







NO
RANCE
IN
ICHE







CONTENTS

Foreword

**Gardar Eide Einarsson –
Power Has a Fragrance
by Gunnar B. Kvaran**

**Notes toward a Report
on the 5th Document
Excavation of the DATA-ist
Society of NWC, Fall 2111
by Sjón**

**Art, information, paranoia
by Ina Blom**

**The Larsen effect:
Gardar Eide Einarsson and
the evacuation of forms
by Nicolas Bourriaud**

Biography/CV

RIO E







Foreword

The dual theme of authority and rebellion is a departure point for Gardar Eide Einarsson's visually hermetic, mostly black and white paintings, carefully constructed sculptures, photographs, videos, flags and flyers. Drawing heavily on graffiti, skateboarding and punk music, he engages with alternative and abject cultures in order to unsentimentally address the workings of contemporary society from within its anomalous manifestations. In one expression of this desire, Einarsson appropriates everyday imagery to reveal how mass media, and the advertising industry in particular, controls our beliefs and actions. By re-contextualizing corporate logos, tattoos, and graffiti scripts together within the institutional setting of the art exhibition, he constructs a powerful, sophisticated, political irony. Similarly, the artist has selected simple pop-cultural slogans and painted them onto museum walls, printed them on flags, set them in light boxes and stenciled them against metal surfaces. Through this straightforward act, Einarsson creates a complex layering of meaning, with a strong underlying critique of manipulation, abuse and violence.

In the exhibition, "Power Has a Fragrance," Gardar Eide Einarsson explores the principal structures of social conflict in modern society. Reflective of his international career, he expands his complex network of references beyond western culture and the historical present. Currently dividing his time between Oslo, Tokyo and New York, Einarsson is among the most celebrated young Nordic artists to have emerged in recent years.

It is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to present the art of Gardar Eide Einarsson. On behalf of the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo, Norway, the Reykjavik Art Museum in Iceland, the Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm, Sweden and the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel, we would first of all like to thank the artist himself for an exceptionally interesting and inspiring collaboration. We would also like to thank his galleries – Standard (Oslo) in Oslo, Nils Stærk in Copenhagen and the Team Gallery in New York for their assistance in the various stages of preparing the exhibition. Lastly, we thank the catalogue authors for their insightful contributions.

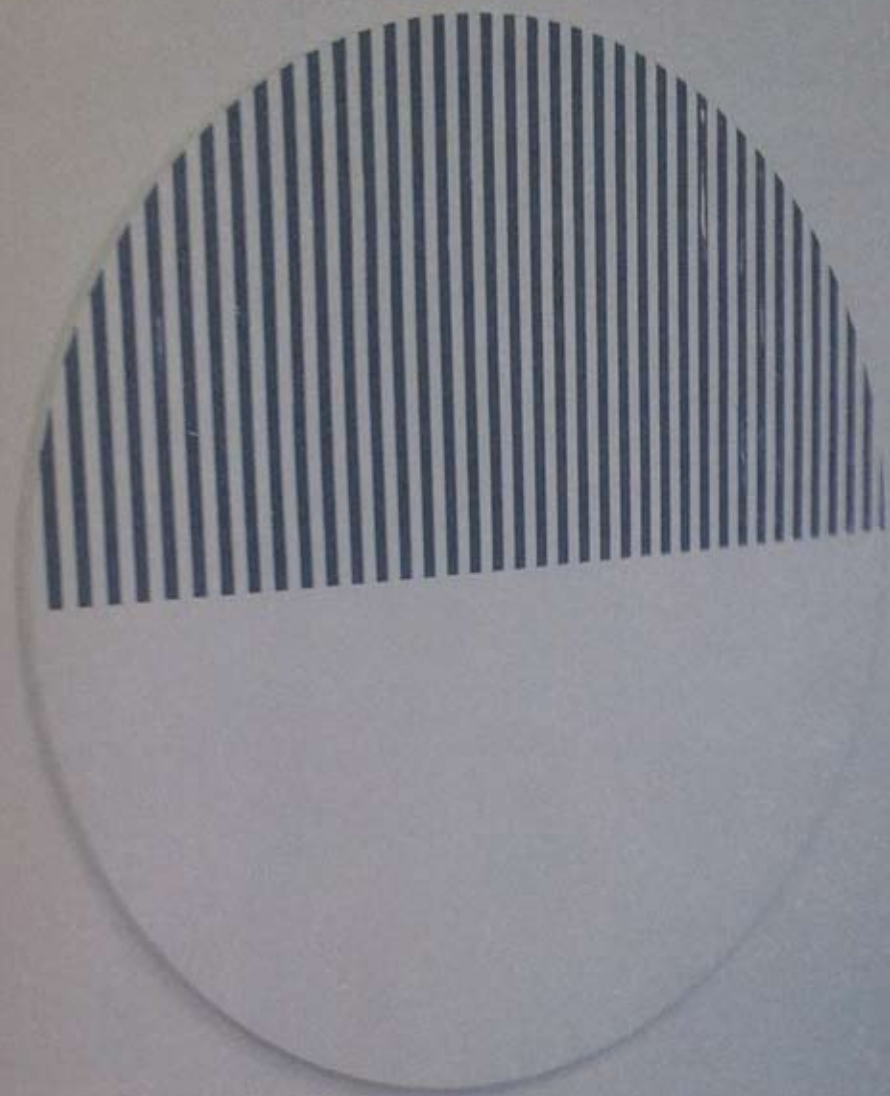
Sara Arrhenius
Bonniers Konsthall

Gunnar B. Kvaran
Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art

Rein Wolfs
Kunsthalle Fridericianum

Hafthor Yngvason
Reykjavik Art Museum















**Gardar Eide Einarsson –
Power Has a Fragrance
by Gunnar B. Kvaran**

There are many parallel realities in the universe of Gardar Eide Einarsson. At least two contradictory, albeit productive, forces immediately appear to be at stake. One represents the virtuosity of blur and fuzziness, which clouds his works in fog and introduces shifting focal points within which dark and gloomy enigmas emerge. Here the artist stages a novelistic sfumato and an overriding atmosphere of uncertainty and dark melancholia. Words and images stir up a wealth of connotations to notions like “suspended”, “memory flashes”, “vertigos”, “fugitive encounters”, and “unchartered territories”. The other involves a very different narrative. The environment here is that of the clear-sighted and the investigator; it is detailed, pointed

and obsessive. Seeking precise points of reference and arbitrary details, it matches texts from instruction manuals and police handbooks with badges worn by soldiers in Iraq, signs from bars and restaurants, pictures of prisoners' coded tattoos, and a photo of a well-known drug dealer. Together, they resist the impression of anonymity and elusiveness otherwise insinuated. The result is an eerie environment, which is simultaneously ambiguous and hyper-realistic. On one hand, we witness the blur of an abstraction, a quiet tempest of a Robert Motherwell painting or a geometrical rhythm of an Ellsworth Kelly composition; on the other, we experience a sense of precision akin to an immigration manual. The assemblage of these forces and narratives, which can be seen as the DNA of the GEE-ism, is both disturbing and fascinating. From this double interlace and anchorage,

we get the enchantment of déjà-vu and the impression that we time and again arrive at almost identical readings of otherwise different works. We experience a feeling of disturbed and troubled jubilation and have a distinct notion that we are immersed within the artist's universe. The magic appears every time we stand in front of the works, like here in this exhibition, which is both a constellation of individual works and one singular, floating oeuvre. The cumulative effect is to produce the sense that there is no future, only an increasingly important, multidimensional past, which the spectator triggers by experiencing the exhibition. "Power Has a Fragrance" at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art consists of an architecture of works each referring to different horizons and societies: Mexican, American, Norwegian and Japanese, to name just a few. It's an

eclectic collage, a fiction, a summary of individual and collective worlds. Grey stainless steel monochromes are at once paintings, walls and architecture; traffic cones from Tokyo are sculptures that both restrict and guide circulation, the flow of the space; an American policeman's batons are signs of authority, whether helpful or abusive; the Unabomber's map of the barrels on his truck becomes a geometric painting. We also see mirrors that are in fact "suicide mirrors" from Tokyo underground stations; blown up book covers-cum-geometric paintings; a logo/sculpture from a Mexican bar; an American police car with a spray-painted "fuck pigs" tag; a 1920s Union protest flag; a picture of a Mexican drug lord; a list detailing the history of car bombs; and a Time Magazine cover featuring the "person of the year". The spectator wanders through a spectacle of flash-

backs and topographical digressions. And the museum, itself, becomes a metaphor for a kaleidoscopic “city space” – Berlin? Tokyo? Oslo? New York? – and maybe even a depiction of modern-day Hell.

Is there a plot? Not really. And it wouldn't matter anyway. It's more about fragments and ambiguous signs from several stories told simultaneously, in which different figures and events appear and take place independently of one another. Within Einarsson's universe there is a narrator (the artist himself), who often lends the impression of a fiction within fiction. As the storyteller, he is difficult to grasp or pin down. He almost assumes the role of the spectator, who invariably has a certain distance to the materials, the raw reference images, and it ultimately serves to increase the overall impression of uncertainty – of a present that

slips away with no future, leaving only a continuously revisited past. A real virtuosity of discomfort.

There is a “behind-the-scenes” mechanism or skeleton, which holds together the elements that collectively create the total illusion of Einarssonism. By using ready-made images and objects and employing art-historical styles including Geometrical Abstraction, Minimalism, Pop and Appropriation Art, the artist achieves an amalgamation of aesthetics, politics and social discourses. Filtering, relocating and re-interpreting his source material, he obtains a unified language and a unique aesthetics with strong references to the black and white media representations of the 1950s and 60s. Black dominates the composition throughout his oeuvre – sometimes a brilliant black, other times a matte black. In Einarsson's work, black is increasingly a “figure

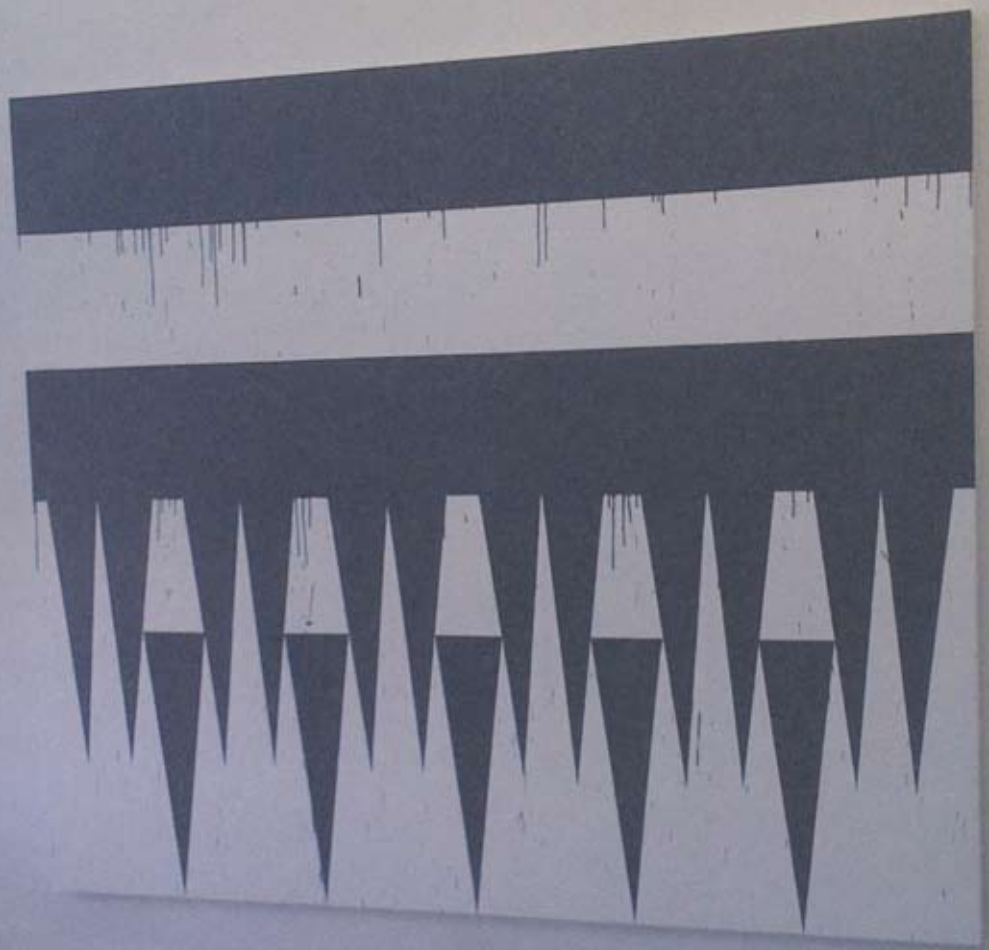
de style" — a *GEE-black*.

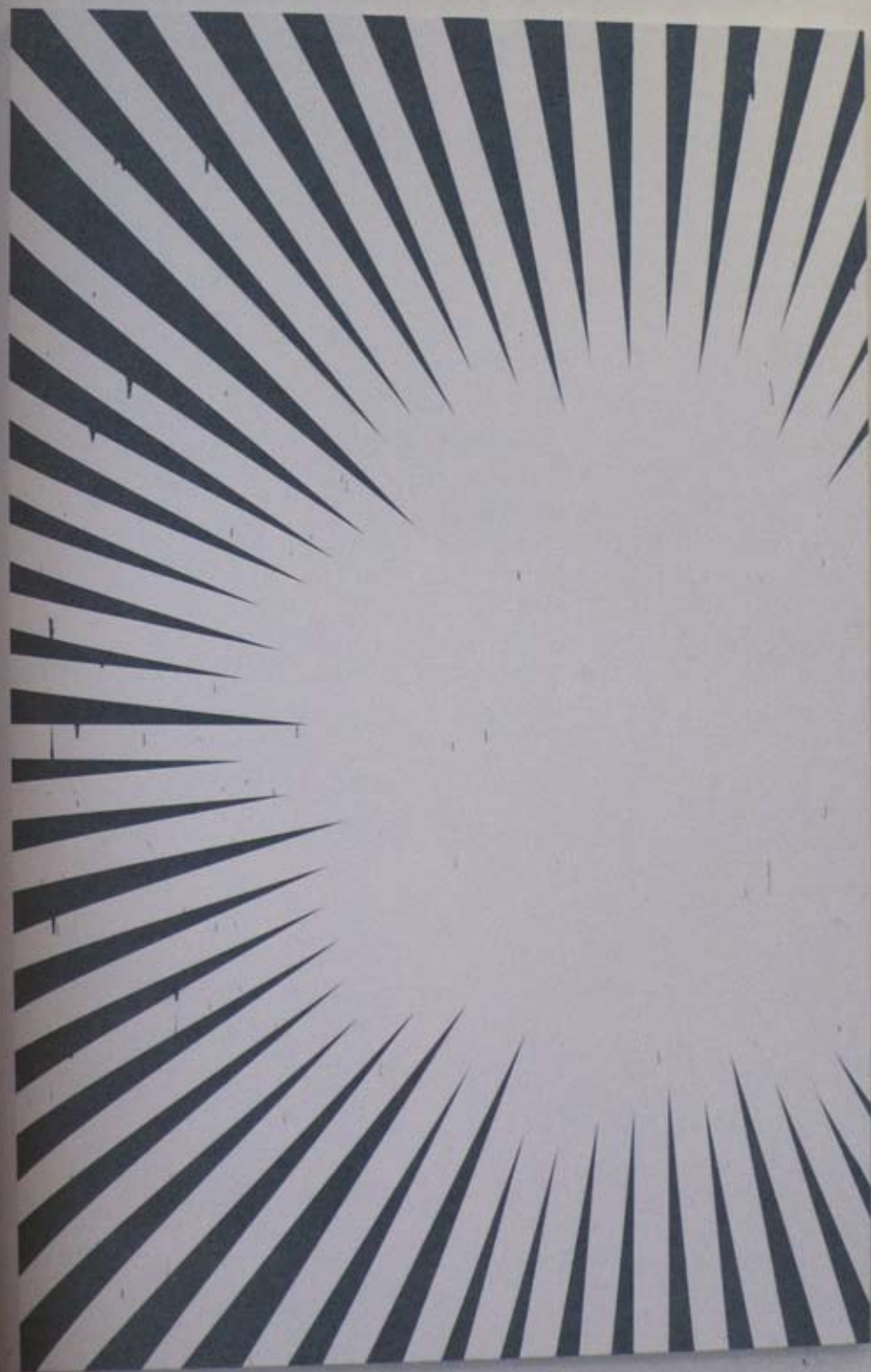
Although all of Einarsson's works are anchored with a distinct orientation, they acquire a fascinating poly-semantic character when experienced in person. Things happen in between the works, almost as if the artist has rendered a conceptual no-man's land, a dramaturgy where nothing seems to exist. This is where the ambiguity and the flux take place. Einarsson's art is always at the edge of being something other than what it actually is. A perpetual sense of displacement and elusiveness is created between the abstract and the figurative: we have semiotic paintings where geometric forms may look like they are part of a Frank Stella canvas but are, in fact, derived from Japanese criminal codes. Similarly, there is an indistinctness between reality and aesthetics, where the realness of an image contrasts with its "coolness"; between individual

and collective interests; fear and violence; justice and injustice; state and semantic rupture; critical distance and personal engagement; fascination and critical judgment; the local and the global; and finally between the presence and the non-presence of the artist.

In this ubiquitous and constantly shifting set of meanings, the oeuvre as a whole becomes more meaningful than any single work or part thereof. The context takes over as a hypertext link and becomes a metaphor for social conditions. Einarsson aspires to represent the world (or a world within a world) as an ongoing equilibrium of social, cultural and economic forces. In this context, the notion of power becomes an important driver. "Power Has a Fragrance" is a poetic, surrealist and "cool" title. We witness a move towards ambiguity and uncertainty, which, of course, is ultimately the privilege and the power of the artist.

















Notes toward a Report on the 5th
Document Excavation of the DATA-ist
Society of NWC, Fall 2111
by Sjón

1. When the storm let up, as suddenly as it had begun, it had pounded the great city with rain for twohundredthirty nights and twohundredthirty days.

2. We sat tight until afternoon and then ventured up out of the train tunnels that had been our base camp while the storm passed over. We split up and set off into the daylight in four three-man search parties, each of which would study one quadrant of the city.

3. On first inspection, the damage to the city was merely as expected: all loose objects had blown into the sea or collected in heaps in smaller plazas and in alleyways. All storefront and advertizing signs had fallen and broken and their images had peeled off entirely, except in isolated places where colorful patches remained in the glue.

4. It was on the fifth day that we comprehended the extent of the destruction. In addition to the damage mentioned above, the windows of every last building had shattered and the wind had scoured all loose objects out of their rooms and lodgings. There appeared to be no pictorial specimens left of the life that had been lived there or that the inhabitants had fantasized about living. The same applied for written material and lettering that might have offered clues to the local culture; everything had fallen prey to water and wind.

5. The only visual relics that the search parties found were faint evidence of graffiti in out-of-the-way places. Only then did we grasp the world-historical significance residing in what remained in the way of billboards in the subway station where we had stayed during the preceding months; the little that had not moldered in the overwhelming humidity down there had served us as toilet paper. In other stations, the damage was total.

6. What remained of the platform and tunnel billboards of the '23rd Street Station':

- a) Left half, nail polish advertisement. Off-red fingernail, 96 cm × 78 cm at the widest point; initial letter of the trademark Dior, a gold-colored 'D'.
- b) The letters 'E' and 'A', formed in French fries on a red background.
- c) The upper portion of a life-sized movie billboard: a strip of night sky, below which the beginning of the movie title is visible, being the letters "TH" in neon-green handwriting.
- d), e), f), g), h), i), j), k), l), m), n), o), p), q), r), s), t), u), v), w): distinguishable fragments of text and image, so small and scattered that further analysis is required.

7. One group promptly took on the task of conserving the billboard remnants.

8. The expedition's largest discovery to date is a building on the east side of the city. From a distance it appeared to be a 'neo-brutalist' monstrosity, 53 stories tall and equilateral (223 m × 223 m × 223 m), but on approach we saw that what had appeared to us to be windows and doors were faults in the building material where black-glazed steel frames had previously been inserted into the material in order to obscure the true nature of the structure. The extreme weather had worked its way under the framework on all sides of the building and loosened the fastenings, prying the steel and glass from the exterior until in the end the frames gave way and tumbled in variously-sized units down to the street on the south, east, and west sides. Upon this falling away of its outer shell, the building was revealed to be utterly unlike other city buildings: it is one gigantic, solid, windowless, doorless clump.

9. The building material is 80 gsm U.S. letter-sized paper, i.e. 215.9 mm in width × 279.4 mm in height. The pages are ordered in 1000-sheet stacks/blocks, which are then laid in a conventional manner, lengthwise, like bricks, thus forming the 223 m wall-width, and we have no reason to believe otherwise than that the "pile of papers" (as we call the building amongst ourselves) reaches its 223 m height as a solid and continuous whole.

10. The next step was to dig our way into "the pile." This led to the discovery that every page in the 1000-sheet building blocks contained information. These are photocopied documents, data on the discrete concerns of the vanished citizenry, issued by public and private entities, pertaining to both private life (tax notices, phone bills, etc.) and collective concerns (minutes from the meetings of municipal bodies, statements from political parties, corporate annual reports, etc.).

11. To date we have found black-and-white photocopies only, with no visual imagery other than the letterheads of the corporations or institutions from which the documents originated.

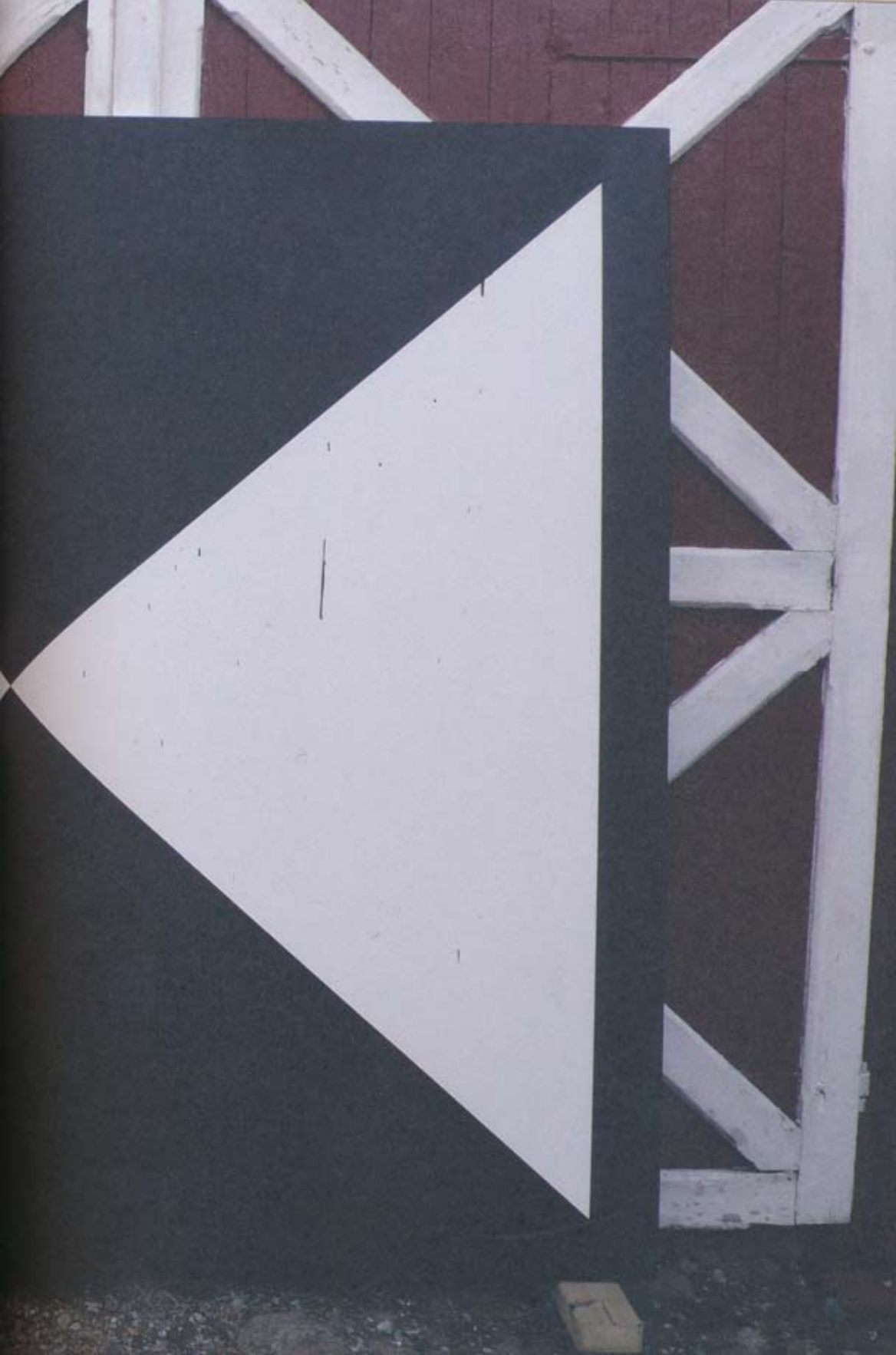
12. 80 gsm paper has an approximate thickness of 0.1 mm. Thus in a single pile of papers extending from the street to the uppermost edge of the building there are 2,230,000 pages. We immediately called out all DATA-ist Society reserve units with any experience in conservation.

13. The work is proceeding well. We are making the utmost effort to retrieve each photocopy intact. In the two months that have passed since our discovery we have excavated a 2.8 m × 1.9 m × 1.3 m "cave" into the structure.

A meditation on the work of Gardar Eide Einarsson, commissioned by Gunnar B. Kvaran for the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art (Dronningensgt. 4, Oslo, Norway. Letters: P.O. Box 1158, 0107, Oslo, Norway. Tel: +47 22936060/ Fax: +47 22936065/E-mail: info@fearnleys.no), composed by Sjón between 24 June 2009 and 3 March 2010.









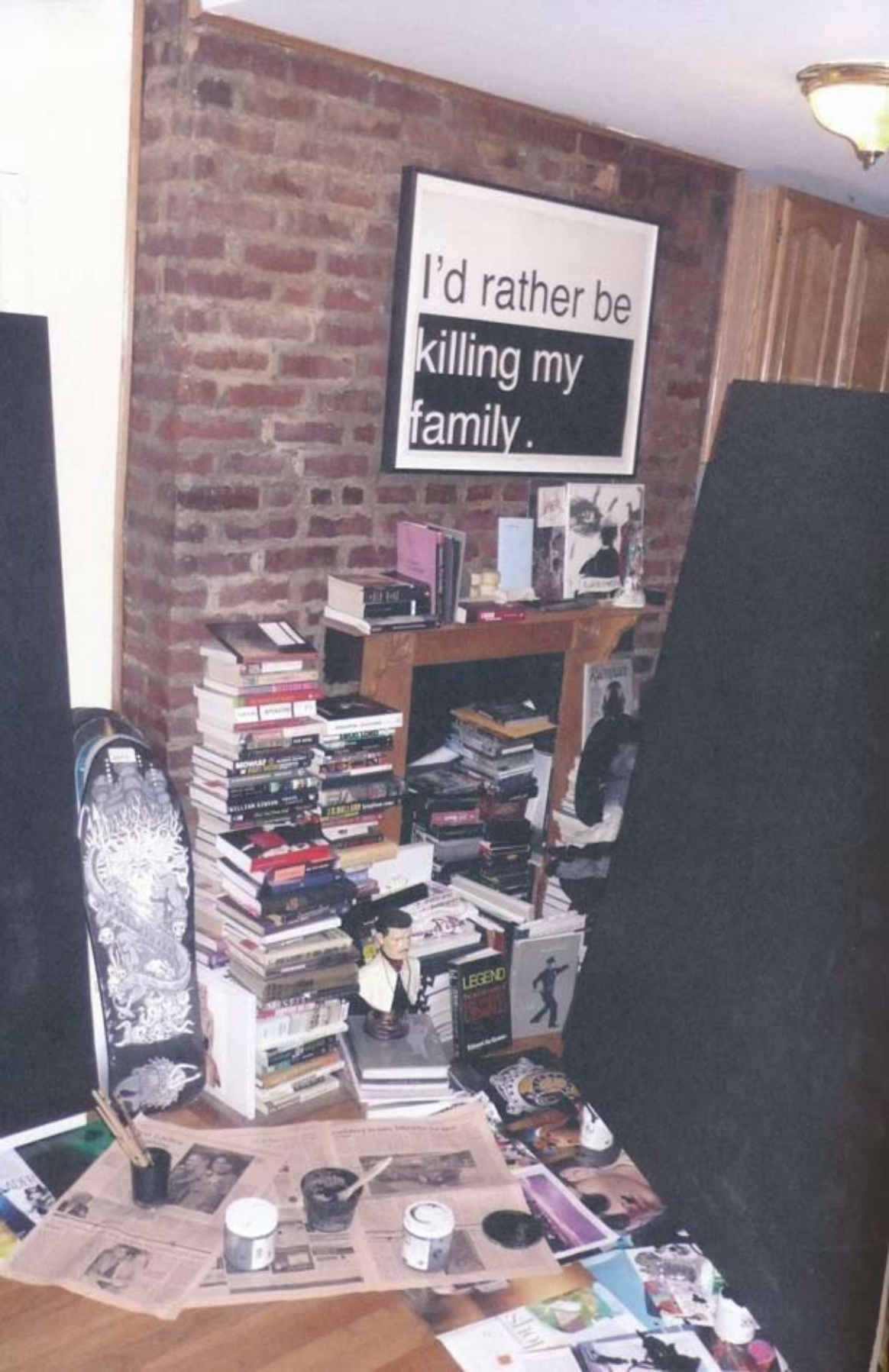




WELCOME
TO
AMERICA
THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM



I'd rather be
killing my
family.



Art, information, paranoia
by Ina Blom

*Paranoia strikes deep in the
heartland
But I think it's all overdone
Exaggerating this, exaggerating that
They don't have no fun*

This is the voice of Paul Simon ca. 1975, a Paul Simon momentarily impersonating the happy-go-lucky slacker who tells all those post-Watergate paranoiacs out there to just *relax*. The laidback blues harmonies underscore his case. This is the aesthetics of rock realism, the aesthetics of all those who refuse to read the big picture in the small detail, who maintain that things are generally what they seem to be, no better, no worse.

And what if, *contra* rock realism, *contra* the studied American coolness that turns to bitter parody at the end of Simon's song, an aesthetics of paranoia could be said to exist – what would it look like? It might look like the work of Gardar Eide Einarsson: indecipherable signs and logos traced on a monochrome canvas, snippets of televised information running over and over on a monitor, inexplicably bleak furniture arrangements, idiotic sentences caught as if “in the air”, at the bottom of a zillion web pages or from some instruction manual. No color, no apparent demonstration of technique, in fact, very little of anything at all – less an experience than an irritant scratches at the outer edges of your conscious knowledge. Thus, spectator paranoia is triggered. It could of course be another case of WYSIWYG: no more, no less. God knows modern art has accustomed us to that particular experience. And yet, there is the lurking suspicion that all these insignificant-seeming bits and

pieces really *mean* something, that, in some larger scheme of things, there exists a marginal public for whom these are genuine signs, opening onto a dense and complex reality. It's just that *you* lack the information. And so the reasoning goes, inside the loopy world of serious art production, where lack of information is at once celebrated and decried, where one person's sublime obliqueness is another person's suspicion of hype and hoax, of self-serving "expert" conspiracies. Gardar Eide Einarsson's work provides direct access entry to this particular social world.

At this level it is basically insignificant whether or not the bits and pieces *actually* signify anything in particular. Yet Einarsson's aesthetics of paranoia is a double entry system: Through the initial triggering of the paranoia of the art spectator and the public who *does not know*, it evokes another paranoid system: The paranoia of those who *think they know*, who organize their more or less secret, more or less illicit forms of knowledge and systems of communication against that of dominant others whose specific position of power depends on a systematic collection and organization of information according to the principle of undercover strategies and an ideal of total control. For both parties the rule holds that no detail is too small, no snippet too insignificant. There is, in short, nothing that is not a sign. Information is everywhere. In a peculiar take on the formal strategies of 1960's and 70's conceptual art, Gardar Eide Einarsson thus manages to tap into a little-discussed undercurrent in this form of art. The emphasis on informational systems and quasi-bureaucratic forms of communication earned conceptual art the name "the aesthetics of

administration": it was essentially seen as an art catering to the sensibilities of the rapidly growing class of post-war functionaries and administrators.¹ And so it probably was — except for the fact that in a number of cases these informational forms had become the artistic language of a paranoid countercultural underground engaging in a highly ambivalent mimicry of the very power structures it was fighting. Here, the aesthetics of administration had, for all means and purposes, turned into an *erotics* of administration... and the most precise thing one can say about the work of Einarsson is probably that it plays off the chaotic *erotics* of political paranoia in analogous ways.

¹ Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions", in *October* 55, Winter 1990, pp. 141-142







ORE







NO
CLEARANCE
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**The Larsen effect:
Gardar Eide Einarsson and
the evacuation of forms
by Nicolas Bourriaud**

Of the theoretical clichés to be found in discourse on art at the start of the twenty-first century, those related to the idea of antagonism are among the most tenacious. The idea that art must display or represent social conflict in order to be seen as “political”, and that furthermore this intention can provide a criterion of aesthetic judgement, harks back to the late nineteenth-century opposition between academic criticism and modernist criticism. The former saw Pissarro and Cézanne as “reactionary” because they did not depict working-class poverty, but rather flower gardens and country scenes; the latter considered their methods and the forms they produced as the content of their art, and, in the last analysis, a validation of its critical potential. Those who championed the allegories of academic art in the second half of the nineteenth century vaunted “the importance it accords to thinking”, in other words “its passion for history, [its] assertion of patriotic, political and religious convictions, and in the end, [its] expression of social or civic ideas.”¹ Some critics condemned Impressionism as a non-committed form of art that concentrated

¹ Thérèse Burollet, in “L’Art Pompier”, in the catalogue of the *William Bouguereau, 1825–1905* exhibition, at the Musée des Beaux Arts, Montréal, the Petit Palais, Paris, and Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, 1984.

on portraying the Parisian bourgeoisie taking their ease, just as Stalin's USSR condemned abstract art as "reactionary" and "bourgeois". And it is a similar logic that nowadays brands Rirkrit Tiravanija as an "escapist" who reproduces patterns of leisure and entertainment², or claims that exhibitions by him or Liam Gillick are "founded on the harmonious identification of full subjects, by comparison to the dis-identified, partial and 'antagonistic' subject position produced in certain works by Santiago Sierra and Thomas Hirschhorn"³. Apart from the fact that the judgement passed on the first two is in my view ill-founded, it remains emblematic of the permanence (or the return) of the theoretical postulate that the critical and/or political dimension of a work lies in its subject rather than its formal character, its declared aims rather than its modes of production or its effects. And the idea of being "dis-identified" is hazy, to say the least. As for the suspicion that hangs over those artists who use the codes of entertainment, it obviously recalls the position adopted by Theodor Adorno, who, unlike the petty bourgeoisie of his time, felt that art should be ascetic, and life voluptuous.

If Gardar Eide Einarsson can be seen as an important figure in the artistic landscape of the early twenty-first century, it is not on account of the

² George Baker, "Editorial Introduction", *October* 110, fall 2004.

³ Claire Bishop: "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October* 110, fall 2004. The quotation is taken from the same author's "Nicolas Bourriaud", in "Art. Key Contemporary Thinkers", ed. Diarmud Costello and Jonathan Vickery, Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2007.

political positions he shares with millions of others, nor the subjects he deals with, which in themselves would be insufficient to render a piece of artistic work worthy of interest. The kind of phrase with which half of all press releases for exhibitions begin, “X’s work deals with the theme of [...]”, never fails to raise a smile – it might just as well be noted that Cézanne was interested in mountains and fruit. It is Einarsson’s artistic project that captivates us. It could be defined in various different ways, but I would sum up his ambition as that of painting a hermeneutic fresco of “control society”. By cropping the object, or enlarging it, downloading signs from the Internet or gleaning them in the street, combining graffiti and flags, flyers and videos, Einarsson immerses the modernist visual system in the sinister morass of post-9/11 political repression. Using allusive forms whose confrontation gives rise to a huge visual Larsen effect, he represents a world in which human relations are reduced to injunctions, interdictions or stifled claims.

I. Minimalism, heraldry, politics

Cropping and enlargement are Einarsson’s basic principles. It should be said that the mine of signs to which he devotes his attention is full of tiny details, and forms that are clandestine, necessarily discreet. *I’ll Never Give My Hand to the Police*, 2007, for example, originated in a prisoner’s tattoo, and other works have been based on images taken from obscure Internet sites, administrative questionnaires, bumper stickers, comics or underground publications. His work casts light on a whole invisible life, and

visitors to his exhibitions may feel as though they have turned over a damp stone to find a swarm of agitated insects beneath it. Terror, repression, dissensus, diverse types of adhesion to obscure ideals: such are the psychological motifs suggested by these stripped-down, monochrome forms. And though Einarsson clearly belongs to the post-production and scan-art movement that has been the major phenomenon of the 2000s, he stands radically apart from artists such as Seth Price, Kelley Walker, Meredith Sparks or Wade Guyton, whose iconographic preferences are much more heterogeneous (being oriented towards a generalised "dispersion"), and whose aesthetics are more "pop". In formal terms, the predominance of black-and-white and the minimalist rigour that characterise Einarsson's compositions are more reminiscent of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who in the 1990s renewed the iconography of political activity, which he contrasted with the vocabulary of minimalism. Einarsson's allusions, subtle intimations and blowups of details represent a formal continuity with this approach. But where the Cuban-American Gonzalez-Torres examined the multiple facets of a single source, namely that of "biopower" and the repression of sexuality, Einarsson, with equal consistency, explores figures of conflict between individuals and the societies to which they "belong". This major conflict lies at the heart of a vast, fragmented fresco whose scattered debris seems to be brought together in each of his exhibitions. It is for the viewer to direct these sometimes enigmatic fragments back towards the invisible centre, the essential conflict: the individual against a central power, the individual and the multiple alternatives that oppose the central power. As the dominant stylistic figure of Einarsson's work, ellipsis produces in us a

sort of muted anxiety, a specific sign of menace. It is clear that something has been taken from the objects we are looking at, and that the link which should make the sense explicit has been obliterated. Through his systematic use of ellipsis, Einarsson instils in the viewer a political consciousness that uses fear as a general principle. In *Untitled (American Flag)*, 2007, for example, the flag has been "emptied out" in such a way as to make it available for an unspecified use. Forms float in a threatening atmosphere; colour is absent; speech bubbles in comic strips have no speakers, or vice versa. Einarsson's world is that of a mismatch between form and content, in which evacuation reigns. This unique metaphor takes account of an entire political context, from disciplinary confinement in offshore camps to the deportation of illegal workers. More generally, it demonstrates the artist's search for a lexicon that can represent the society in which we live, given that the current proliferation of information is accompanied by a deafening silence with regard to contemporary political issues: the bombardment of information to which we are subject makes it possible, paradoxically, to keep a lot more things secret. There is a sort of informational white noise, a susurrant that covers and "equalises" discordant sounds. The bandpass is reduced to the dimensions of government propaganda and ruling ideology, while anything that is not considered to be "in the public interest" is relegated to the netherworld of the Internet. This situation is examined in Einarsson's work through the elision of content, and a tacit appeal to the personalisation of social forms, as in *Online souvenir #2 (Statue of Liberty)*, 2007, which includes both the head of the statue and the twin towers of the World Trade Center, above the slogan "YOUR TEXT HERE



To Personalize". Demonstration banners, hoardings, light boxes, administrative forms – formats are emptied out, and their contrasts accentuated through the use of black-and-white. This reduces political opinions to the dimensions of bumper stickers, or urban graffiti. What artists and outlaws have in common is an urge to produce sense within their respective systems, through customising and marking their territory.

II. The spectacle of politics, the politics of the spectacle

The emblematic figure of the relationship to the City is no longer the citizen, but the immigrant, who has none of the former's civil rights. This is really an invisible citizen, a denizen of basements, a furtive weapon engaged in a social war – the political equivalent of Philip K. Dick's "replicants", with all the attributes of humans, apart from rights. The acquisition of an identity (and its associated social visibility) is thus the central issue in an urban strategy and a precarious thinking process whose points of attachment are non-material. The South African artist Kendell Geers has shown this in photographs of private security systems, and in works that feature physical danger, such as *Mondo Kane*, 2002, a minimalist cube with shards of glass stuck in it, and others made of razor blades, or carrying a lethal electric charge. Francis Alj's, having moved from his native Belgium to Mexico, also works on the control systems that traverse the City, with images of outsiders, homeless people and stray dogs. But the question of immigration and insecurity implies another: that of translation. Einarsson, who left Norway for New York at the start of the 2000s,

draws a part of his problematic from the act of immigration, which he has described in interviews as a sort of primal scene. "In Norway", he says, "there is a very different relationship to individualism. It's almost frowned upon to be excessively individualistic. People are encouraged to have a social frame of mind. I moved to New York seven years ago. To me, the extent to which this cowboy individualism seemed to be present was shocking. That probably comes out of my having moved here the day before 9/11. In my first year, it was armed guards on the subways and Humvees downtown. I can see those experiences in my work. I was just cataloguing all of the repressive imagery."⁴ How can a relationship to a particular society be translated into the vocabulary of another? The feeling of being alien to the social body has become a precondition to perceiving it. In the art of the early twenty-first century, the gaze of the stranger is much more interesting than that of the "native". And the reason why it prevails over the perception of the individual who belongs fully to a community is that it is equivalent to the way the psychoanalyst looks at a patient. It is a gaze from outside, what Jacques Lacan would have called a "floating listening". Every society secretes a specific subconscious that could be termed "ideology"; and the primary role of artists who take a critical approach to their environment is to interrogate this social subconscious, to grasp its symptoms in the succession of narratives and images produced by society. Ideology, according to Louis Althusser, is "a system (with its own logic and rigour) of representations (images, myths, ideas or concepts, as the

⁴ Interview with Christopher Bollen, *Interview*, November 2008.

case may be) that has an historic existence and role within a given society”⁵. And human society, he added, creates a particular type of formation that is “profoundly unconscious”⁶. Einarsson questions the modes of apparition of ideology in daily life, and in the most popular forms of cultural production. But unlike a number of artists who settle for simply presenting these forms as ideological, he puts them into perspective as part of a political project, bringing out their true ideological character. Above all else, what his works show is a certain state of turmoil. They expose the consternation of ideology through the chaotically multiple phenomena of resistance to centralised power, the proliferation of extreme left-wing groups, the pullulation of criminal networks. In this dissident universe, anti-capitalist militancy joins up with the world of crime by strange pathways. Einarsson evolves an erudite intertextuality in exploring the secret language of a clandestine community as compact as the Japanese yakuza (*Tokyo Underworld*, 2006), or in manipulating the codes of underground subcultures or leftist militias. Seen through the monochrome figures that make up his exhibitions, politics is a distinct branch of heraldry, an ensemble of ensigns under which the watchwords of a protean, ideological dissidence file by, more or less hermetically, sometimes reduced to an unceasing flow of political and ideological signals from which the artist extracts forms that touch us with their flashing power. We see that they continue to generate sense (though we do not clearly perceive its origin). But what

⁵ In *For Marx*, 1965.

⁶ *Ibid.*

world do they come from? Cut out, filigreed, standardised in black-and-white, fitted into the format of modernist painting, they seem to have been camouflaged in order to operate optimally in the specific reality the art world offers them. Signs in combat gear.

If the capitalist productive system is to be preserved, then ideas, and more particularly ideas with a potential for subversion, must be relegated to a domain in which they have only exhibition value. Such is the danger that hangs over the world of art – that of turning into a natural reservoir of protest against the system. Art has become a location for the redeployment of politics in a depoliticised space, under the omnipresent authority of a market indexed upon the luxury goods industry. But this structural contradiction, however violent, may produce truth effects. It is true that the world of art could see itself described as a locus of the utmost hypocrisy, in other words one of inoffensive political maximalism, where the extremism of positions is exacerbated by the fact that no one imagines they could have the slightest effect on an ideologically armour-plated reality. Art is also, however, a place where counter-ideology is produced, at the infinitesimal scale of the signs manipulated by Einarsson. To return to Althusser, let us not forget that “the function of ideology is to ensure a link between people across the forms of their existence, the relationship of individuals to the tasks the social structure has set them.”⁷ Ideology is an imaginary bond, a mental fixative. By means of samplings and

⁷ In “Théorie, pratique théorique. Idéologie et lutte idéologique”, quoted in Jacques Rancière, *La Leçon d'Althusser*, 1974.

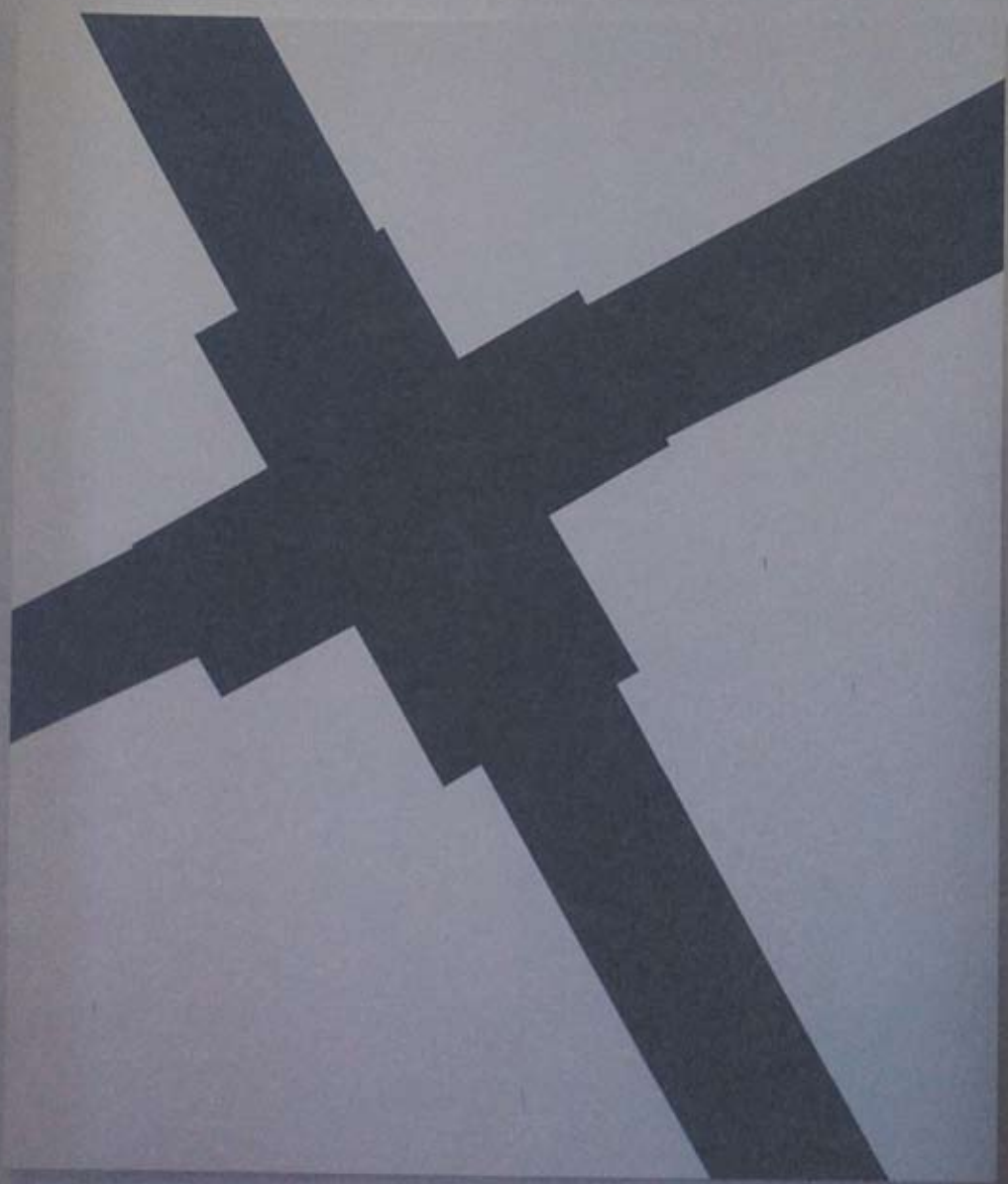
the “detaching” of signs, Einarsson’s works put into practice a critique of ideology, and it is in this sense that they bring about political effects at the very heart of their formative process. I have already mentioned the “Larsen effect” that characterises his exhibitions. By making the signs of their source as remote as possible, while bringing them as close as possible to the codes of pictorial modernism, and to the dominant ideology as it is reflected in the art world, Einarsson generates an overwhelming, chaotic dissonance – a “white noise” that drowns out the music of information; an art in which the control of amplification is manifest, and which plays with “breath” as a formal instrument.



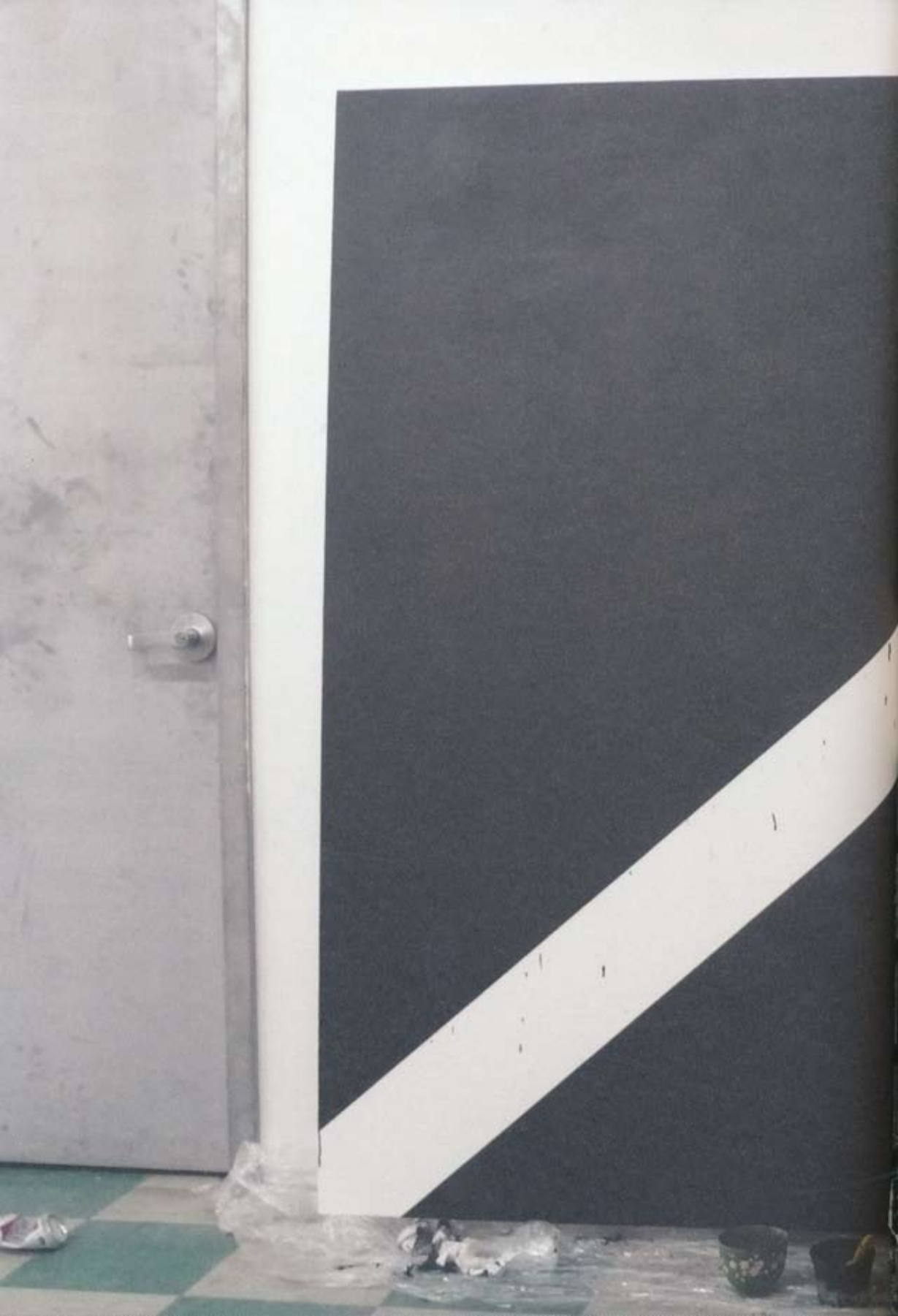
ETERNAL



NAUSEA











Gardar Eide Einarsson

Born on 12 January 1976 in Oslo, Norway
Lives and works in New York

Education:

- 2002–2003 Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program/
Cooper Union School of Architecture, Architecture and Urban
Studies Program, New York, US
- 2001–2002 Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program,
Studio Program, New York, US
- 1999–2000 Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule,
Frankfurt am Main, DE
- 1996–2000 National Academy of Fine Art, Bergen, NO
- 1994–1996 Einar Granum School of Fine Art, Oslo, NO

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

- 2010 *Power Has a Fragrance*, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern
Art, Oslo, NO (traveling to Reykjavik Art Museum,
Reykjavik, IS; Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, SE;
Museum Friedericianum, Kassel, DE, catalogue)
Another Modern Moment Completed, Team Gallery,
New York, NY, US
- 2009 *Focus: Gardar Eide Einarsson*, Museum of Modern Art,
Fort Worth, TX, US
I Caused Dreams Which Caused Death. This Is My Crime.,
Bugada & Cernel, Paris, FR
Dog-Whistle Politics, Nils Stærk Contemporary Art,
Copenhagen, DK
- 2008 *No Chaos, Damn It!*, Standard (Oslo), NO
South of Heaven, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, CH
I Am The Master of My Fate, Gardar Eide Einarsson,
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Saint Louis, MO, US
- 2007 *Michael Benevento*, Los Angeles, CA, US
All My Friends Are Dead, Honor Fraser, Los Angeles, CA, US
Judge, Team Gallery, New York, NY, US

- South of Heaven*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, DE (catalogue)
Total War, Sorry We're Closed, Brussels, BE
- 2006 *Population One*, Standard (Oslo), NO
Tokyo Underworld, Nils Stærk Contemporary Art,
 Copenhagen, DK
Present Future, Artissima 13, Nils Stærk Contemporary Art,
 Turin, IT
Statements, Art37Basel, Team Gallery, CH
- 2005 *Ship of Fools*, Swiss Institute, New York, NY, US
Leashed or Confined, Team Gallery, New York, NY, US
Black Iron Prison, Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris, FR
- 2004 *Come and Take It*, UKS Gallery, Oslo, NO
Start to Enter, Nils Stærk Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, DK
We'll Make the World You Live, Fotogalleriet, Oslo,
 NO (catalogue)
5 (Words), Schnittraum, Cologne, DE
Your Example Will Speak Louder Than Words, Marres Centrum
 Beeldende Kunst, Maastricht, NL
- 2003 *o.u.t.l.a.w.*, Atle Gerhardsen, Berlin, DE
That's Not Made for That, Norsk Form/Fotogalleriet, Oslo, NO
Violators Will Be Fine, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, DE

Two-Person Exhibitions:

- 2006 *Banks Violette/Gardar Eide Einarsson*, gallery.sora, Tokyo, JP
 (with Banks Violette)
- 2004 *Rank Xerox*, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, NO
 (with Matias Faldbakken)
- 2003 *Lösen Sie Ihren Bonus Ein*, Am Parlamentzplatz, Revolver,
 Frankfurt/Main, DE (with Hinrich Sachs)
- 2002 *Lars Von Trier*, American Fine Arts, New York, NY, US
 (with Gareth James)
6' Under, White Box, New York, NY, US (with Carissa Rodriguez)
Mind the Space, Oslo Kunsthall, NO (with Jan Christensen)
- 2001 *Osculum Infame*, Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, Helsinki,
 FI, (with Matias Faldbakken (catalogue))
- 1999 *Notes From the Underground*, Galleri 21:25, Oslo, NO
 (with Marius Engh)

Selected Group Exhibitions (2005–2010):

- 2010 *The Beauty and the Distance*, 17th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, AU
It Is It, Espacio 1414, Santurce, Puerto Rico
- 2009 *Chasing Napoleon*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
Beg, Borrow and Steal, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL, US
That's All Folks, Stadshallen, Bruges, BE
The World Is Yours, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, DK
New York Minute: 60 Artisti della Scena Newyorchese, MACRO Future, Rome, IT
Living Together, The Centro Cultural Montehermoso, Victoria-Gasteiz, ES, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, ES
Lessons in the Art of Falling, National Museum of Photography, Preus Museum, NO
Einarsson, Rhodes, Whitney, Team Gallery, New York, NY, US
Every Revolution Is a Roll of the Dice, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY, US
- 2008 *Listen Darling...The World Is Yours*, Ellipse Foundation, Cascais, PT
Norsk Hydros Kunstsamling, The Henie Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden, NO
The Soft Shields of Pleasure, Den Frie Udstilling, Copenhagen, DK
Hardcore, Sørlandet Art Museum, Kristiansand, NO
Meet Me Around the Corner: Works from the Astrup Fearnley Collection, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, NO
That Was Then...This Is Now, PS1, New York, NY, US
2008 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum, New York, NY, US
Murder Letters, Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon, PT
Lights On: Norsk Samtidskunst, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, NO
Carnegie Art Award 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, FI, (traveling to Henie Onstad Art Center, Den Frie Centre of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, DK, The Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm, SE, Royal College of Art, London, UK, Gothenburg Museum of Art, SE)
- 2007 *Every Revolution Is a Roll of the Dice*, Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX, US
White Light, Sørlandet Art Museum, Kristiansand, NO
My Sweet Sixteen Party, Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, BE
Group Show, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, JP
Painting, Space, and Society, Göteborgs Konsthall, Gothenburg, SE

Sweet Bird of Youth, Arndt & Partner, Berlin, DE
Last Attraction Next Exit, Max Wigram, London, UK
Bastard Creature, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
Mafia: or One Unopened Packet of Cigarettes,
Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY, US
Conditions of Display, The Moore Space, Miami, FL, US
Extraordinary Rendition, Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona, ES
Kick It Till It Breaks, The Kitchen, New York, NY, US
I Love Malmo – Works from the Malmö Art Museum, SE,
Turku Art Museum, Turku, FI
In Practice Projects, Sculpture Center, New York, NY, US

2006

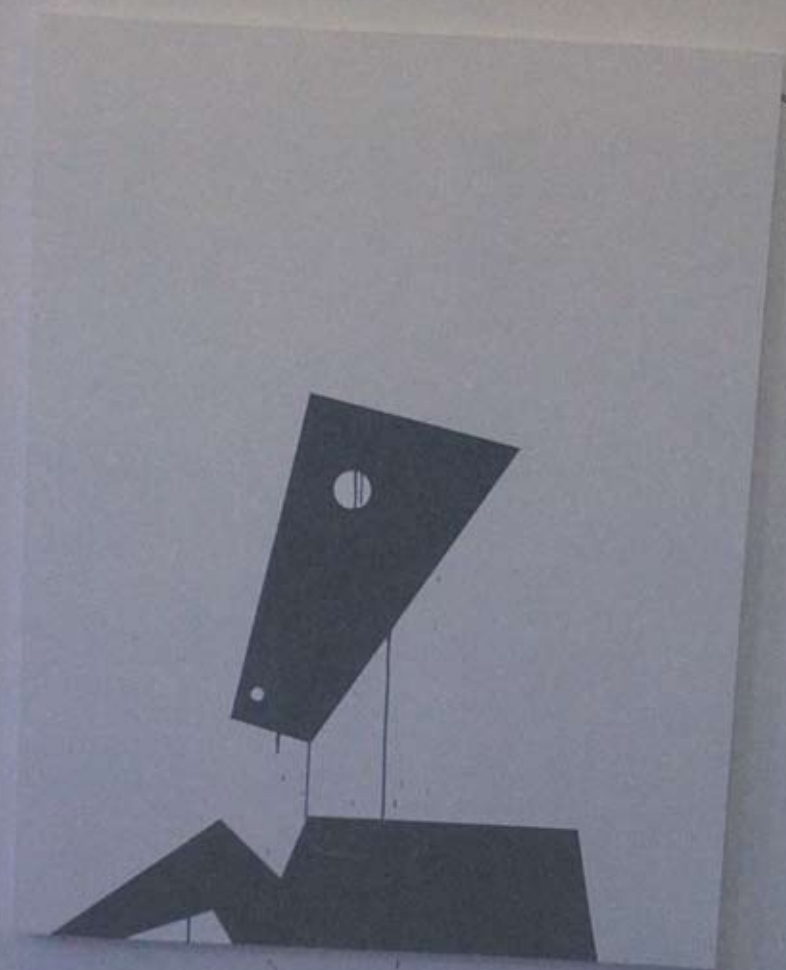
In the Poem About Love..., Artists Space, New York, NY, US
And yet It Moves!, MOT London, UK
Bring the War Home, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, NY, US
Collection 2005/06, Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, BE
Survivor, Bortolami Dayan, New York, NY, US
Déjà 5 Ans Seulement!, Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris, FR
I Love My Scene 2, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY, US
Opacity, Wiener Secession, Vienna, AT
Defamation of Character, P.S.1., New York, NY, US
Norwegian Sculpture Biennial, The Vigeland Museum, Oslo, NO
Street; Behind the Cliche, Witte De With, Rotterdam, NL
Coming Together, The National Museum of Art, Architecture
and Design, Oslo, NO
War on 45, Bortolami Dayan Gallery, New York, NY, US
View Nine: Scene 2, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY, US
Skate Culture, Preus Museum, Horten, NO
Mafia (Or One Unopened Packet of Cigarettes),
Standard (Oslo), NO
Theater of Life – Rhetorics of Emotions, Städtische Galerie im
Lenbachhaus, Munich, DE
Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, CA, US
Down by Law, Wrong Gallery for the 2006 Whitney Biennial,
Whitney Museum, New York, NY, US
Villa Jelmini – the complex of respect, Kunsthalle Bern, CH

2005

L'Altro, Lo Stesso, Franco Soffiantino Arte Contemporanea,
Turin, IT
To Be Continued..., Nils Stærk Contemporary Art,
Copenhagen, DK
Master of My Fate, Robert and Tilton Gallery,
Los Angeles, CA, US
In the Poem About Love You Don't Write The Word Love,
Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow, GB
The 9th International Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, TR
Blast, G Fine Art, Washington D.C., US

Downstrokes and Feedback, Allston Skirt Gallery,
Boston, MA, US
Next Generation: No Ordinary Sanctity, Kunstraum
Deutsche Bank, Salzburg, AT
Walls 'n Things, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, New York, NY, US
Populism, The National Museum of Art, Design and Architecture,
Oslo, NO; Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, LT;
Frankfurter Kunstverein, DE; Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam, NL
*Opacity: Current Considerations on Art Institutions and the
Economy of Desire*, UKS, Oslo, NO
Greater New York, P.S.1., New York, NY, US
Damien Deroubaix/Gardar Eide Einarsson/Jakob Kolding,
Team Gallery, New York, NY, US









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NAKED FEAR!



STUDIO
AND
CUBE

*On the relationship
between where art is made
and where art is displayed*

Brian O'Doherty

TYPECASTING
ON THE ARTS AND SCIENCES OF HUMAN INEQUALITY



Gardar Eide Einarsson
'Power Has a Fragrance'

Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, 06.05–15.08.2010
Curators: Gunnar B. Kvaran, Hanne Beate Ueland, Grete Årbu

Reykjavik Art Museum, 21.10.2010–09.01.2011
Curator: Hafthor Yngvason

Bonniers Konsthall, 08.03–12.06.2011
Curator: Sara Arrhenius

Kunsthalle Fridericianum, 25.06–11.09.2011
Curator: Rein Wolfs

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