt an. *Sind die Anderen schon hier?* Die Anderen sind noch nicht eingetroffen. Ich stelle mich in einer Seitenstrasse neben einem Hauseingang. Von hier kann ich den Ort unserer Intervention gut beobachten. Er befindet sich direkt neben einem der Eingänge zur Baustelle. Auf der gegenüberliegenden Strassenseite hat es ein Kletter-Gym, in dem die Putzmannschaft gerade ihre letzten Runden dreht. Die Dämmerung setzt nun immer stärker ein. Während ich warte und beobachte, wie die Baustelle langsam erwacht, wird der Tag allmählich klarer. *Die ganze Woche hatten wir schlechtes Wetter und ausgerechnet heute haben wir strahlenden Sonnenschein. Warum kann es nicht bewölkt sein?* Die ersten Lastwagen biegen in die Einfahrt, die Arbeiter klettern auf die Krane und die Dachdecker steigen auf die Leitern. *Was für ein schlechtes Timing wir uns ausgesucht haben. Wir dachten wirklich, dass die Arbeit auf der Baustelle erst später anfangen würde. Nun befinden wir uns zwischen Putzpersonal, die ihren Tag beenden und Bauarbeitern, die ihren Tag beginnen. Wir hätten die Aktion von gestern doch nicht auf heute verschieben sollen. Aber gestern war der Regen doch zu stark. Das Papier hätte sicherlich nicht gehalten.* Immer wieder fährt ein Fahrradfahrer an mir vorbei oder ein Fussgänger läuft den Bauzaun entlang zur Tramhaltestelle. *Gehen die Leute wirklich so früh zur Arbeit?*

6:30 Uhr, 11. März 2024
Bauzaun Koch-Areal, Zürich

Die andern sind nun auch am Koch-Areal eingetroffen. Schnell verteilen wir die Aufgaben. Eine*r trägt den Sprühkleber auf (ich sprühe), eine*r klebt die Blätter auf die Wand und eine*r filmt das Ganze. *Sollen wir die Aktion auf später verschieben? Wenn es dunkel ist, fühle ich mich vielleicht sicherer. Jetzt könnte uns jederzeit jemand sehen. Nein, wir ziehen es durch, wir können es nicht nochmals verschieben. Ausserdem regnet es heute Abend wieder. Gut, abgemacht und nun los.* Die Sonne ist bereits aufgegangen und die Baustelle ist mittlerweile in vollem Gange. *Von wegen, die Baustelle beginnt erst um 8 Uhr, damit die Anwohner nicht geweckt werden. So stark wie die Strasse befahren ist, fühlt es sich an, als hätten sie sich alle hier versammelt, um uns zuzuschauen.* Zögerlich stelle ich mich vor den Bauzaun und nehme meinen Mut zusammen. Und dann geht es plötzlich ganz leicht. Zuerst wische ich mit einem Küchentuch die Oberfläche trocken und sprühe den Kleber auf die weisse Oberfläche. Neben mir werden die roten und weißen Blätter abwechselnd aufgeklebt. Immer wieder schaue ich über die Schulter, und vergewissere mich, dass niemand kommt. *Hat jemand die Polizei schon gerufen? Werden die Bauarbeiter aus der Baustelle kommen und uns zur Rede stellen? Die Bilder sind so schräg, sollen wir nochmals von vorne anfangen?*

6:33 Uhr, 11. März 2024
Flüelastrasse, Zürich

Niemand kommt. *Niemand scheint sich um uns zu kümmern.* Schnell sind wir fertig und packen unsere Sachen zusammen. Erst auf dem Rückweg zum Studio beginnen wir wieder miteinander zu reden. Jeder von uns ist erleichtert, dass es vorbei ist. „Zum Glück haben wir es nicht noch einmal verschoben“, sagt jemand. „Ja, es ist gut, dass wir es jetzt durchgezogen haben“, stimmt jemand anderes zu. Die Beklommenheit, die uns alle erfasst hatte, fällt langsam von uns ab und wir reden darüber, wie albern unsere Ängste doch eigentlich waren. „Eigentlich schon sehr naiv, dass wir dachten, dass die Baustelle erst um 8 Uhr anfängt.“ „Ich hatte solche Angst am Anfang, ich musste mich die ganze Zeit umschaun.“ „Ja, ich auch! Ich denke auf dem Video hört man wie sage: 'Achtung ein Auto!'" „Letztendlich hat es wohl niemanden interessiert, was wir gemacht haben.“ *Eigentlich war es sogar ganz lustig.* Ich fühle mich frei. Ja, fast schon beflügelt. *Vielleicht habe ich mir zu viele Gedanken gemacht. Würde die Polizei überhaupt Leute festnehmen, die Bauzäune beschädigen? Im Grunde genommen war es doch kein Vandalismus, oder? Vielleicht hätte ich sogar Lust, so etwas gleich noch einmal zu tun.*



SITE CONTROL PROTOCOL

DATE / TIME	ALTERATIONS OBSERVED	SIGNATURE
11.3. / 7:36	Just finished posting, suspicious construction workers, wet boards	lcr
11.3. / 8:29	No changes, man took photo	fan
12.3. - 12:41	windy & some rain today, no changes	ST
13.3. - 9:12	RIPPED CORNER MIDDLE OF BAND	FG
14.3. / 14:11	Quiet on construction site, Minimum climber asked about posters	guc
15.3. / 19:53	NO CHANGES	FG
16.3. / 20:21	ripped poster → half missing → ripped away?	ST
17.3. / 10:29	Wet & 3 posters peeling	EH
19.3. - 17:45	while taking photo, old man asked about project, seemed critical	ST
21.3. / 16:03	SUSPICIOUS LOOKS FROM CONSTRUCTION WORKERS LEAVING	FG
22.3. / 7:51	Logging around site, no changes	lcr
24. / 15:51	TOTAL OF 2 POSTERS MISSING, 6 PEELING	ST



a

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| a | FCZ Main Stickers | Badenerstrasse 550 |
| b | FCZ Sub-Group Stickers | Badenerstrasse 437 |



b

As one strolls through the streets of Zürich and lets the gaze drift naturally, one is quickly drawn to the tags, graffitis, and stickers that cover public surfaces. They vary in form and scale, representing graffiti crews, serve as conduits for political messages, and as platforms for advertising projects. Yet amidst this diversity, one motif stands out prominently: the bold letters FCZ. Zürich's graffiti scene appears to be heavily influenced by the local football club.

This dominance is palpable when walking through the streets surrounding the Letzigrund Stadium and extends throughout the city as a whole, which is somewhat surprising. Despite the club's relatively small significance in daily life compared to, for instance, FC Basel, which holds more sway in political and urban life, FCZ's presence is ubiquitous on every street. While there may be other graffiti crews in Zürich that impress with the scale and artistic complexity of their pieces, none rival the sheer volume attributed to FCZ. Even political messages and movements are far less prominent than the sports club. There are few facades that have been spared from the spray cans of the FCZ fans. Next to the larger scale throw-ups and tags, the ubiquitous abbreviation adorns dustbins, lantern posts, letterboxes, and street signs in the form of stickers. One reason behind the proliferation of FCZ is the regular procession of the Südkurve through the city en route to the stadium before matches. In the anonymity of the crowd,

comprised mainly of young men sporting identical black FCZ jackets, jeans, and white Reeboks, they can easily leave behind hundreds of tags in broad daylight, frequently without facing consequences. Through graffiti, stencils, and stickers, opposing fans as well as residents of their own city are made aware of which club and which group dominates. But the street expression also goes beyond mere territorial marking and adheres to certain artistic standards.

From gang-related territorial claims to pieces displaying artistic finesse, public surfaces are adorned with FCZ's triumph over the city, a victory that has persisted for some years. The rivalry between Zürich's two city clubs, FC Zürich and Grasshoppers, is largely dominated by FCZ, to the extent that any manifestation of GC's fanbase within city limits is swiftly erased by FCZ supporters. The GC fanbase is mostly based in the agglomeration of Zürich. GC's waning popularity among the youth, precipitated by the club's relocation to Niederhasli, the lack of an own stadium and its sale to a Chinese company, is mirrored on the streets by the FCZ fans with the slogan "Züri isch ois".

The FCZ ultra scene, generally associated with the Südkurve, isn't easy to grasp or generalise. Initially, the club was prominent among the working class of Zürich, while GC was known to be the richer and more successful club. With a change of management in 2006, the FCZ was heavily commercialised and able to win the Swiss Championship several times again. Today, the football club and its ultra scene are represented through various forms and sub-groups. Apart from the five official FCZ fan clubs—Letzi, Tigers, 1896, Region Solothurn, and Letzi Junxx—there exists an unknown number of ultra subgroups congregating in the Südkurve. The current fan scenes emerged from a movement that established itself in the stands of Swiss stadiums around the turn of the millennium. Driven by a fascination for the Italian and South American fan scenes, characterised by enduring chants, choreographies, and flaming distress flares. These groups, with names like Boys, Paradox, 43, k4, Reservoir Dogs, Locoz, Vecchia Brigata, Lochergut-Jungs, Outcast Society (OCS), Prolls, Anthrax, or Hallygally, vary in organisation and demography. During each

game, approximately 5'000-6'000 individuals populate the multi-layered Südkurve. However, despite sharing analog attributes such as age, clothing, hairstyle, and sports affinity, their behaviours and motivations can differ significantly. There are those who actively seek violent confrontations with like-minded groups of opposing clubs. There are also those who prefer to focus on creating new songs and choreographies. But most people simply just stand in the Südkurve because they enjoy the atmosphere and want to cheer their club on. In recent years, the Südkurve has attracted many young people, offering intense emotions and a sense of belonging at a relatively low cost—something that has become a rarity in Zürich. Consequently, the Südkurve has evolved into the largest youth center in the entire canton. The growing popularity of the ultra scene has posed some challenges, particularly as it represents the most radical form of fandom. Many young fans have bypassed the traditional socialisation process of becoming a fan, which typically involves attending games with parents during childhood. Consequently, there has been an influx of new fans that the older, more seasoned supporters struggle to control. This demographic, aged 15-25, often exhibits more radical and violent tendencies, leading to frequent confrontations with police and rival clubs. While hooliganism and violence has a long tradition in football, the new fans have disregarded unwritten rules and norms, leading to breaches of codes of honour and crossing of boundaries, even involving non-ultra fans in their violence.



c

The ultras of the Südkurve not only express their passion for FCZ, but they also experience the city of Zürich with an intense feeling of pride, love, dedication and belonging. The club and the city merge into a symbiosis, the connection of which is inseparable for the ultra group. Zürich sets the pace that the ultras pick up, allowing them to unleash it freely while living out their passion in the stadium. Urban influences thus determine the actions and thoughts of the ultras, shaping the character of an ultra group. How does local patriotism fit into an urban, multicultural society? Most likely, our complex, fast-paced, neo-liberal world demands some form of chauvinism and fosters the desire for stability and belonging. This primal human need for affiliation can intensify during adolescence and develop into a tendency to rebel against parental figures and the establishment. This process can be pivotal for self-discovery and development as well as for detachment. Adolescence is ultimately the chance to find one's own identity and define one's own values, independently of the parental home, the culture modelled by it, and the social structures. The adolescent orients himself outward and his condition is in constant flux. He is extremely vulnerable, sensitive, and fragile during this phase. He often masks this vulnerability with aggression. Some adolescents seek closeness to the FCZ Südkurve precisely during this transitional phase.

c Südkurve Sticker

Badenerstrasse 500

d Anti-GC Sticker

Lochergut



d

Just as flags are a stylistic device of ultra groups to express their love for the city and the club within the stadium, stickers and graffiti have become the suitable medium to manifest this love throughout the entire cityscape. Not only near the Stadium Letzigrund, but also in almost every neighbourhood, and in large parts of the surrounding areas, the identifying marks of the Südkurve can be found in the form of stickers or spray-painted graffiti. The local and international street art scene not only sets an example for artistic expression but also for their operational methods, greatly influencing the ultra scene. Both adhere to a logic of territorial marking and presence within the city. Creating these artworks in public often signifies bravery and

can determine one's status within their respective groups, as it is connected with significant risk. Both graffiti and the ultra scene exhibit strong machismo tendencies, engaging in an ongoing dick-measuring contest, both within their own circles and against rival gangs. When walking along Badenerstrasse this becomes especially evident. The Badenerstrasse is a connecting axis between Stauffacher, Lochergut and Letzigrund and is therefore the most used street for the march of the Südkurve to the stadium. The street signs, rain pipes and shop windows are covered with a variety of FCZ stickers and the facades wear the sprayed blue fists and letters of the club. There is no absence of the FCZ to be seen. The further away the sticker is from the ground, the more important the message is to the one who put it up, even worth risking a sprained ankle for. In places where stickers can only be placed with climbing, FCZ stickers predominate. With as much dedication as they have for their club, they also attach the stickers, climbing onto trash cans and risking an uncomfortable landing if necessary. The higher they go, the longer they stay stuck there. Just below, you will find the political stickers. In the Zürich sticker world, football is therefore more important than politics. Compared to graffiti, the use of stickers in street art poses relatively lower risks, making it more prevalent among a wider range of fans. It only takes two seconds to apply a sticker and is most often unnoticed by passersby. Unlike the intricate

FCZ	Heiligfeld	Badenerstrasse 447
FCZ	Fritschiwiese	Fritschistrasse 9
FCZ	Südkurve	Letzigrund, Sektor D

tagging by spray can or marker that demands skill and mastery, applying a sticker requires no particular expertise, as the artwork is typically prepared beforehand by someone else and then reproduced and exchanged in large quantities. Unlike carrying a spray can, walking around with stickers doesn't inherently imply criminal behaviour. However, as one 46-year-old FC Zürich fan discovered at the street parade, sticking a sticker on a police car can lead to hefty fines, as he was fined 1'800 CHF for doing so.

The stickers adorning urban surfaces represent the various fan and ultra groups mirroring those found in Letzigrund stadium. Their themes span from celebrating player dominance to showcasing the passion of the fanbase, and even advocating the destruction of opponents. Some stickers are sold in the Südkurve to fund choreographies, while they are usually traded for different stickers. Though individual inconspicuous due to their size, when amassed, they create sacred spaces of worship on public surfaces, prompting reflection on the nature of public urban spaces and who has the agency to contribute to them. As Henri Lefebvre thought, the spaces of everyday life cannot be seen as either abstract or stable entities. Instead, they must be understood as lived, meaning they are not only produced, they themselves actively produce the subjects that inhabit them. "Social space is a social product." Thus the public sphere, which exists only if it is also a social space, both produces and gets produced by the same forces that produce the subject. When there has been an invasion of the commercial in the public space, the traces of the subculture of football ultras serve as an adequate counterbalance through their sheer mass. It is a grassroot reclamation of the bourgeoisie city, even if it is only a superficial one, considering the large processes that are happening in the neo-liberal, hyper capitalist economy. Therefore the graffiti practice is often supposed as mere territorial pissing. However it serves as a more authentic sign of youth culture than the pretty stencil street-art with inherently consensual messages like "stop war" or "end racism", that finally serve the capitalist captains and the processes of gentrification and displacement. In this context, the ultra and graffiti communities embody the ethos of action over consumption.

ERHÜTER IMMER WITEN

ZÜRCHER
SÜDKURVE

PARADOX

XOUBA

WACHT

ZEE CITY

SÜDKURVE
FC-ZÜRICH

ZÜRCHER
SÜDKURVE

SÜDKURVE

FCZÜRICH

OUTCAST
SOCIETY

ZÜRCHER
SÜDKURVE

WO-DU
BISCH
SIND-MIR

SÜDKURVE
ALL FCZ IRR
FC-ZÜRICH

ZÜRICH
SIT-1896

FC-ZÜRICH

15 JAHRE
OUTCAST
FCZ

a, b

Letzipark, inaugurated in 1987, stands as one of Zürich’s premier shopping destinations and holds the distinction of being one of Switzerland’s largest malls, boasting the 10th highest turnover. Approaching the massive windowless blue concrete structure adorned with prominent store signage, Venturi and Scott-Browns decorated shed comes to mind. Despite its outward appearance of suburban derelict chic, Letzipark serves as a bustling hub within the community and the area around Altstetten.

Beyond its array of consumption-focused stores, for many people the mall offers a communal space where they can meet and socialise and unwind without financial obligation. This communal atmosphere is particularly palpable on weekends, as families and individuals from diverse backgrounds and generations fill the expansive atrium, enjoying leisurely afternoons and grabbing a quick bite at Popeyes. For parents (such as the barber of Tibor Bielicky), the mall’s Kinderhort facility provides a valuable service, allowing them to entrust their children for a few hours while they shop or take a well-deserved break. In close proximity to Letzigrund Stadium, Letzipark also provides 1’500 parking spaces, serving stadium attendees and shoppers. Descending the spiral stairs to the lower parking levels reveals a peculiar sight - a sacred space of sorts, enveloping a circular platform. The metal encasing of what appears to be a ventilation system is covered with layers upon layers of stickers, accumulated over the years by passersby who, feeling unnoticed, left their mark on the metal surface. The neglect of regular sticker removal maintenance has inadvertently transformed these panels into a cultural artifact, a testament to youth culture and collective expression.

Upon closer examination of the stickers, it becomes evident that FCZ fan culture predominates the wall’s narrative. Much like Letzipark itself, football serves as a unifying force, transcending social barriers and reflecting broader societal issues. Intrigued by the cultural significance of the sticker-covered panels, we sought to subtly contribute to this narrative through the medium of stickers. Drawing inspiration from the rich football-related stories archived at the Sozialarchiv, we aimed to expand the dialogue surrounding football culture and bring these narratives to the urban consciousness.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a | Atrium with Palm Trees (2023) | Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50 |
| b | Opening Day (1987) | Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50 |
| c | Aerial View (2002) | Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50 |
| d | Analysis of the ‚Triptych‘ | Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50 |
| e | Preparation of Stickers | Badenerstrasse 557 |



a



b



c

- 1 "So oder So? Rasen statt Parkplatz, Stadion Zürich", Fussballrasen und einen Fussball und Einkaufswagen - vermutlich Volksabstimmung 7. Sept. 2008, Stadt Zürich
- 2 Fussball statt Shopping: Für ein wohnliches Quartier auf den Trainingsplätzen Hardturm und ein Fussballstadion ohne überbrissene Mantelnutzung. (Stadion Hardturm Zürich)
- 3 Wir sind Europameister! Im Abzocken. - Neue Fairness braucht die Schweiz - SP - [Fotomontage von Vasella (Nummer 1), Grübel (Nummer 3) und Ospel (Nummer 4) auf den Körpern von Spielern der Schweizer Fussballnationalmannschaft beim Feiern]
- 4 Original "Globi"- Fussball - Figur!
- 5 Kinder posieren mit Fussball vor Garagentoren - Otto & Johann Honegger, anlässlich der Schliessung, Wald (Zürich), 1988
- 6 "6. Antiracup Soletta - 26. Mai 2012, Vorstadt Schulhaus" - antirassistisches Gruppenturnier in Solothurn, eine weisse Frau und ein schwarzer Mann am Fussballspielen
- 7 "Berner und Zürcher Tbst.-Fussballklub in Lyss, Juni 1924"; M.I.: "Tbst.-bund Basel - Bibliothek (L. Abt.)"
- 8 President Putin meets with FIFA president Giovanni Infantino
- 9 Fussballdress Centro Lusitano de Zurique (mit Aufdruck des Sponsors UNIA)
- 10 Kritik von Linksaktivisten an der UEFA und ihrer Funktion an der Euro 08
- 11 Teil der Kampagne gegen die Kommerzialisierung eines Sportgrossanlasses (2008)
- 12 vermutlich im Vorfeld der Abstimmung über das Bundesgesetz über die Arbeit in Industrie, Gewerbe und Handel (Arbeitsgesetz), Aenderung vom 22. März 1996
- 13 "Torneo Calcio Ennio Carloni" - Fussballturnier Ennio Carloni in Schaffhausen, um 1965
- 14 Fussballtraining bei Lausanne-Sport, Jonglieren, ca. 1960
- 15 Fischer Chöre - Wir wollen Tore sehn
- 16 dbFCZ
- 17 "Ohne Migranten keine starke Wirtschaft" - für eine vernünftige Migrationspolitik: secondas plus - liste 15", 2000er-Jahre
- 18 Fussballtraining bei Lausanne-Sport, Jonglieren, ca. 1960
- 19 Anstecker, "Energetik", Fussball spielender Mann, wahrscheinlich Sowjetunion

01

"Politik"

02

"Migration"

03

"Unterhaltung"

04

"Jugendsport"

05

"Fussball Kultur"

06

"Krieg"

07

"Freizeit"



20

2 x Nein: F
2x Nein

21

Knaben stehen im Gänsemarsch auf
1978

22

Well thats whats behind the screens

23

File:FIFA - Strasse Zürich.JPG

24

FC FOMH Vernier

25

Ob ich auf dem Rasen stehe oder vo
Fussballer", eine von 15 Postkarte ein
Rassismus, 2000

26

19. Satus-Sportfest Bern 1999; SATL
Junioren- Fussballmannschaft

27

Kinder spielen Fussball im Freien

28

Russia's Putin Confronts the FIFA He

29

Wimpel Fédéral

30

04
"Esperia" [Arbeiter-Fussballclub in Be
det] - [Schwarzer Panther mit schwar

31

Am 7. September 2x Nein zu diesem

32

Sportclub

33

Argentinien - Menschenrechte - 19;
Militärregimes in Argentinien im Zu
Argentinien im Jahr 1978]

34

Fussball statt Shopping: Für ein wohn
ein Fussballstadion ohne überbrissene

35

KVS Jugend, Ausflug, vermutlich beir

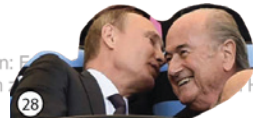
36

"Flachpass - Die FCZ-Bar - Im Somm
ese und freie Sicht auf den Sonnenur

37

Fotoalbum "Schuharbeiterstreik Brüt
Fussballspiel, "Auf der Allmend übt s
Roten Sport." (Pfungstjugendtag)

38

Sozialdemokratischer Abstinentenb
dumm & faul", "Wer ist der grösste Fe



Am 7. September
a, jeder von ihnen mit einem Fussball, Service



39
40



Sport
halter
schaften der Jugend
JUGA-Sporttrei
1971



Dietikon, Pokal



55

41
42
43

Editorial cartoon Fifa World Cup

"Satus-Fussballverband. Schweizer Meis
Chêne Eau Vives Genf", Zürich, 1973



17

opper Basel -



25

Fotomontage Fussballmannschaft mit LFSA-Köpfen, u.a. Gustav Egli, ca. 1960

Türsteher - Ihr seht nur 'schwarz'. Gil Kouame,
agne der Eigenössischen Kommission



31

Knaben mit ne... Oberkörper mit einem Fussball im... ühend (Ballübung
co 1978



46

"Sitzer... schule! - Erlaubt ist, was... stört. - Zürcher St



4



22

"Argen... te im 'Abseits' - Fus... ieler während ei... schwarze Silhouette einer Person mit verbundenen Augen und Händen; Kampagne im Rahmen der Fussball-Weltmeisterschaft in Argentinien 1978; AI versuchte auf die damaligen Verstösse der Regierung gegen die Menschenrechte aufmerksam zu machen;

JUGA-Sporttr... Fussballspiel, August 1974



9



21



5

Anstecker, "futbol... (ball), wahrscheinlich Sowjetu...

"Sportbegeisterung und Stolz auf die Heimat mit italienischem Temperament in der Zürcher Langstrasse am Abend als Italien Fussball-Weltmeister wurde, Juli 1982" - junge Frauen und Männer mit Flaggen auf Auto mit aufgespraytem Italia-Schriftzug

r On Reelection



40

egend von italienischen Immigranten gegrün-
Fussball]



47

48



49

für ein... sierend



16

st geg... tsverletzung
hang mit der Fussball-Weltmeisterschaft in

Bändel "Gegen Kriegsspiel! Für Jugendkultur! Zürich... k-Tag, 1931"



14



6

JUGA-Sporttr... nterthur - "Schöne Spielsz... ", 1972

Maskottchen (Hundekostüm) mit Transparent "Play Football not War - Ja/Si/Oui 25/6 Nov. Merci!"; links ausserhalb des Fokus: Militärtrommler



19

artier auf den Trainingsplätzen Hardturm und
utzung. (Stadion Hardturm Zürich)

53

Fahne Arbeiter-Radfahrer-Verein Altstetten Zürich "Brüder zur Sonne zur Freiheit, Brüder zum Lichte emp... mit Jakobinermütze, links im Hintergrund Fabrikkamine

llspielenn, ca. 1930

54



52

Die Fus... ihrem Trainer" - Foto... ortage in einem Heim für schwer... in Arese bei M... n SAH, Jugendliche auf dem Fus... 48



50

SPD, Fussball-Plakat

55

"Fussball Ja - Folter Nein - Argentinien 78 - Amnesty International" - Fussball aus Stachel-draht; Kampagne im Rahmen der Fussball-Weltmeisterschaft in Argentinien 1978; AI versuchte... Verstösse der... schenrechte au... m Rahmen e... n des 50-Jahre



53



39



15

Nov. 1931/Pfingstjugendtag Zürich, 1932" - (o:)
" (Pfingstjugendtag); (u:) "Nachwuchs für den

56

l. Mai-Umzug in Zürich - "Bier macht dick,
Organisation? der Alkohol!", Zürich, 1912

57

07



In September 1983, Group Material was renting advertising space from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York. The New York Subway was repeatedly in financial distress and overall in a bad condition. Advertising Space was co-existing with graffiti covering everything from the walls to the seats of the subway cars. By renting those billboards, they manage to introduce a third group to the New York Subway: Aspiring Artists. The project titled *Subculture* was the inspiration for our project. Substantially, as we were dealing with one of Zurich's biggest subcultures, the FCZ ultras. Spatially, as we were referring to what Marc Augé would call a Non-Place, similarly neglected as the New York Subway in the 1980s, appropriated by street artists and advertisement. Finally, we also referred back to their methodology by not editing any of the existing contents but rather ironically commenting on the existing, using material from the Schweizerische Sozialarchiv.

f

f Sunday March 10th, 2024 at 18:50 Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50
g *Subculture*, by Group Material (1983), New York



g







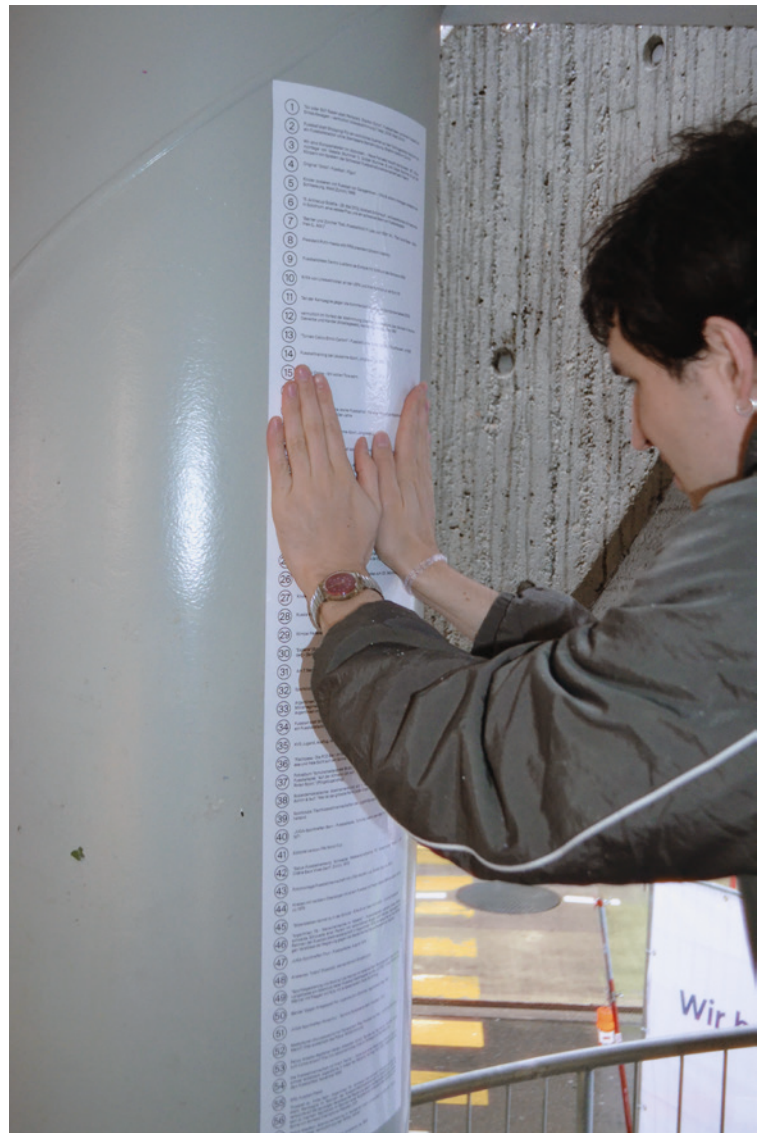




h



i



h The Triptych with both old and new Stickers
i Installing the Exhibition Index to the Newel

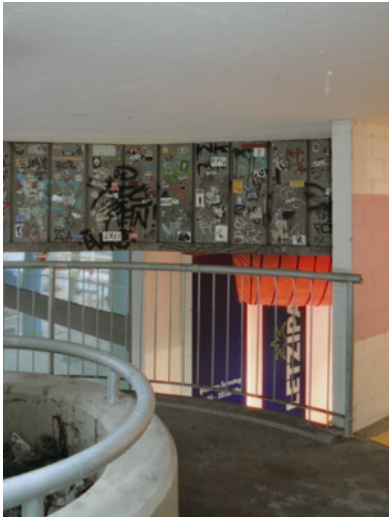
Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50
Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50



j



k



l

- j Parking Garage Circulation
- k Installation of Stickers
- l The 'Triptych' of Display Panels
- m A Couple Trespassing
- n The Exhibition Index to the Newel

- Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50
- Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50
- Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50
- Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50
- Parkhaus Letzipark, Baslerstrasse 50



m



n

commenting

documenting

archiving

57

I currently have 23'598 photographs, 244 notes, and 4'322 videos stored on my phone, along with countless emails, instant messages, music albums, and song titles. Additionally, my Google Drive contains numerous documents, which are further organized by spreadsheets and platforms such as Are.na. Although Donna Haraway predicted that we would become cyborgs, the wetware in our skulls and the hardware in our hands are in fact inextricably linked. With digitalisation, we have transcended the limitations of physical space and can now gather an almost infinite amount of data, making each of us a gatherer, if not a hoarder. Potentially, this could allow us to contribute to a more pluralistic narrative of reality. But amidst this sea of digital debris, there is a crucial difference between the accumulation of personal data and the creation of public archives: their accessibility. This raises the question: How can our hoarding tendencies help us to transform into politically vital archival beings in the ongoing struggle for intersectional justice?

Part 1. On Organisation

As knowledge workers, much of our work depends on our ability to not only collect but also organise data for future reference. However, this process of documentation, curation, elimination, and organisation goes beyond a mere technical requirement when we decide what data becomes public and what remains private. Sharing our findings, observations, experiences, and views allows us to create counter-libraries and counter-archives to those shaped by nation-states, institutions, firms, newspapers, or individuals. In fact, the word 'archive' derives from the Greek word 'archeion', meaning an administrative building that houses public data. But just because data is public does not mean it is accessible to everyone, online or offline. The ability to access data and the type of data available depends on the archivaries spreadsheet, which contains metadata for each archivarly, including keywords. Incomplete metadata, whether intentional or unintentional, can make it difficult to find information. Archiving is a serious task that requires significant administrative effort and high-level skills. Therefore, it is not surprising that archival activities are more prevalent in societies with greater financial and human resources, such as Switzerland, and less common in less affluent or grassroots communities. However, citizen archives such as the Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv in Switzerland are still rare and continuously operating at the limits of their spatial and financial capacities. Therefore, it is crucial to not only personally collaborate with citizen archives like the Schweizerische Sozialarchiv but also to deliberately thoroughly organise and decide which data or databases to share for educational, political, or activist purposes both online and offline. Actively contributing to knowledge production apart from academia includes parttaking in gathering the records of the histories aside the spreadsheets, be it oral histories, visual matter of youth and subculture, or day-to-day ephemeral photography.



a

Part 2. On Accessibility

However, the relationship between archives and powerful groups or individuals is not solely financial. Instead, the desire to actively shape national, religious, or cultural narratives stems from what Jacques Derrida calls *Archive Fever* (1995): the desire to both preserve and destroy, remember and forget. Various regimes in the past and present continue to use archives as sites to exert power and control over the construction of knowledge. There is little difference between colonial-imperial leaders of the past and authoritarian leaders today in this regard. They are both driven by a fear of loss and a desire for immortality. This desire may even lead to a rewriting of history, as seen in Russia’s attempt to veil Stalin’s atrocities by hindering access to the respective archives. As physical archives are destroyed, restricted, or censored, the role of the archivist shifts to that of a forensic researcher. In this context, the private once again becomes political, as it serves as factual evidence. Practitioners like Eyal Weizman often begin with incomplete or precarious oral histories or testimonies and then reconstruct the case using mixed media in an interdisciplinary approach. NGOs and human rights organisations are increasingly relying on private, shaky, hand-recorded videos to trace back the flight route of a rocket or an old family portrait that provides indications to reveal a gruesome history. This is true when events follow each other in quick succession, but especially if countries aim to investigate those events in the hindsight. The vastness of the internet does not magically bring together those who need and those who are able to provide certain data. Everything that is not correctly tagged or lacks verifiable metadata is either not credible or cannot be found. While this is not a call to non-selectively or aimlessly provide personal data, which could harm the provider of said data itself, it remains a continuous pondering between what might be helpful to the greater society and what might be a dangerous threat to ones own life.


- a Paul Otlet’s Conceptual Model of how human Knowledge is recorded; the universal Catalogue transcends the Limitations of individual Books and other physical “Carriers” of Information
- b Numerous Investigations by Forensic Architecture, using 3D Modelling as well as public and private Image Material

1.95 THE KILLING OF DILAN CRUZ

A 3D reconstruction of a street scene in Bogotá, Colombia, showing the killing of Dilan Cruz. The scene is viewed from a high angle. A red figure (Dilan Cruz) is in the center, surrounded by other figures. A red line indicates the path of a projectile. A blue figure is on a bicycle in the background. A white arrow points to a 'CC' (Carriero) and a blue arrow points to a 'DC' (Diligente). A timeline at the bottom shows the sequence of events.

DATE OF INCIDENT 11.2019	LOCATION Bogotá, Colombia	FORUMS Legal Process
COMMISSIONED BY Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (CSPP)		
During the 2019 'national strike' demonstrations in Colombia, 18-year-old protester Dilan Cruz was shot by a bean bag round fired by police in Bogotá, and died two days later. The Colombian Attorney General subsequently published a report defending the killing and accusing Cruz of being part of a mob; our investigation shows how this conclusion derives from a misreading of the visual evidence.		

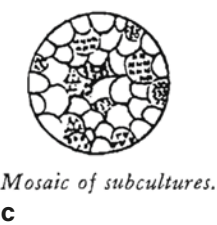
1.97 DESTRUCTION OF MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN GAZA

A 3D reconstruction of the destruction of medical infrastructure in Gaza. The scene shows a complex of buildings, including a hospital. A red arrow points to a building that was heavily targeted. A text box explains that the attack on Al-Shifa Hospital began with intimidation as the hospital received warnings to evacuate, and its surroundings were heavily targeted. A timeline at the bottom shows the sequence of events.

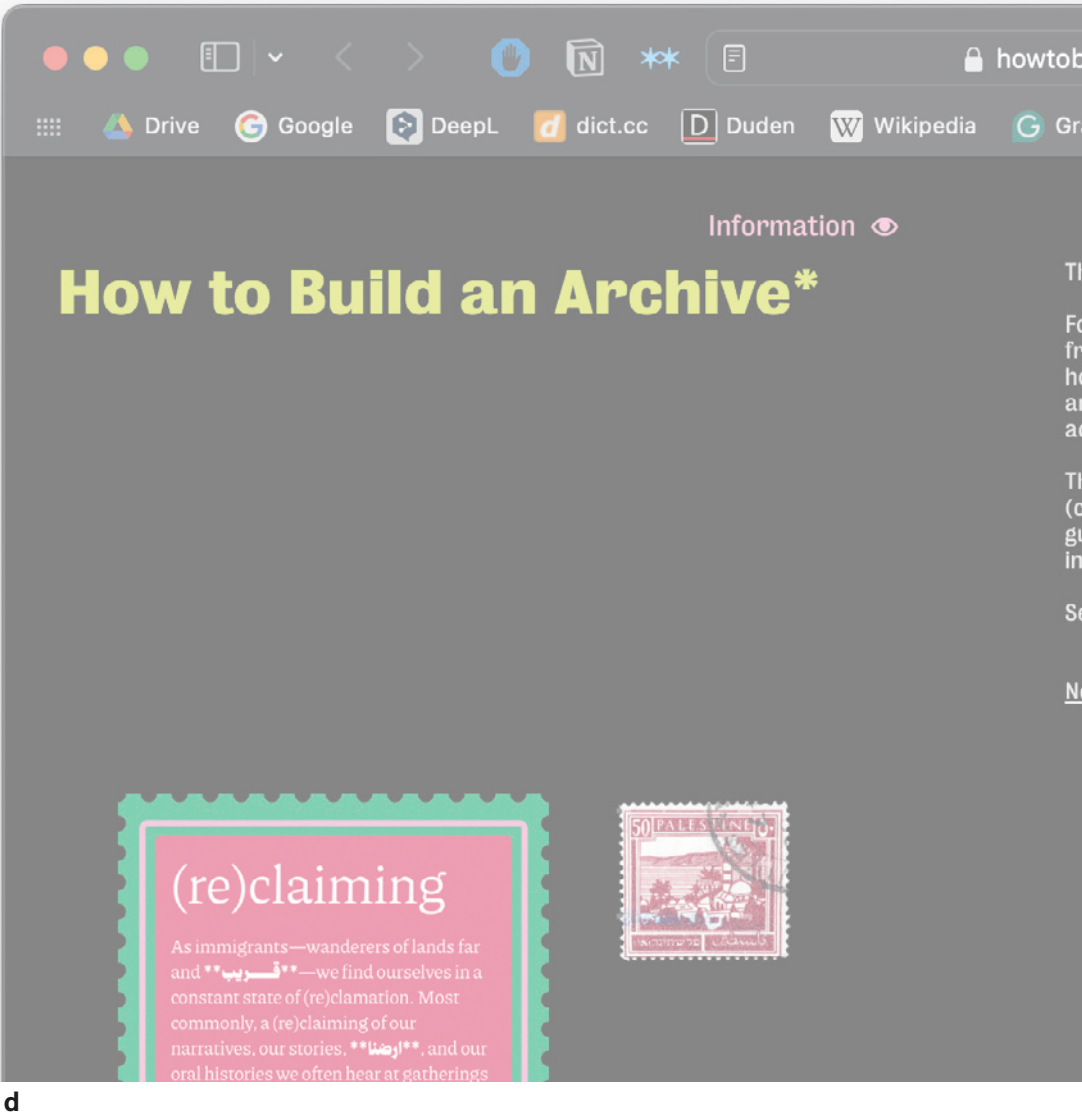
DATE OF INCIDENT 07.10.2023 - Ongoing	LOCATION Gaza, Palestine	FORUMS Legal Process, United Nations, Human Rights Report, Media, Web Platform
COMMISSIONED BY Self-initiated		
Since 7 October 2023, we have aggregated news reports of Israeli military attacks on medical infrastructure in Gaza. Our analysis suggests that hospitals in Gaza have been subjected to a pattern of intimidation, direct targeting, siege, and occupation by the Israeli military over the course of the 2023 invasion.		

b

Part 3. On Agency

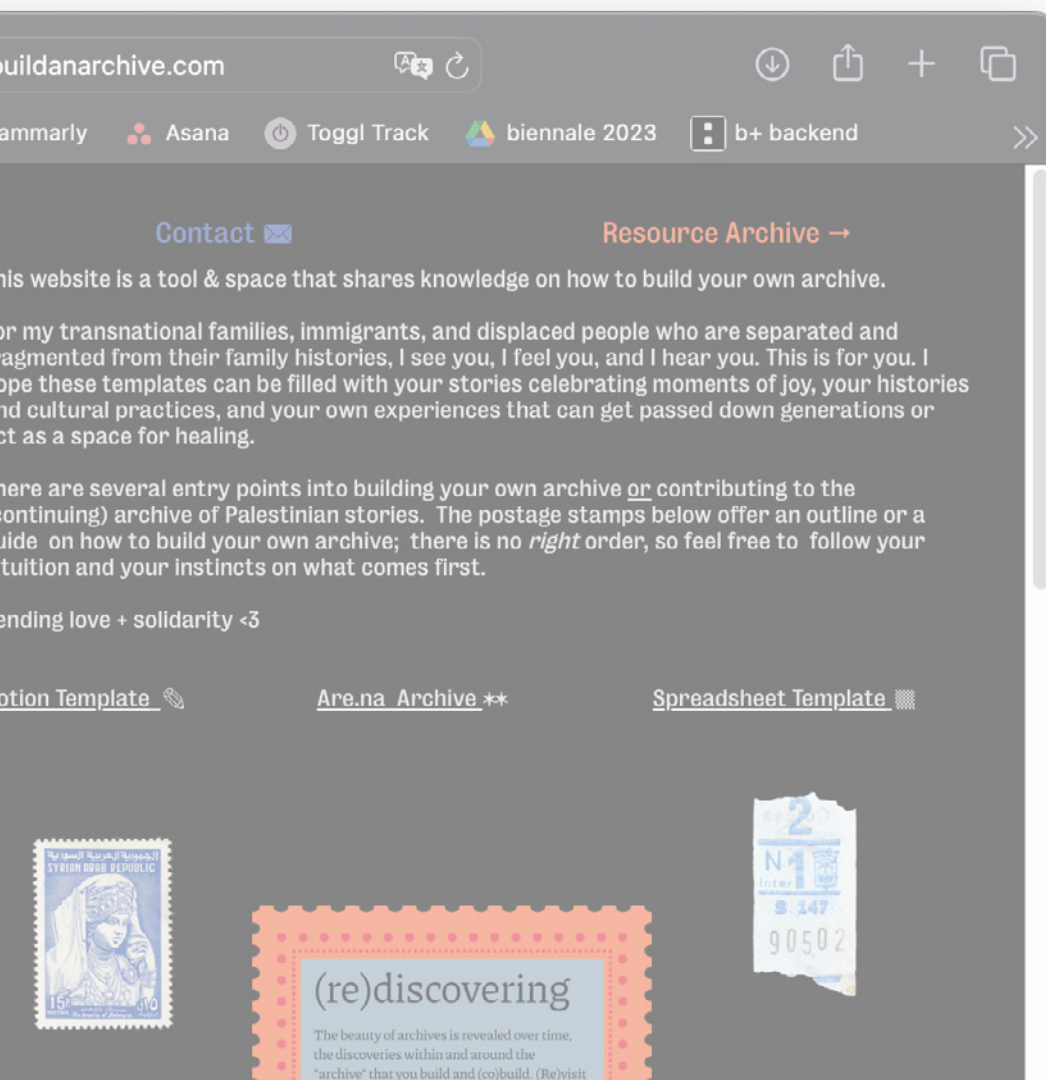


Finally, as Rick Prelinger states in his *Appropriation Manifesto*, “mortar is just as historical as bricks, but we only ever talk about the bricks.” What Prelinger is hinting towards is that while we tend to focus on the historical significance of data, we often overlook the importance of the human factor involved in creating and accessing datasets. Therefore, it is not only crucial to actively contribute to online archives but also to continuously engage with existing ones. Contemporary archival practice thus involves creating new and unexpected connections between existing materials to either deconstruct histories or add missing elements. Although archives may have ideological biases, this should not prevent us from critically examining and potentially altering the narrative. In her groundbreaking work, *Can the Sub-Altern Speak?* Gayatri Spivak remarks, “The ‘sub-altern’ cannot speak without the thought of the ‘elite.’” While acknowledging the criticism of Western hegemony as a prerequisite for diversifying the archive, it is important to recognize that the ideology embedded in Western archival documents was the root cause of exactly those colonial or marginal histories that we aim to include today. Simply removing or editing the Western archive does not eliminate the injustice it caused, but rather obscures the factual record of racialized, homophobic, or misogynistic doctrines. By reassessing the archive from the perspective of what Christoph Alexander referred to as ‘A Mosaic of Subcultures’, there is potential to gain a more pluralistic and diverse understanding of history.



c ***A Pattern Language*, Christoph Alexander (1977), p. 44**

d **Low-Threshold Instructions on How to build Personal Archives shared within marginalised Communities [howtobuildanarchive.com]**



16-03-2024 16:28

Jakob Schäfermeyer

From the very beginning, our discussions revolved around the question: to what extent must participatory projects be accompanied by structure and professionalism? We see a possible answer in the development of Group Material, which initially aimed to form an independent counter-image to the aesthetically-distinct existing art institutions. If we look at the later exhibitions such as *Education and Democracy*, *Politics and Elections*, *Cultural Participation* or *AIDS and Democracy*, which were all carried out in collaboration with existing art institutions, we can see how working within the system can also be productive. The space as well as the financial resources were used to offer a large number of artists, curators, teachers, and students a stage that would normally only be used by well-known personalities from the art world. The introduction to the publication *Democracy* from 1990 begins with a quote by New York State Supreme Court Justice Bruce Wright, "Participating in the system doesn't mean we must identify with it, stop criticizing it, or stop improving the little piece of turf on which we operate". The question still remains the same today: how much structure does a practice need and at what point are the external constraints too significant to bring about real change?

16-03-2024 17:23

Sacha Toupance

I think that GM was relatively lucid about their trajectory within the institution, and that what still allows them to be relevant is undoubtedly their impertinence and quirkiness. In *AIDS: Timeline*, it's the clash between their visual agency, presence within institutions and their act to speak of an invisible genealogy and a marginal social malaise. Their practice seems to have assimilated the criticisms of institutions formulated for instance by AMCC 10 years earlier when it was realized that the federal grants and tax-exemptions that enabled certain institutions to function resulted in museums' incapacity to be politically engaged and active. Without the disruption brought about by GM's practice and interests as a collective, their presence within the institution would not have been productive or relevant.

16-03-2024 20:03

Franziska Gödicke

What we can learn from Group Material, however, are the limitations of individual agency in a conflicted creative system. Trying to grapple with the ladder by sustaining an alternative exhibition space resulted in Group Material's parting due to severe financial and personal conflicts. Thus, their parting also shows us that every cooperation necessitates structure. Often, if structure is claimed to be non-existent, hierarchies, monetary flows and decision-making structures are simply veiled behind a seemingly non-hierarchical organization. This dynamic commonly favors the survival of the fittest, be it the loudest, wealthiest or most dominant in the group. In her Essay *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* feminist Jo Freeman identifies seven key aspects to prevent this dilemma: delegation of responsibility, authority in people's respective responsibilities, distribution of authority, rotation

of tasks, allocation of tasks along rational criteria, diffusion of information and equal access to resources. While we cannot say to which extent Group Material fulfilled these criteria, their parting hints towards problems in more than one aspect. Here, more conventional institutions and their structures might have protected people's personal lives and finances while allowing them to concentrate on their work as the center of their energy and monetary expenses. In the end, that's what you, Sacha, carved out as their main legacy: their practice, not the institution they tried forming. Because the reality of the capitalist system we live in is also that of funding, and while you correctly pointed out that this premise at several points in history kept institutions from becoming politically engaged and active, we will not solve this dilemma by sacrificing all remnants of our leisure time and savings as individuals pitted against the ailing financial system of the art world. The idea of escaping a systemic problem on an individual level is precisely the root of a neoliberal doctrine of the "American Dream", which fully neglects issues of race, class, and gender. In his book *Art for UBI* [Universal Basic Income] the Venetian activist and curator Marco Baravalle therefore highlights the urgency and necessity of decommodifying our work in order to no longer have to choose between what is right and what is filling the fridge. Because, in the end, shouting and booing from the sidelines is easy, but frankly not a very productive means of criticism, especially if your counter-institution fails at the expense of your initial goals, arguments and individual means.

17-03-2024 09:13

Pauline Gähwiler

I think that just because you actively decide against an institutional organization does not mean that you should decide against any organization. I think it's a mistake to say that if you question social structures (as Group Material has done) you must oppose all structure and strive for an exclusively non-hierarchical co-operation. An awareness of how to work together and how one's own behavior within the group influences the other members is very important. This is exactly what we learn in our studies. When I think back to my previous semesters, what I remember most is the way we work together. And the success of the collaboration influences the quality of the project in the majority of cases.

Timothy Rollins' letter to the group in 1980 provides insight into how the members of Group Material worked, or did not work, together. He writes about his frustration with the seemingly jealous and almost intrigue-like behavior within the group. He points out that the group needs to be more disciplined in their work together. But he also talks about the responsibility they have to the public, where they have already achieved a certain notoriety as an activist artist group. He writes: "[...]artists like us tend to suffer from an irrational inferiority complex when it comes to putting our asses on the line of actual cultural production. Are we Group Material or not?... Really... how insecure... how dare we feel inadequate or hesitant to do work in this age [...]" The lack of trust within the group affects their

work and influences the argumentation through which they want to act.

A clear organization and also a clear distribution of tasks based on the strengths and interests of the individual members of a group is therefore not important because you then act as an institution and are eligible for government funding as a non-profit corporation. No, it gives each person agency and strengthens the feeling that they can rely on each other. Every member is perceived as part of the group and does not have to earn their right to participate. Above all, it creates a basis in which the threshold for conversation and discussion is set very low. Speaking your own mind takes less effort. So I would argue that it doesn't depend on how much structure a practice needs for it to function. But rather how the structure is set up, whether it is tailored to the individual strengths and weaknesses of each person within the group. And how open and respectful interaction with one another can be achieved so that each member is encouraged in their work. And this is probably where Group Material failed.

17-03-2024 17:27

Maurus Wirth

I agree with what Franziska has pointed out about the problem that is inherent with the informality of organizational forms. There is an obvious contradiction in the critique of professionalized, large institutions, while, at the same time, forms of collaboration are preferred that seek to distance themselves from hierarchy and institutions. These alternative forms often rely on voluntarism and can therefore provoke unjust working conditions. Although the leading art avant-garde, represented by groups like Group Material, often presents themselves as great thinkers and fighters for social justice, they often fail to create fair and just working conditions for all participants. By contrast, large institutions, while they may be rigid in structure, offer a certain stability, especially financially, and thereby more justice. I find it therefore rather hypocritical. The criticism of Group Material also shows that while they aimed to bring greater diversity and variety to exhibition spaces and institutions, they simultaneously formed a rather homogenous group of art students from affluent backgrounds.

18-03-2024 08:25

Eva Sun Meier

In my research on the intrapersonal dynamics of Group Material, I came across this interesting quote by Alison Green: "Internal group discussions over the following year revealed there were those who wanted to be activists, those who wanted art careers and those — the ones who continued to work as Group Material — who were interested in activism and art."

I think this goes to show that, in the end, the members of the collective were individuals with their own identities and artistic agencies. As Pauline pointed out, there existed a certain insecurity among the members of the group which led to distrust. In a way, one could identify the motif of a group of troubled, egocentric artists that could not agree upon how to define themselves collectively, which eventually led to their

demise. On the other hand, I believe that they became more precise in their exhibition style once their membership was reduced. They abandoned the brick-and-mortar gallery space of 244 E. 13th Street, which allowed them to begin exhibiting in not only the public realm (subway cars and street billboards), but also in situations that brought them closer to participatory art (eg. "town-hall meeting" discussion forums). As we've also discussed a few times, there existed within Group Material a tendency towards the organizational practices of an institution despite being rather anti-establishment. This brings me to a further discussion question that would be interesting to hear from you guys about: to what extent was Group Material actually activist? I view their methods of artistic arranging/curating to trigger association and thereby provoke critical reflection as subtle yet very powerful; I wonder, though, how effective was their engagement in participatory art forms as a means of activist art?

19-03-2024 09:26

Jakob Schäfermeyer

I think the point that Eva makes, about the artists in the group having to be characterized as individuals who represent their own interests and thus come into conflict, is, in part, the answer to the initial question. An argument such as this conflict of interest arises to a large extent where individuals, due to their self-imposed responsibility, efforts and monetary contributions, have the feeling that, despite this, they are working on something that does not fully meet their own expectations. This is precisely why the question of structure, hierarchy, etc. is interesting. You would almost never assume that a "normal" employee would attend a company meeting with the same expectation of having a say in decision-making processes, as they are partially dependent on the system. That's why it would be so interesting to imagine a system in which the structure and interdependencies are not in conflict with personal development as well as co-determination of the topics and the course of the company itself.

With regard to the question of how effective their engagement in participatory art forms was as a means of activist art, I think it is the opposite of the original expectation to judge here. By this I mean that the inclusion of diverse artists and their access through the creation of a framework to address social issues in existing institutions is the real activist achievement. On the other hand, I am more skeptical about the discussions in the *Townhall* meetings. This is mainly because I believe that these processes need a longer period of time during which the external participants see themselves as part of the agency and then become an active thinking and contributing part and not a symbol of the voice of the community.

19-03-2024 12:00

Sacha Toupance

In a rather funny and spot-on text from 1981 for the Eat this Show, the collective seems more than aware and lucid about their internal problems: "GM's first public year was an encouraging success. But internally, problems advanced (...) More and More our energies were swallowed by the space, the

space, the space. (...) People got broke, people got tired, people quit (...) we had to cease being a space and become a working group once again." And when they leave their space, they see greater politicization and a commitment to participation: "It is impossible to create a radical and innovative art if this work is anchored in one special gallery location. Art can have the most political content and right-on form, but the stuff just hangs there silent." Our interventions in the public realm probably talk about this tension within GM's work.

I think I'm just as skeptical as Jakob is regarding his last point. I also believe that's why the question of participation in our interventions in Altstetten quickly seemed unnecessary (at least for me?); we didn't want 'naive' and staged participation, nor something that felt forced. For sure, such participation processes take time and question the status of each individual involved. When this is not the case, we're just witnessing unproductive forms of discussion that serve only to perpetuate an established system. We didn't have that time and that energy (because it really is about that - energy that one is ready to spend on a conversation). That's why, to respond to you, Eva, perhaps I would only consider the 1981 exhibition *The People's Choice - Arroz con Mango* as a real proposal for participation from GM that doesn't have naive ambitions in my opinion. The principle is the same as *Americana*, except that residents of the neighborhood are invited to bring their own valuable objects to be displayed in the exhibition. We see the same principles of critical juxtaposition and curation that we know, and the participation of residents of the block where the gallery is located offers this sort of object mapping that speaks about collections, attachment to things, and the relationship to possession and wealth. It doesn't go further, achieves a critical stance and is fully comprehensible. It's this simplicity that I appreciate because it's not immature, nor does it try to pretend to be anything else than it is.

24-03-2024 17:15

Eva Sun Meier

It's interesting to begin to juxtapose our interventions in Altstetten and the work of GM in the discussion about the role of participation in exhibition and art. Of course, we six, like the members of GM, are differentiated, opinionated individuals that expressed contrasting opinions in precisely how to engage with the SSA, how to react to the conditions we discovered in the streets, and how to express our own authorship in the public realm.

In the end, we also had discussions about how to engage with the question of participation and the public's reaction to our work. I completely agree with and share the skepticism of Jakob and Sacha in regards to the pitfalls of participatory art; in what can quickly become an act of "social-washing", participants and their contributions are rendered symbols of an attempt to distance oneself from institutional models. The institution often provides a platform (a space, a database, an archive) that acts as an access point to culture. What is criticized is how this is also an opportunity for said institution to frame or create a narrative around culture that is profitable and, as Franziska has described, commodifying. So

if institutions are the commodifiers of culture and collectives like GM (which, unlike institutions, can express the urgency to integrate politics and activism into their work) run the risk of creating a superficial narrative of activist, participatory engagement, where do we truly find participatory art?

In our interventions we were, so to speak, free of the institutional shackles that impose the profit-oriented presentation of culture. We also actively decided not to seek out active engagement with the individuals that were addressed in our work due to, in my opinion, our lack of being informed on the intricacies of their cultures. Honestly, unless one actually can identify as a member of one of these cultures, we will always remain outsiders looking in (which, don't get me wrong, doesn't mean we can't develop opinions and our own work about these cultures). Are we entitled to say that we created participatory art/a participatory exhibition space because of the medium? Because the interventions simply reside in the public realm?

24-03-2024 20:39

Pauline Gähwiler

I think just because it's in a public space doesn't mean it's participatory art. Maybe it only becomes participatory when someone else actually interacts with it. For example, when someone writes something over our red and white papers again. Only then does it become participatory or not? This is why I think some of us have so much trouble not seeing participatory art (as you say, Eva) as social-washing. By actively inviting the 'affected people' to an artistic action and almost forcing people to give their opinion, the intervention becomes less credible. So our interventions only become interactive art when someone decides to add something. Nevertheless, I think that artistic activism has its justification. And a participatory process is only possible if you don't expect too much from it. The question is also, how much change can you really expect from an artistic intervention in public space, no matter how polarising it is? Is it naïve to believe that minimal social interaction such as sticking up stickers or putting up posters can bring about fundamental change? However, I don't think that is necessarily the artist's intention. For example, GM's *Amerikana* exhibition was very successful because it put its finger on the wound and pointed out social problems. But did it really do anything to change our system? Aren't we basically still suffering from the same social problems?

I think in this kind of activist and participatory art, you shouldn't take yourself too seriously. Pointing fingers often achieves little. A certain amount of irony should be allowed.

25-03-2024 19:04

Franziska Gödicke

For me it is interesting that almost 40 years later, the core discussions inside Group Material are still shaping our discussion today: From questions of structural and personal conflicts, to hierarchy in cooperation to integrity and success within participatory art. While reading your contributions, I felt the urge to contribute three last considerations.

Firstly, while their individualistic approach may seem at odds with the collective ethos of activism, it's vital to recognize that seeking various forms of capital – be it monetary, social, or cultural – is inherent to navigating and sustaining one's life. Hence, passing judgment from afar on their troubles and choices overlooks the complexities of their circumstances and backgrounds, as not everyone inside group material was from monetary or culturally privileged backgrounds. However, and here I agree with Eva, alternative structures have a tendency to be exploited by people who seek to foster their careers on the back of people that actually strive for democratic participation and activism. However, dealing with those tendencies is a question of sustainable hierarchies and structures within the group. Many of the conflicts we pointed out here in the past days, however, are more systemic ones – which is why I noted earlier the necessity of targeting systemic problems on a systemic, not an individual level.

Secondly, and I agree with Pauline here, Group Material's exhibitions may not have catalyzed immediate structural change. However, I consider the purpose of art to be separate from utility, productivity, or –in whatever regard– success in its participatory ambitions in order to be politically impactful. For me it is also important here to add to the notion of "participation" introduced by Eva, Jakob and Pauline in the discussion on the potential success of their participatory endeavors. More precisely, I would like to separate participatory art from grassroots activism. In her 1969 *Ladder of Citizen Participation*, Sherry Arnstein introduces various levels of participation, with grassroots initiatives being at the very top of the ladder. While Group Material certainly did not provide any grassroots-level participation, delegation or partnership, they surely offered representation (*The People's Choice - Arroz con Mango*, 1981), low-level-access (*Subculture*, 1983) and critical information (*Americana*, 1985) as the necessary pre-conditions in climbing the ladder towards full grassroots-level participation. In so doing, they offered a starting point to enrich our understanding of citizenship and community agency.

In that regard, and due to the prior parallels we formed between both our work and that of Group Material, we might turn inwards and criticize not only their but also our own hypermobility. While both the allure of novelty in the art world and the rigor of ETH's curriculum may tempt us to flit between topics and locales, true impact necessitates a deep-rooted investment in communities and causes, that Baravalle calls "Radical Permanence". If we understand both their and our own work of just the beginning of a longer process to invest the necessary time and resources in nurturing enduring relationships and effecting substantive change in the respective communities, what we have to start with today is to be very honest and outspoken about the complicated dynamics of both collaborative work and participatory art in its socio-economic implications, our own limitations and individual vantage points– and I think we did a great start on that with this conversation.

This conversation was held using an open google document sheet, allowing each contributor to answer from their individual situatedness in space and time.



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- a *Apero Helvetica*, by Pauline Gähwiler, Franziska Gödicke, Eva Sun Meier, Jakob Schäfermeyer, Sacha Toupance, Maurus Wirth (2024), Zürich



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Editorial

Sleeping with the Enemy: On Participatory Art

Jakob Schäfermeyer

Place and Actor: On Exhibition and Authorship

Eva Sun Meier

Collections, Exposition et Archive

Sacha Toupance

Intervention I: Rote Plakate

Pauline Gähwiler, Eva Sun Meier, Sacha Toupance

Gedanken zu einer Intervention

Pauline Gähwiler

Tag und Nacht nur 1 Gedanke

Maurus Wirth

Intervention II: Züri Isch Ois

Franziska Gödicke, Jakob Schäfermeyer, Maurus Wirth

Archive Fever: On the Tyranny of the Spreadsheet

Franziska Gödicke

What Now?

A conversation between Pauline Gähwiler, Franziska Gödicke, Eva Sun Meier, Jakob Schäfermeyer, Sacha Toupance, Maurus Wirth