

## ABSTRACTS & EXCERPTS

KENDRA BALLINGALL

*We have never been right: art at the threshold of the nation-state*

Both critiques of nationalism and symptoms of anti-nationalism are present in contemporary art practised and seen (though not necessarily produced) in Canada, and more specifically Winnipeg: while some work explicitly (critically) intervenes in, deconstructs, or toys with the institutions and representations of the nation and its exceptional state in order to assert a decolonizing nationalism, at times engaging in what Gayatri Spivak would name "strategic essentialism", other work implicitly (symptomatically) negates the dominance of Canadian nationalism by imagining something uniquely local. I will first consider the work of Kent Monkman, Rebecca Belmore's *Architecture for a Colonial Landscape*, and Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds' public art project *Remembering in America*, as well as the exhibition informal architectures curated by Anthony Kiendl at Plug In ICA in Winnipeg. I will go on to discuss work that participates in defining or mythologizing a "coming community," as Giorgio Agamben might describe it, including the Expressionist counter-narratives of filmmaker Guy Maddin (*My Winnipeg*), the collaborative "outsider art" of the prolific Royal Art Lodge, the Situationist-inspired Winnipeg cartographies of sound artist Garth Hardy, and the playfully inauthentic, epic Northern landscapes of Simon Hughes. These art practices will be placed in the context of competing discourses of rights, nationalism, sovereignty and subjectivity arising from the Canadian Museum of Human Rights proposed for Winnipeg in 2010, an ambitious museum project that has the potential to alter or reify Canada's image on the international stage. I suggest that local art works have the capacity to remind us that as a practice, nationalism is always a strategy, whether of domination or resistance, and as a concept, nationalism is never singular.

REMCO DE BLAAIJ

*Should you be doing this? A trip from zero tolerance to a thousand possibilities*

The bases of the presentation will be two essays from the book of BAVO, a group of Rotterdam-based "architect philosophers" Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels. A central starting point is the zero tolerance policy that started in New York City and is successfully sold around the globe. This policy connects the whole world and is even felt in our practice as curators through the cities, institutions we work in and the artist we work with, in critique as well as acknowledgement.

ÖVÜL DURMUSOGLU

*Turkish nationalism and contemporary art in Turkey: old and new fundamentalisms*

The presentation will be formulated around the ideas of a new workshop to be developed on new fundamentalisms in Istanbul, why it is needed at the moment and how it can be structured. The first part – titled *Who loves Turkey most?* – will

be a general analysis of new populist nationalism in Turkey. Against republican elitists who are using nationalism as a shield against globalism symbolised by AK Party in the political scene, AK Party supporters ask the question *Who loves Turkey most?* Thus the populist nationalism – originally nourishing kemalist and secularist ideals – is getting stronger and stronger in this political bipolarization. Under this light, the position of populist nationalism in the art circles will be discussed. Examples of the use nationalism as a means to attack the new internationalism of the contemporary art scene in Turkey, especially in the case of the Biennial, will be underlined.

How can we develop thinking and acting methodologies counter arguing this dangerous new fundamentalism? In this part, the discussion will be turning around the structure of this new workshop: how the local situation should be placed in the larger framework of current fundamentalisms in the world picture, by whom and how the situation should be discussed, how we can get over some traditional structures to communicate the ideas to a larger public in a larger time span.

RONEN EIDELMAN

*Art and politics in the state of emergency. Israel as an example*

The state of emergency, the place where democracy is suspended, where the exception becomes the rule (Agamben), the place where madness reigns, where something that has been completely unacceptable a mere ten minutes prior is now normal, is a situation where art can play a special role. In Israel we exist in a perpetual state of emergency. We have been in a state of emergency since the founding of the country. I would like to explore the role of art and artist take in the state.

Through art you can do a lot, say a lot, almost anything. It can be the most radical of spaces, where the rules are suspended, where perhaps even the state of emergency cannot exist (or would not wish to exist there, to be more accurate). But we cannot discuss the freedom of expression without also asking: who we, the artists are talking to? Or to be more exact, who is listening? Especially when reality can be far more original, interesting, surprising, and radical than art itself.

However, living in an area of conflict, under the shadow of the great trauma of the Holocaust, in a country that still has not decided it's final borders, in a culture that still questions who it is; I believe art has a duty to go beyond the protective spaces of museums and galleries as well as use the autonomy of art and it's institutions for the benefit of political and social issues.

I will present examples of artworks that challenge the reality in the region. We will examine the nature and destiny of art and culture as being created in a place of continuous violence and conflict, as a struggle against extreme capitalism and the rules of the "free market".

We will discuss art that leaves the confines of museums and galleries and enters popular cultures and the political sphere and its creators are also activists, computer programmers, journalists, teachers, musicians, philosophers, scientists, and designers.

Possible examples: Billin Popular Committee, Sharif Waked, Anarchists Against the Wall, Artists Against the Wall, You Are Not Here, Active Stills, Drafted Art, Tami

Riklis, Tal Adler, Pharhesia, Ping Pong, Public Movement, Anti-Semite cartoon contest, and different works of mine.

CLAIRE FEELEY  
*Picturing victims*

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David Thorne and Julia Meltzer relocated to Damascus in 2005 shortly before the assassination – in which the Syrian government was implicated – of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. This incident served to frustrate an already ripe hostility visited upon Syrian citizens by the Bush administration. As Meltzer told Neil MacFarquhar of the New York Times, “I think the question that we went there with was, ‘How does this threat, this policy, live in peoples psyche?’” The subject of their art was to be the anxiety of a public living under the threat of violence. The result was three video pieces exhibited during the 2008 Whitney Biennale. Into what relation, then, does the viewer enter with those peoples depicted? How is their becoming victim dramatized and how does this becoming victim consequentially position the viewer?

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Excerpt from the paper

EVA FOTIADI  
*Nationalism and curating – a relation at multiple levels*

How can you deal with nationalism by the medium of the exhibition? Do you deal with it as a theme? Nationalism, in whichever ways it might be expressed in different places, seems for a great many people to be part of a mentality. It is not always realised. Or when it is, realisation does not necessarily entail confrontation. So how can one confront symptoms of nationalisms and of the clinging to national identity references in the practice of curating? Understanding nationalism as embedded both in people’s mentalities as well as in political interests, and curating as a professional practice of presenting art that necessarily includes the involvement of artists, audiences, institutions, collaborators and networks, at how many levels does a curator actually deal with symptoms of nationalisms and their critique?

ERDEN KOSOVA  
*Synergy of Resistances*

The recent sudden interest of capital in contemporary art in Turkey has attracted a considerable amount of resentment from various circles, to the point it has been labelled as the territory of cosmopolitan decadence serving to the benefits of the outer forces (meaning EU, USA and other hypothetical enemies of the country). Considering the fact that the contemporary art has pursued a remarkably engaged politics so far, this convergence of criticality and capital appeared indeed problematic. Some practices though have chosen a different path sidelined with

separate circles pursuing anti-nationalist, anti-militarist, feminist and queer agendas. This synergic interaction has produced a new hope in retaining and elaborating critical stance.

JOHANNES PAUL RAETHER

*Party-otism. The new friendly Germanomania, remembrance and German identity in the Berlin Republic*

With the presentation I want to give an insight into the way German national identity is constructed, almost twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. I want to touch on how a new generation, the third after the Shoah, the grandchildren of the National Socialist society comes to the power of defining national identity, nationalism and the own way of dealing with official collective memory in contrast to subjective perception of the nation.

Attacking the new forms of a friendly nationalism, that constantly neglects the powerful world politics of a large industrialised western country, neglects the almost unbearable growing of neo-nazism in the eastern parts has become more necessary than ever. Yet, a strong statement of members of the fine art community against Germany as a Nation and against every Nation as a construction to oppress and normalise has not happened in the internationally hyped *Berlin Republic* I want to discuss the question why, unlike in the subcultural music community, artists are rather unaware of their role for the construction of national cultural heritage, national discourses and images for new forms of nationalism.

I want to show examples of intervening into the national consensus by the means of performance, action, happenings and other artistic production. I want to discuss how to intervene into the national discourse without being embraced by the very discourse at once, aiming at formulating a special German quality of world class remembrance, an unique selling proposition in the international competition for attracting business, tourism and investment.

SARA STENCZER

*The corners of a triangle – feelings of nationalism in the works of contemporary artists from Hungary, France and Israel*

My presentation will focus on the diverse appearances and approaches of nationalism in three completely different countries: Hungary, where I was born, France, where I live at the moment as an immigrant, and Israel, where I wanted to migrate not a long time ago.

The cultural and ethnical diversity in each place is different – both in its level and its impact, as well as the heritage of nationalism — its roots and its wills are very intensively present. The immigrant artists, shown in temporary exhibitions, are dealing with their left-behind traditions, culture, patriotism and abandoned roots in art, as a self-therapeutic and social act, at the same time, the aggressive pride of a large part of the native inhabitants is well known and has a welcomed visibility in public art.

The two main kinds of existence and state of mind will be the guiding lines of my discussion: nationalism and self-consciousness within and outside one's state

borders. In parallel, a few recurrent issues can be underlined in the interests of the artists, as the use of the notion and symbol of “home”, “travelling”, “flags”, “documentations” and “historical inputs”.

In my native country, extreme nationalism is very strong and incomprehensibly visible all around, as well as in the field of the public art. The Hungarian nation has a very depressive and arrogant attitude, which is highly criticised by the bigger part of the cultural scene, unfortunately not enough in the field of fine art (Csaba Nemes, Little Varsó, Miklós Mécs, Anna Fabricius, László Csáki, Katarina Sevic and the RE:ORIENT, Hungarian Greyhound project, etc).

In France, the richness of cultural and ethnical diversity is very fruitful but has lots of difficulties, which is treated by the new generation of contemporary artists. French nationalism, constant immigration and the illegal – *sans papier* – status of a large part of the workers and refugees is a subject of artists’ exhibitions and critics. The situation is quite ambivalent because of the selfish and proud attitude of the French people against the foreigners, and, in the mean time, the diversity and strong competitiveness of the art scene and everyday life is the fruit of the migration (Claire Fontaine, Kader Attia, Thomas Hirschorn, Cao Fei, Barthélémy Toguo, Minerva Cuevas, the project *Micronations* and the Cité Nationale de L'Histoire de L'Immigration, Paris, etc).

The Israeli is a very young and artificial nationalism, which has a completely different background, impact and presence. The country is 60 years old, but possesses an ancient culture, which generates a constant and pressured dialogue. The cultural field is very important in the building of the newborn national identity, which is quite an ambiguous act, because in Israel almost everybody is an immigrant, who misses their roots, traditions, as a result of the denial of their heritage by the families (Yael Bartana, Ygal Feliks, Boaz Arad, Adi Nes, Gilad Ophir, the *Face 2 Face* project by JR and Marco, the exhibition *The Houses at Home Live in Apartments* and the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon, etc).

TAMARA ZLOBINA

*Visual trauma of Ukrainian nationalism*

After the fall of Soviet Union in 1991 Ukraine became independent. New nation state tried to build own national narrative, but as well as the age of big "national novels" (in terms of Pierre Nora) was over this process had contradictory character. National intelligentsia (the one who fought soviet regime) claimed for the new Renaissance of national culture. Political elite (which consisted of former party leaders) fulfilled that claims by *sharovary* (false ethnic) version of cultural process.

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Excerpt from the paper