Editorial

I believe in sharing. Issues of the ownership of the collective memory, sharing and exchanging have been leitmotivs in this project. Until now, the basis of my collection of images has been those that mass media makes available in the public domain. It is a selection of the appropriated images I have shared with the authors of this book.

In return, they shared their reaction towards these public images with me. In addition, everybody involved in this book project shared stories, situations, and anecdotes, which occurred because of the project and which could potentially be another reason to create images. Eventually the book brings the results of this process back into the public sphere. It is connected with the hope for more reactions, which will enrich the visual and text based discourse on visuality, image, the ownership of our collective memory and the public sphere.

Actually, the idea for this project came to me during the preparation of a solo exhibition at Bunkier Sztuki Kraków, which is the name of Krakow's Center for Contemporary Art. Since a rather voluminous book on my work of the past 10 years was published in 2000, it seemed a bit boring to see all these photographs again with critical texts in ñ for a change - Polish. At the time, I was more attracted by the idea of making a book about the reasons and premises of my artistic work, which is basically the fact that I have been collecting images for approximately 20 years. These images are taken from the daily and weekly press, they are stills of video-recordings of films and TV news ñ more or less reproduced public images. I wanted to share them with colleagues, critics and curators among others. Thus I offered a group of people who are somehow close to my artistic practice or to issues I am dealing with, access to a part of this very subjective collection as an inspiration to create texts and images that respond to the interest of their authors and not to a hermeneutic exercise. My interest has been to see what kind of thoughts and imaginations the sent material would evoke.

In the end, over 130 people received the invitation to join me in this project. The response to my proposal has been unexpectedly strong and overwhelming: 101 individuals have sent a contribution. Thank you all for engaging so generously! It has made me really happy!

The methodology of this project can be considered a game, which I initiated by producing a CD-ROM with a personal and moment-guided choice of the compiled images. A general rule based on action and reaction was established: each author received a CD-ROM with the material that has been the inspiration, motor and core of my own work. Of course this does not mean that I have used all of them in my artworks. On the contrary, in this compilation there are very few images used in my own work. Through this project they have again become a medium of exchange. In return I received reactions, which range from emotions of creative excitement to statements like: "I can' t do anything with the material you present" or even more frustrated reactions, "Why did you make me look again at this horror" (the book may give answers). Of course I do not evaluate the statements, because I believe that a non-ideological approach to subjects generates more interesting discourses.

Consequently the authors invited to this project had complete freedom to deal with the material. They could react to my invitation through texts, collages, new images, sounds or other ideas. The only thing I really wanted to trigger has been authenticity in the reaction. There is no need to say that I did not necessarily expect text contributions from curators or critics and contributions of images from artists.

However the project follows a visual strategy that is similar to my machineries. In this sense, I present a series of images in a compilation, which produces new images and readings. My contribution in the context of this project has been to define the rules of production, to compile the images on the CD-ROM, and to create the presentation concept for the different contributions.

Many of the collected images on the CD-ROM deal with political, social and global issues. Characteristically, those images invade us in an unpredictable order. Considering this aspect of the discontinuous invasion to our consciousness and looking at the material received, I was sure that it would be completely uninteresting to organize it according to the alphabetical order of their authors or to mere thematically aspects. I felt the necessity to sequence the material due to spontaneous associations and to a rhythm, which follows closer to the rule of how I would edit a film. As a consequence of this, the reactions of the authors were put together more in terms of confrontations, montage, hard cuts, and transitions ñ all strategies, which create a (more circular) narrative beyond academic and simply thematic discourses. In order not to distract from this narrative, the main part of the book does not present the authors name with his or her contribution, unless the reaction to the CD-ROM was a letter, for which receiver and sender are constitutional. The relationship between contribution and author is linked through the second part, which contains all relevant references, such as page references, biographical notes, translations and in some cases additional information to what is shown in the main part. As the contributors are coming from all over the world, another principle of the book is, in the case of texts, we kept the original language in the main part and put the translations into the reference. This creates a wonderful polyphony of voices and simultaneously guarantees a maximum of authenticity.

The book is an attempt to approach the issues connected with images, collective memory, mediatisation and the public sphere in an explicitly personal way. In sharing the images I also share my insecurity towards them. This is why they keep me busy; and as they do with me I hope the book will do so with you.

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