



play_gallery for still and motion pictures

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www.pushthebuttonplay.com

opening hours: tue-sat 12-7pm

DISOBEDIENCE

an ongoing video library

a project by Marco Scotini

Private View: Thursday, 13th January 2005, 7pm

14th January – 26th February 2005

Opening hours: Tue - Sat, 12 am – 7 pm

Disobedience is an exhibition and a study on the relationship between artistic practice and civil disobedience. It developed from a co-operation between PLAY_gallery for still and motion pictures, transmediale 05 and the Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien. Conceived as a heterogeneous and constantly changing archive, the project is understood as a guide to the geographies of civil disobedience: from the social struggles in Italy in the year 1977 to the recent globalisation protests before and after Seattle. The project is also an atlas of the plurality of resistance tactics: from direct action and counter information to biological disobedience. By setting different signs and situations in motion, **Disobedience** is presented as a network of open topics, brought together by artists, activists, film producers, philosophers and political groups.

Interventionists, activists and media collectives are all over the world working through the medium of exhibitions, while artists go out into the streets and - by betraying the visual for the action - produce public forums, activist campaigns as well as symbols and mechanisms of protest. Some talk of a return to the political art of the seventies, others of an "ambiguous" return. Martha Rosler recommends re-reading Adorno as deterrent against a drift towards a mainstream phenomenon. Steve Kurtz, of the collective Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), was arrested by the FBI as a suspected bio-terrorist. Is the post-Seattle-movement thus only a remake (although in online version) of the past? Can the problems still be the same, after the socialist framework has disappeared and we have totally different ways of production in post-Fordist times? ... if it is no longer possible, to retain a clear separation between intellectual production, political action and culture? ... if it is nearly inconceivable to differentiate work from other human activities?

The goal of **Disobedience**, to create a common space for artistic production and for political action, means to grasp that society itself is changing, and with it the language it produces as a political subject and as a media object. The construction of images is what defines the strata of social relationships in our societies and, as Debord calls it, what makes appear as united what already exists in separate form. The direct intervention of a political grassroots activism - the call for change as well as the possibility to achieve consent - is always measured for its ability to break existing political structures, to point out new ways for practicing the public realm, to create non traditional forms of political intervention and to configure new antagonisms and forms of disagreement.

The decision for directing the attention towards civil disobedience has however another reason. Paolo Virno for example defined civil disobedience as the "basic form of political action by the multitude". Outside the liberal tradition, in which this civil disobedience by the multitude has formed since Thoreau, and also far removed from the will to have it constitutionalized - as Hannah Arendt wanted it -, civil disobedience cannot agree with the state, and has to query its authority. If civil disobedience is not limited to violation, defection demands an affirming attitude towards our potential to produce images for communication etc. by generalizing what has traditionally been artistic practice.

Disobedience presents itself as an expanded cartography of conflict and as a network of contemporary activism. The course of the exhibition runs through ten rooms in the two spaces of Play_gallery and Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien. Each room is the autonomous part of a central platform with an historic character and contains a collection of original material from the 77 movements in Italy. An information area contains books, flyers,



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magazines and posters from and about the seventies, and inscribed on a time-line the main events from 1976 to 1978: From the Parco Lambro demonstration in Milan, filmed by Alberto Grifi, up to the expulsion from the University of Rome of the trade union leader Luciano Lama and the events in Bologna, which were documented by Italian video activists.

The exhibition is also concerned with the relationship between art and activism of the post-communist era in Eastern Europe, with the world-wide movement against neo-liberalism (from the crisis in Argentina to the G8-summit), the occupation of public spaces, the calls for a social housing policy, the struggle for civil rights as well as with culture-jamming practices. Much attention is paid to those forms, which see the most important expression of civil disobedience in this time of post-Fordism in the 'exodus' and in the 'exit' (according to the definitions of Albert O. Hirschman): Forms of self organization, alternative production processes, constituting practices.

Disobedience was conceived as long-term project that therefore can only be presented as an incomplete and provisional archive.

Artists, theorists and groups of artists involved:

Alterazioni Video, Argentina Arde, Delphine Bedel, Franco Berardi (Bifo), Beth Bird, Black Audio Film Collective, Jota Castro, Comunitaria TV, Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), Marcelo Expósito, Harun Farocki, Alberto Grifi, Grupo de Arte Callejero (GAC), Guerrillavision, Indymedia, kanalB, Makrolab, Gianni Motti, Paper Tiger TV, Margit Czenki/Park Fiction, Radek Community, Oliver Ressler, Pierre-Olivier Rollin, Paula Roush (msdm), Paola Salerno, Hito Steyerl, Socialist Resistance, Sven't Jolle, The Yes Men, Tute Bianche, Andrei Ujica, Ultra-red, Ambrogio Vitali/Radio Alice, Videoteppisti, Paolo Virno, Peter Watkins, Wayruro...