



mAssage

KATRIN BAHRs, SEBASTIAN BUERKNER, DAVID CURTO, SANTIAGO ESCOBAR, EHSAN FARD-JADNIYA, MANU LUKSCH & MUKUL PATEL, GIANCARLO PAZZANESE

curated by Wiebke Gronemeyer

4 July - 15 August 2009

Galerie Caesar & Koba, Am Sandtorkai 4 (2. OG), 20457 Hamburg-Speicherstadt
Opening hours: Tuesday till Saturday, 2-7pm and any time by appointment

Every year Galerie Caesar & Koba presents a group exhibition that references their own location in the Hamburg "Docklands" (Speicherstadt) as well as examines the gallery's emphasis on New Media Art. This year the gallery invited independent curator Wiebke Gronemeyer to conceive a group exhibition. *mAssage* presents works of six international artists from Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Chile and Colombia. Thereby term "medium" is at stake from the very beginning.

It all started with a typo. Originally, the famous 1967 book by the American media analyst Marshall McLuhan *The Medium is the Message* should have been called *The Medium is the Message*, as it was supposed to finally establish this legendary credo of media theory. However, McLuhan appreciated the typesetter's small but far reaching mistake and decided to maintain this seemingly absurd title as it provided for more than one reading: massage, message, mass age or mess age. This error went down in history as it captured the essence of the author's ideas and intentions: a medium can no longer just be understood as a simple structure that carries a message as its content; rather, medium and message form part of symbiotic relationship between content and form, the digital and the material.

The works of Katrin Bahrs (DE), Sebastian Buerkner (DE), David Curto (ES), Santiago Escobar (CO), Ehsan Fardjadniya (NL/IR), Manu Luksch & Mukul Patel (AT/UK) and Giancarlo Pazzanese (CL) explore this relationship. The medium is the subject of their artistic concern and practice, although it rarely manifests as New Media Art.

Nowadays the term media is apprehended as a synonym for a moment of liquidation and annihilation of any subjective or individual intentions: when speaking of media we most often refer to mass media systems, and when addressing their functions we almost always certify a feeling of impotence towards them. This is where a massage might happen, as messages get obscured and appear as inconclusive. Similar to the rotary punctuation in a massage the viewer seems confined to the circularity of all media, the symbiotic relation between form and content, entity and difference, reality and illusion, the digital and the material. What seems to prevail us from coming to terms with the complexities of media is our own impossibility to shift our perspective on and perception of media.

The artists, however, pronounce a sort of meta-position. They direct the viewers' attention towards their embeddedness in and relationship with their medial ambience. Sebastian Buerkner's very particular cinematic language compels the viewer to dedicate himself to his animated imagery but to question the representational function of images. Giancarlo Pazzanese's performance *Lu-Che* accentuates the problem of representation giving it an ephemeral character. Katrin Bahrs and Ehsan Fardjadniya obtain the material for their ink-jet prints and transparent portraits from the public pleth-



ora of images. But the images are far from possibly being depicted one-to-one in the artists' work. Rather, they are submitted to a strong contention – sometimes destructive – in which they lose their old identities and elicit new associations. David Curto's paper cut-outs and Manu Luksch's & Mukul Patel's censor station invite the visitors to actively comment on information technologies and interfere in communication processes.

When the medium becomes pronounced as message, then this not only refers to a conflictive relationship between form and content, but much more to the visitor's direct encounter with the exhibition. The show conveys McLuhan's enquiry into how media alter our relationship to things, objects and their surroundings to the relationship between work and viewer: just like McLuhan characterized the relation between medium and message as symbiotic, the art works resemble a dynamic system as they aim to negate any linearity or continuity when it comes to their interpretation. The gallery itself becomes a medium, and instead of just providing a framework as a format for works as content, it assumes a vehicle-like character and becomes an environment for a direct contention with its own mediality.

Wiebke Gronemeyer, 2009



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PROGRAMME

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| 3 July, 7 – 10 pm | Opening |
| 7 pm | <i>lu-che VIII</i> , Performance by Giancarlo Pazzanese
With his performance the Chilean artist Giancarlo Pazzanese challenges existing ideologies and modes of medial representation while directly referring to the docklands area in which the gallery is located. |
| 7 – 10 pm | <i>The Spy School exercise #9</i> , performative book launch by Manu Luksch & Mukul Patel
<i>Love, Piracy, and the Office of Religious Weblog Expansion</i> is a performative book launch, and a collaborative reading project that continues online. Wherever the book <i>AMBIENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS</i> is distributed, a 'censor station' is set up, where a specific 1500-word text in the book gets submitted to a draconian censorship scheme that can only be uncovered in a collaborative effort. ambienttv.net/love |
| 4 July, 4 pm | Workshop <i>1:72 (One-to-Seventy-Two)</i> by Santiago Escobar
The workshop approaches the idea of the city from a different angle, mainly by considering scale and imaginary ways of representation. The artist positions the city as the flexible and the photographer as the fixed component. Participants are invited to re-think their role as citizens and express their personal experience and relationship with space, which will result in a multitude of possible cities and shapes, as well as images. |
| 16 July, 7 pm | Artist Talk with Katrin Bahrs
The works of Hamburg-based artist challenge the idea of gaining knowledge through a mode of perception. Together with Wiebke Gronemeyer she will discuss what means or media she appropriates to contest the viewer and wherein a quality of a refigured process of knowing could be present. |
| 18 July, 5 pm | Curator's Talk |
| 15 August, 5 pm | Curator's Talk |