

## DIARY

### T-B A21 Lopud Seminar 2011

#### *Black Swans – Producing the Improbable*

Lopud, Croatia, October 6 – 9, 2011

#### Thursday, October 6

The Lopud Seminar 2011 started on Thursday evening at hotel La Villa with an introduction by Francesca Habsburg, chairman of T-B A21, on the history of her engagement with Croatian culture and Lopud in particular. This was followed by the first panel *T-B A21: A laboratory for new ideas. The new project space* moderated by academic Bruce Ferguson, with Francesca Habsburg, architects and academics Alisa Andrasek and Skylar Tibbits, T-B A21's project manager Moritz Stipsicz and Tony Myatt, director of the Music Research Centre at the University of York. Addressing the context of architecture, design and academia in general, the discussion focused on questions of non-institutionalized forms of collaborations and formations of networks emerging within institutional settings – in particular academic environments – based on the overlapping of experimental research areas within various disciplines. Notions of scaling, contingency and speculation within architectural, computational and design practices were discussed in relation to models of collaboration between academia, practice and industry as well as between artistic practices and scientific research. Technology emerged as intrinsic to the development of ideas as well as a non-linear thinking (“imaginative leaps”) as being essential to remain experimental and vibrant as an institution.

#### Friday, October 7

Following a tour through the Fortress by Francesca Habsburg, the seminar participants gathered on Friday morning in the Franciscan Monastery for the panel *Commissioning Art – Producing the Improbable*, moderated by T-B A21's chief curator Daniela Zyman with curator Dan Cameron and artists Mario Garcia Torres, Florian Reither and Marko Peljhan. Taking participants involvement with specific projects ranging from interventions in post-Katrina New Orleans to Kabul as a starting point, the panel discussed projects defying centrifugal forces and markets and seeking out remote places of engagement and activity as well as the role of institutions in supporting and promoting such commissions.

In the afternoon the group met for a visit to T-B A21's art pavilion *Your black horizon*, a collaboration between artist Olafur Eliasson and architect David Adjaye, which has been installed permanently on Lopud since 2007 after it premiered at the 51<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennale in 2005. Afterwards, the group returned to the Monastery for the afternoon discussions,

starting off with a short introduction by Francesca Habsburg and a presentation by Stewart Richardson, captain of T-B A21's research vessel *Dardanella*. The route of the ship as well as the specifics of its past and future journey circumnavigating the Americas were discussed in detail. This was followed by the panel *Dardanella: A Living Archive* moderated by Francesca Habsburg with Stewart Richardson, Tony Myatt, curator Fionn Meade, sound artist Jana Winderen, who joined the *Dardanella* on one leg of its journey to make underwater recordings, and scientist Adam Bly, founder of SEED Media Group.

In the evening, Dubrovnik-based artist Slaven Tolj performed inside the Monastery, a re-staging of his *Untitled* work from 2003, developed for the T-B A21 exhibition *Brightness* held in Dubrovnik in the same year. Sitting on a chair undressed, the artist was wrapped in a cable of lights, slowly unscrewing individual bulbs until the audience was left in complete darkness. Friday night was dedicated to sound performances by Jana Winderen and Tommi Grönlund, both taking place in the inner courtyard of the Monastery. For *The Unseen Realm*, a live audio installation focusing on acoustic zones beyond our hearing abilities, Jana Winderen used sound material from the underwater recordings she made on the *Dardanella*, as well as sounds of insects and bats, some of the latter recorded on the island itself. Tommi Grönlund's *A brief review on the status of sorrow* used existing sound material from various sources as well as exploring the sound resonances produced by the space of the courtyard.

### **Saturday, October 8**

In the morning the seminar participants gathered at the Monastery for a presentation by Tony Myatt, entitled *Neuroscience, Ecology and Other Music Production Techniques*, addressing his work in the field of sound perception and technology and in particular in relation to T-B A21's sound pavilion *The Morning Line* and the development of hydrophone technology on the *Dardanella*. Afterwards, Tony moderated the panel *Mediatic Production and Dissemination of 'A Living Archive'* with artists Petteri Nisunen and Marko Peljhan, architect and academic Adrian Lahoud, and Markus Reymann who is working with T-B A21 on developing the *Dardanella* project. The panel discussed issues regarding the accumulation and processing of large amounts of data referring to participants' own projects as well as the development of *A Living Archive*, T-B A21's plans to make material collected during the *Dardanella's* journey accessible online. The panel also addressed different research methodologies in relation to collecting data, whereby two opposing formats emerged, one being the comprehensive survey, the other one focusing on research being conducted through the construction of a specific initial argument. Notions of collaborative practices as well as copyright issues were subjects the panelists touched upon, as well as leading the discussion to questions of data visualization, emphasized through a presentation on the topic by Adam Bly who shared his specialist knowledge in this area.

Following an afternoon trip to Dubrovnik, the seminar participants met again at the Monastery in the early evening for the final panel *Performance and the Performative* which followed a presentation by American curator Fionn Meade, entitled *Question the Wall Itself* who addressed the notion of the performative through historical precedents in relation to its history in social sciences, anthropology as well as exhibition making and performance art. The following panel was moderated by Matthias von Hartz, artistic director of the Kampnagel theatre festival and included Fionn Meade, artists Tommi Grönlund and Carl Michael von Hausswolff, actor Markus Reymann and Sandra Noeth from Tanzquartier Vienna. The discussion initially addressed issues concerning collaborations between institutions working within different cultural fields in particular dance, theater and visual arts. Walid Raad's project *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: A History of Art in the Arab World*, a co-commission by T-B A21 and Wiener Festwochen, re-emerged as a point of reference within the discussion, leading to subjects such as repetition, embodiment and institutional critique. The historicity of performance art and the notion of 'life as performance' were addressed as well as the problematic attempt to construct a homogenized notion of performance art through the institutionalization of performance practices within museological contexts and their incorporation within museum collections from medium-specific viewpoints. The question of authorship was addressed in relation to controversies surrounding re-enactments of performance works as well as in the context of the notion of authenticity in relation to the body, a figure of thought emerging strongly throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Similar to Friday night, Saturday evening was dedicated to performances, starting off with Gelitin's performance lecture *let's talk about something real, let's talk about love* where the artists presented a selection of their past projects – ranging from a rocket launch in Japan to an intervention at the World Trade Center in New York. The performance took place mostly inside the monastery with the three artists – Florian Reither, Ali Janka and Tobias Urban (without fourth Gelitin member Wolfgang Gantner) – making use of the direct feed of a video camera projecting drawings and other printed material on a screen during their presentation. Around midnight, this was followed by a sound performance in the courtyard of the monastery by Carl Michael von Hausswolff who collaborated with Michael Esposito for an ongoing project in relation to electronic voice phenomena. The performance described by the artist as “a concert/presentation of utterly strange occurrences that would be called electronic voice phenomena” included recordings from Sweden, Mexico and new ones taken on Lopud the night before, which had been processed by Esposito to detect unusual, ghostlike noise phenomena.

### **Sunday, October 9**

The seminar closed on Sunday morning with a casual discussion in the garden of La Villa which gave all participants the opportunity to reassess the subjects addressed during the seminar.