



**Barking Dogs United: SIZE MATTERZ**  
**ACC GALERIE WEIMAR** **19.01.-16.03.08**



ACC Galerie Weimar  
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Weimar, 18. Dezember 2007

### Barking Dogs United: SIZE MATTERZ

Exhibition from 19.1. til 16.3.2008 at the ACC Gallery Weimar

Opening: Friday, 18.1.2008, 20:00

Barking Dogs United is an Artist Duo founded by Nikos Arvanitis und Naomi Tereza Salmon in 2005 In their Manifest it says: "We work on a future, in which there are no more artists, only no-artists".

In the center of the SIZE MATTERZ exhibition stand objects, which have lost their spatial relationship and with it lost their grip, or their function has been altered. Prefabricated skateboards and self built items, such as: a three-way socket, a pistol, a navigation system, a lighter as well as video projections are installed in the gallery. Arvanitis and Salmon create a feeling of uncertainty, as though the visitor would be an Alice in Wonderland of art. In the entrance one is confronted with the Barking Dogs United Manifest. Light boxes with drawings of manipulated schemata accompany the viewer through the show. The whole skateboard floor surface generates an unsteady level – an unsteady plane under one's feet.

SIZE MATTERZ is the theme of a playful gallery tour. The Artist Duo dedicates itself in an ironic way to questions such as: what role does the artist play in society today? Is he a social worker or an entertainer? What is his relationship towards the art market, the gallery, and the public? In an age of multi-tasking, the artist today has to be able to deal with everything, from art production, to self-marketing, to being skilled in explaining and declaring what he does. Salmon and Arvanitis reflect their working and living process and are trying to fathom the borders between chaos and order, self-expression and fame, individual unfolding and economic pressure. Their fifteen minutes of fame are just starting or are already over long ago.

Nikos Arvanitis, born 1979 in Athens, Greece, has lived and worked in Germany since 2004. He studied in Vienna, Athens, and Weimar. Naomi Tereza Salmon, born 1965 in Jerusalem, Israel, has lived and worked in Germany since 1991. She studied in Jerusalem and Weimar. The works of both artists have been nationally, and internationally shown. All components of Size Matterz are being created on the occasion of the exhibition at the ACC gallery Weimar.

You are welcome to join the after opening party at Haus Soziokultur Gerberstraße 3, Weimar, featuring Mosh Mosh, an Electro/Comedy/Glam Rockduo from Berlin ([www.mosh-mosh.com](http://www.mosh-mosh.com)). Start: 23:00.

We will gladly send you further press material if requested.

We would appreciate it if you would publish this press release and send our best regards from Weimar.

Frank Motz, Dir. ACC Galerie Weimar

#### ACC Weimar e.V. mit Galerie und Kulturzentrum

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Das ACC ist als gemeinnützig anerkannt, Spenden sind steuerlich abzugsfähig. Werden Sie Mitglied im Förderkreis der ACC Galerie!

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## **Barking Dogs United – SIZE MATTERZ**

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**An exhibition of the ACC Gallery Weimar in cooperation with Kerstin Stakemeier (Hamburg).**

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**January 19-March 16, 2008**

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**Sponsored by the Stiftung Kunstfonds,  
the Thuringian Ministry of Culture, and the City of Weimar.  
With support from the Sponsor Circle of the ACC Gallery Weimar**

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STIFTUNGKUNSTFONDS

### **An eight-point introduction.**

1 Barking dogs don't bite! But: Like with the proverbial dogs, it's not the individual dog's fault that he can't bite when he's barking, but the fault of the species, his development. In the case of Barking Dogs United, it is art that can only symbolically bark and not politically bite.

2 So why is the position of art in society directed toward passivity, toward representative criticism? Why can't it bite, even when the individual artist is in a mood for attacking? And why is art in the present – like the six-headed dog, the corporate identity of Barking Dogs United – incapable of movement, but loud?

3 Boris Arvatov, productivist art theorist of the Russian October Revolution in 1917, gave an answer to this question in 1920 that is just as simple as it is illuminating: "Middle-class art produces only representations of the world – but never the world!"

4 Up to our own time, this has changed little. Art has remained bourgeois. However, with the art market that has been expanding for years and the resulting immense increase in value of contemporary art, it seems that our relation to it has changed. Art has gained in security – but lost in distance. Its autonomy, which had never been more than its position among the bourgeois aesthetes, has gone from being a privilege to a duty. In the present day, the barking must intensify to the point of possibly negating art altogether in order to continue seriously attacking its own contemplative position.

5 Contemporary art has become a societal fashion accessory. Who needs a world consciousness anyway when he has got art consciousness? For many reasons, it has grown into a more and more central spectacle in society: more and more art fairs, private collector museums, mega-exhibitions, the economizing of art universities and museums. Art as a commodity has become art as a money investment. This does not make it morally reprehensible – but simply unimportant from the standpoint of criticism.

6 Barking Dogs United urges for this investment to be poorly invested: as an economy of consumption. In the Jena Real Philosophy, Hegel wrote, among other things, that the economy at the moment has embarked upon a productive, stabilizing path for society, in which its production is no longer driven by desire, by the consumption of objects, but by its constant reproduction. Economy begins to support the state when it ensures the nation's reproduction.

7 In SIZE MATTERZ, this principle is ostensibly reversed: SIZE MATTERZ does not produce, but rather consumes, so that – as we can read in the manifesto's conclusion – artists become non-artists. And in order to make artists into non-artists, it is not necessary to introduce everyday objects into art, which only makes the price of the objects higher and leads to the sort of scandals that were so frequent in the last hundred years; instead, art must begin from everyday objects and draw its basis from them.

8 Barking Dogs United begin with the part of commodity production that is just as superfluous as art itself seems to be: skateboards, (drag) shows, Western clichés, religious relics – parts of everyday culture. They take apart the present into its individual components and affirm not their societal mediation, but their objects. Barking Dogs United do not embrace mass culture in order to modernize high culture, and do not embrace high culture in order to separate themselves from mass culture, but rather create solidarity with useless hedonistic individual components that promise neither product value nor increased prominence. Barking Dogs United bark, since in art, there is no reason to bite: non-art is everywhere in society. We only need to lead it to art.

**Opening speech by Kerstin Stakemeier.**

## STEP-BY-STEP PICTURE TOUR



ACC Galerie Weimar, stairway and entrance room.

Attention Contemporary Art!  
Enter at your own risk!





Foto: Claus Bach

### GPS Navigator, 2008.

Object (150x100x30cm), built-in screen with animation.

A virtual navigation through the exhibition via GPS.  
4'00 Min.



Foto: Frank Motz

### Wir müssen draußen bleiben (Benedikt Braun), 2008.

Two barking megaphones.

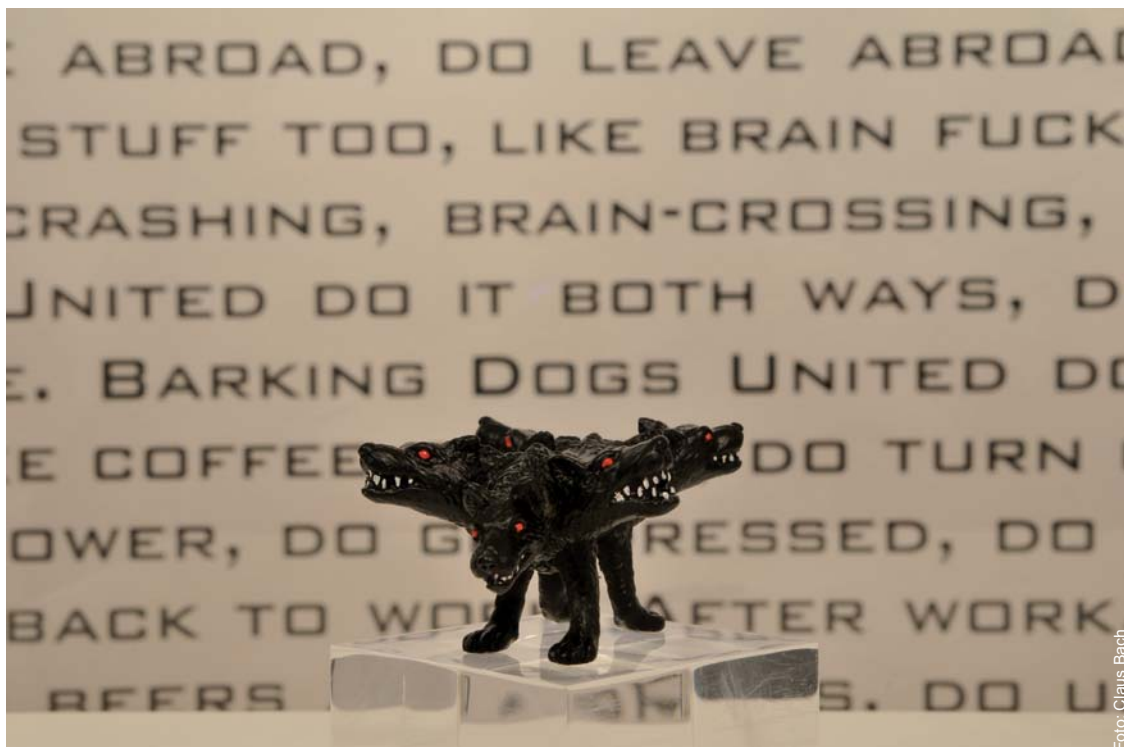


Foto: BDU



**Corporate Identity Room, 2008.**

With BDU-Manifest, BDU-Emblem und BDU-Mascot (in the showcase).



**BDU-Mascot, 2008.**

Objekt (12x6x4,5cm).



**BDU featuring Roger Behrens  
On a Spaceship With no Fuel and  
no Future, 2006.**

Barking Dogs United interview  
Roger Behrens about pop music, art,  
and social affairs.  
Radio Feature, 105 Min.

Headphones installation along a gal-  
lery corridor.

**Skatefloor, 2008.**

Floor installation containing 1.300  
Skateboards.

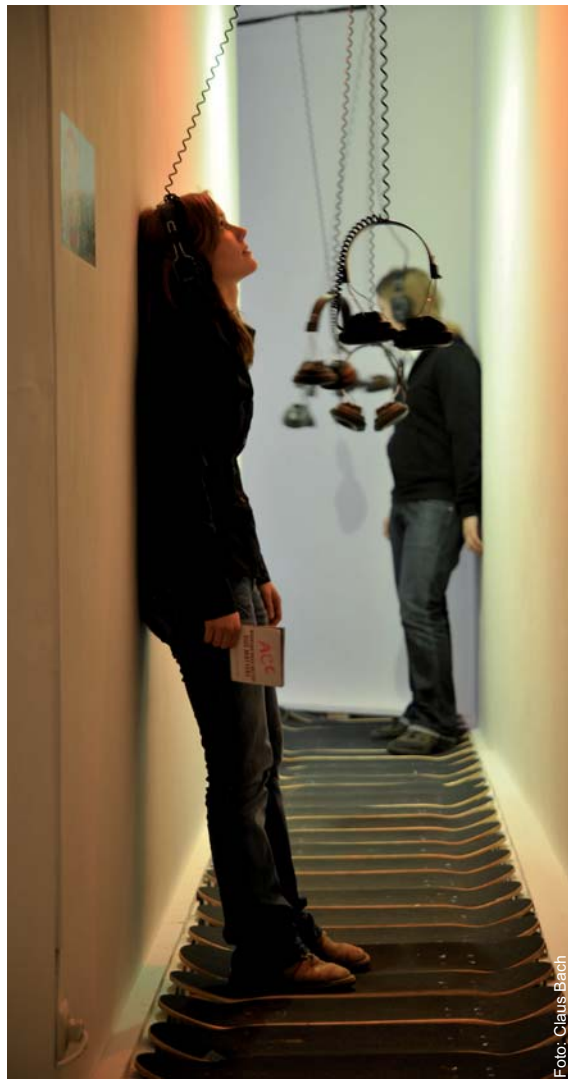


Foto: Claus Bach



Foto: BDU

**BDU Skateboards - Multiples, 2008.**



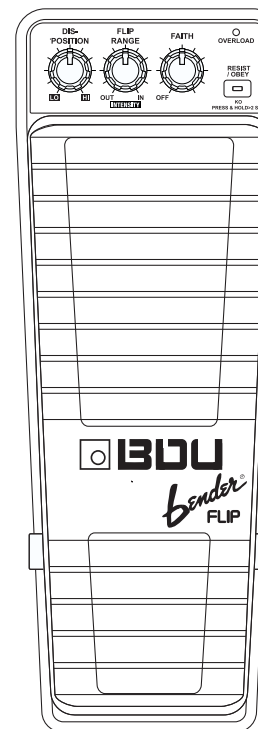
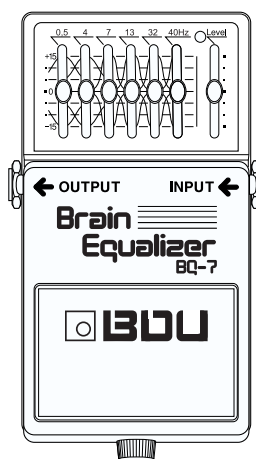
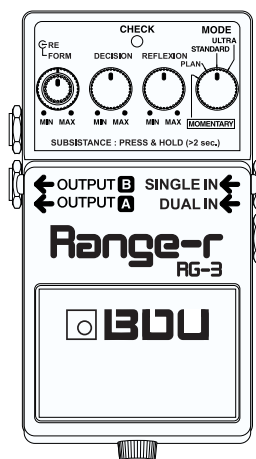
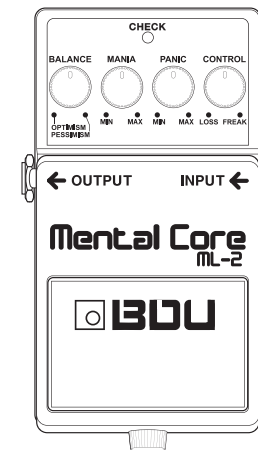
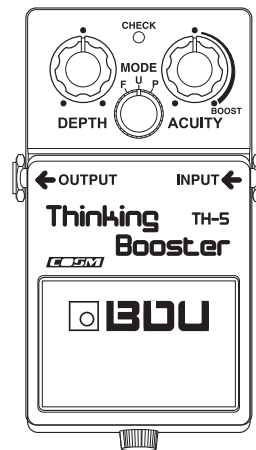
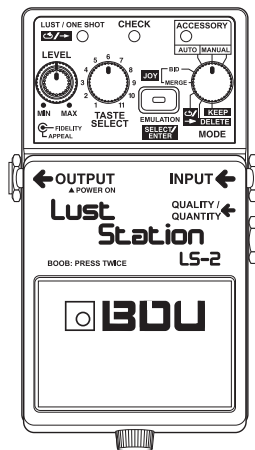
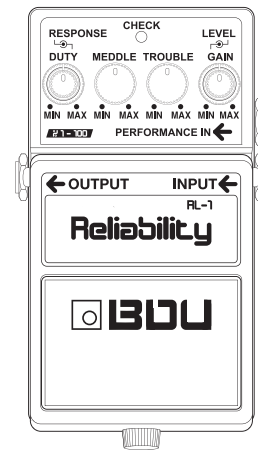
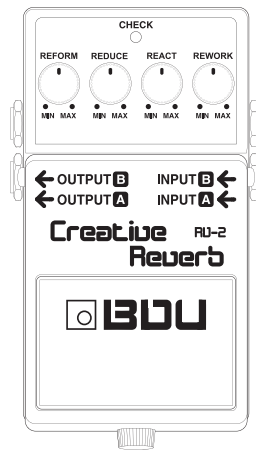
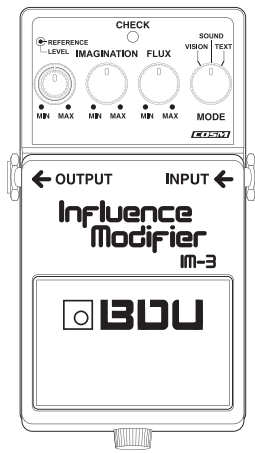


Foto: Claus Bach



Foto: Claus Bach

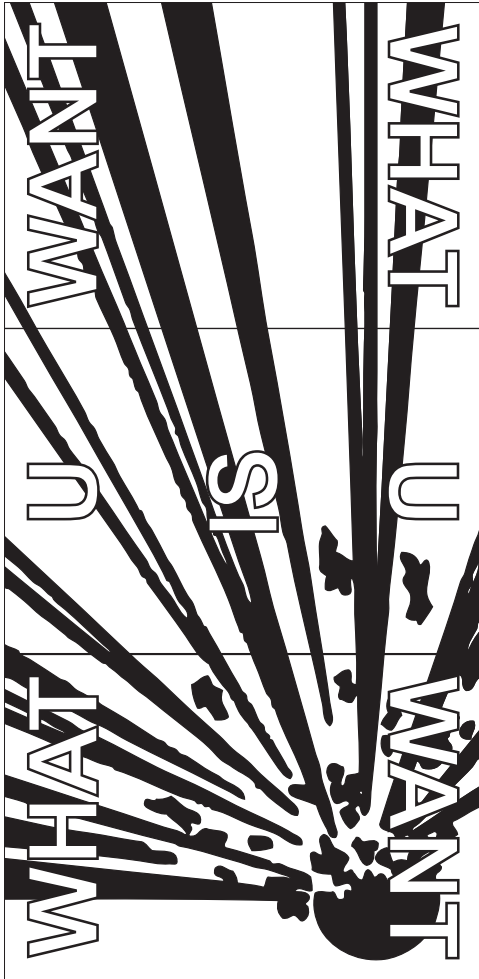
**FX (Teile 1, 2 und 3), 2008.**  
**What U Want Is What U Want, 2008.**  
**Skatefloor, 2008.**  
 (Exhibition view)



FX (Teile 1, 2 und 3), 2008.

Schemes, Light-boxes with digital prints, DIN A0.

Schemes of guitar effect pedals manipulated to personal preference effect devices.



**What U Want Is What U Want, 2008.**  
Computer collage, three light-boxes with digitalprints (each 63x43cm).

**Three way plug, 2008.**  
Object (250x70x60cm).

**Skatefloor, 2008.**  
Floor installation containing 1300 skateboards.







**Pistol (Toy model), 2008.**  
Object (230x170x35cm).

**Skatefloor, 2008.**

Floor installation containing 1300 skateboards.

The Pistol is installed in a room, facing the wall. Walking inside the exhibition space, one sees first a hole in the wall, unaware of it being the barrel of a gun, where a bullet is situated as well.



**Dual-not-duel, 2008.**

Video, 12'50 Min.

In two separated rooms, projected on back-to-back walls, you see Nikos shooting Naomi and Naomi shooting Nikos in human size. In both cases the image of the one is blending into the image of the other.



Foto: Claus Bach



Foto: BDU



Foto: Claus Bach

**Neon Tetra, 2008.**

Video, 15'00 Min.

Video of a flickering neon lamp.

**Skatefloor, 2008.**

Floor installation containing 1300 skateboards.

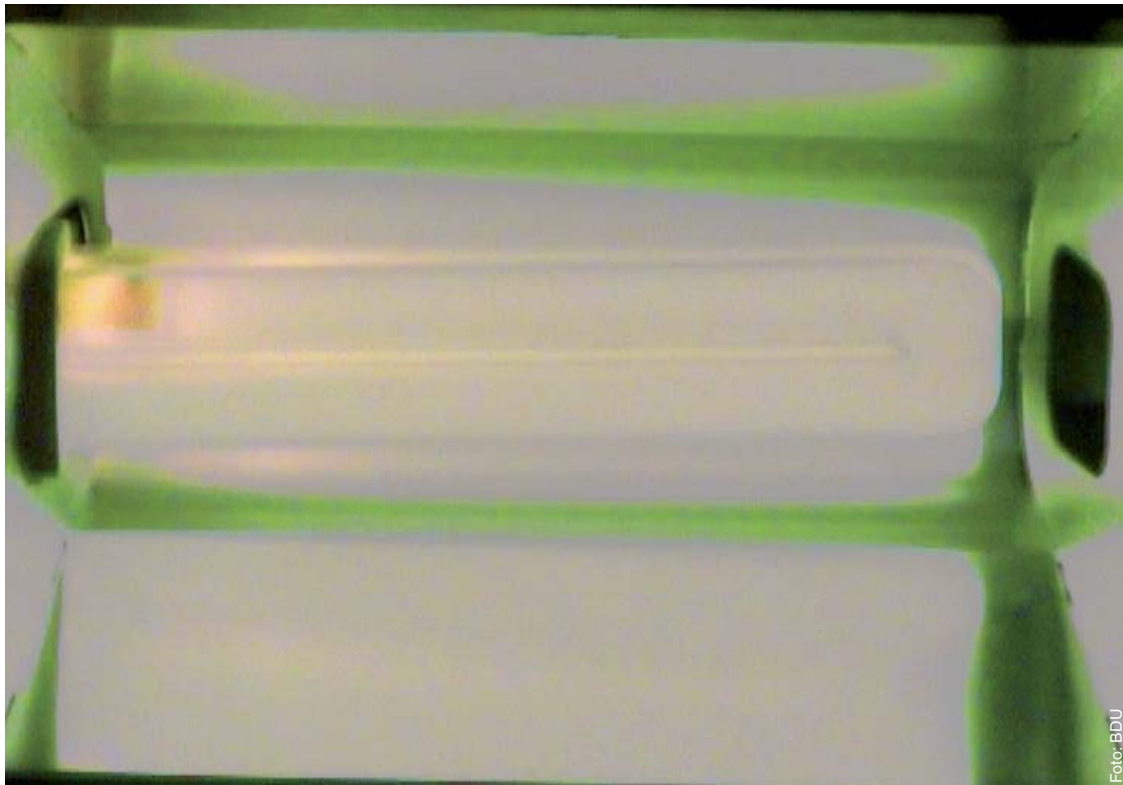


Foto: BDU

**Neon Tetra, 2008.**  
Screenshot, Video of a flickering neon lamp.



Foto: Claus Bach

**Skatefloor, 2008.**  
Floor installation containing 1300 skateboards.





Foto: BDU

**Henrietta, Feuerzeug nach  
Helmut Newtons „Big Nude III“, 2008.**  
Object (220x70x30cm).

**Skatefloor, 2008.**  
Floor installation containing 1300 skate-  
boards.



Foto: Claus Bach



**Kitchenwars, 2008.**

Video, 1'45 Min.

Two gas stoves fighting. Each fight ends up with explosion.





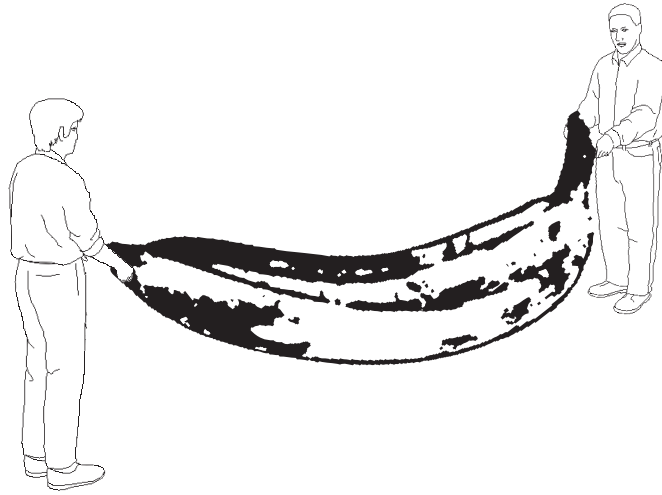
Foto: Claus Bach

**What U Want Is What U Want, 2008.**  
**Two Banana Men, 2008.**  
**Girl with Toilet, 2008.**  
**Anal-log, 2008.**  
**Skatefloor, 2008.**  
 (Exhibition view)



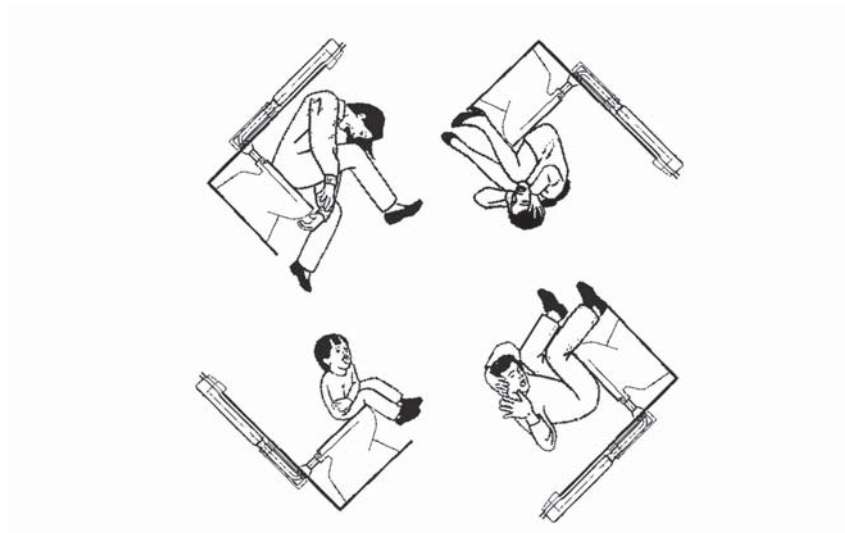
Foto: Claus Bach





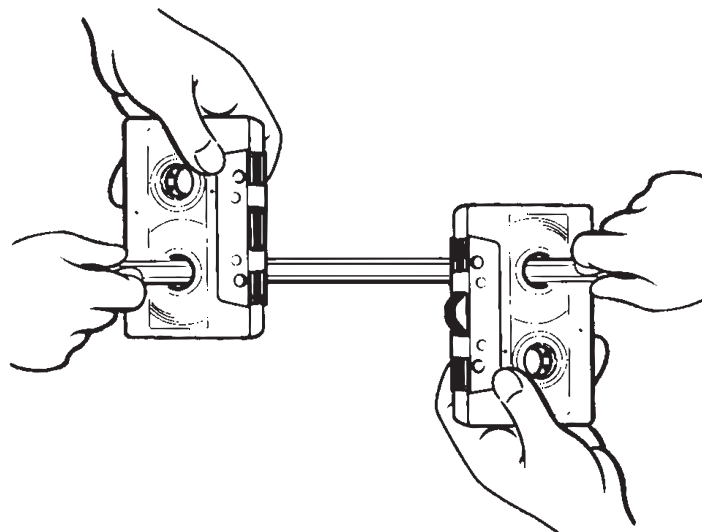
**Two Banana Men, 2008.**

Computer collage, light-box with digital print, DIN A0.



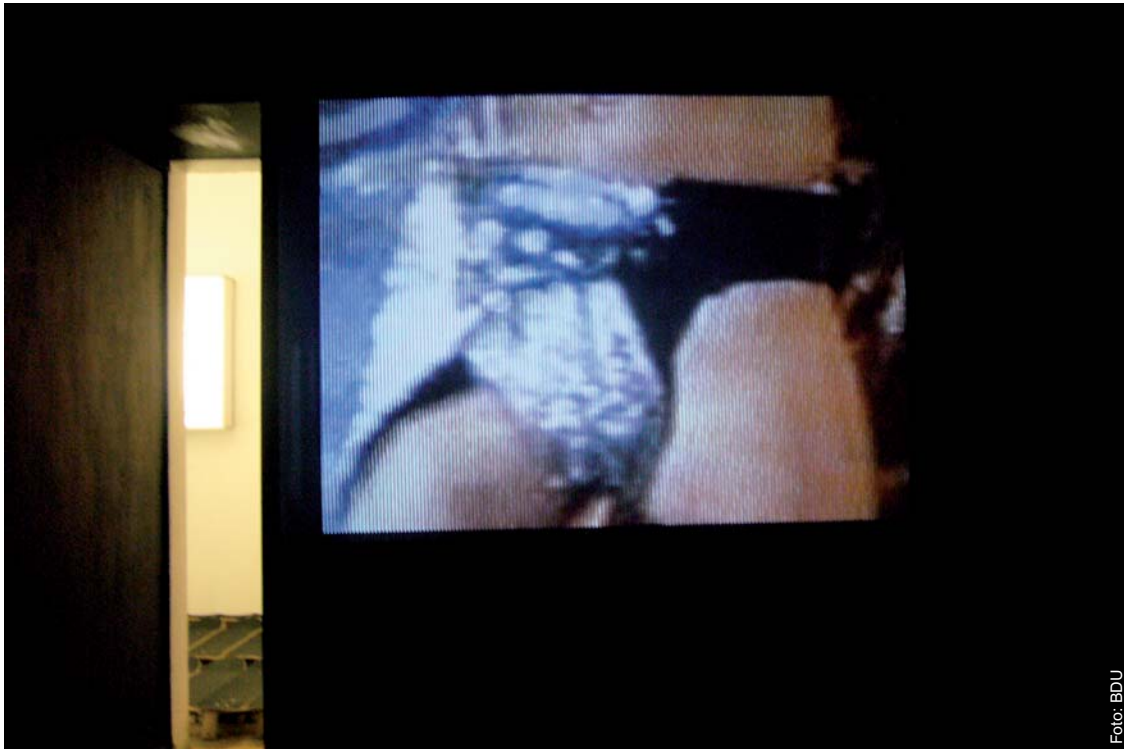
**Girl with Toilet, 2008.**

Computer collage, light-box with digital print, DIN A0.



**Anal-log, 2008.**

Computer collage, light-box with digital print, DIN A0.



**Girls on CMYK, 2008.**

Video, 3'30 Min.

Edited video footage taken from television, shows a drag-queen song and outfit contest. The footage images fade in and out of CMYK colours.



**IN DOG WE TRUST, 2008.**

**Ornamental Capital, 2008.**

**Discokreuz, 2008.**

**Skatefloor, 2008.**

(Exhibition view)

Computer collage, light-box with digital print, DIN A0.





Foto: Claus Bach

**Disco-cross, 2008.**

Objekt (240x125x25cm), rotating.

**Skatefloor, 2008.**

Floor installation containing 1300 skateboards.



Foto: BDU

## Barking Dogs United – Terms of Use

For Barking Dogs United, size is what counts, since there is no room for fadishness here. Where the bourgeoisie, as Theodor W. Adorno wrote, wants “a paltry life and opulent art,” it doesn’t allow for separation. The world is reconstructed out of whatever is a utilitarian object but which serves no productive function in the reproduction of society. Lifestyle accessories such as skateboards, fashion, and drag meet up with objects of order like handheld weapons, GPS systems, and their societal intermediaries, religion and violence. Modified technical drawings, computer collages demonstrate afunctional constructions. Life in the present is reconstructed from the perspective of what is (still) artistic. This results in no productive utilitarian objects and no contemplative aesthetics, but rather the world, ordered according to new values. Aesthetic functions are not reinforced through decoding, but rather through overcoding, and the same aesthetic functions that subsist in everyday life are exaggerated.

BDU bark – they don’t bite, since in order to bite, they first need to realize the path that is explored in the exhibition: becoming a non-artist. Since the emergence of their autonomy along with that of the middle-class, which has protected it ever since, artistic production has only been independent at the price of being totally insignificant. And those artists of the past who sought to escape from this misery logically sought to attack this middle-class art system. The Russian Constructivists hoped to assimilate mechanical production, the Bauhaus gave itself to design, the Situationist International of bait politics. BDU reverse this attack: they do not target art, this abstraction and intangible conventional chimera, but rather the artists. They target nameable identities, producers, and first of all – themselves. With BDU, the destruction of one’s own position is also done through overcoding. Naomi Tereza Salmon and Nikos Arvanitis are constantly present in their exhibition – however, not in the ancestral position of artists within bourgeois society, as eccentric clowns, but rather as enforcers.

So what in themselves can artists attack in order to finally become non-artists? How can artistic production be simultaneously hedonistic and arrogant when its societal role in the present day, even in criticism, makes use of the very market politics it attacks? How can it inaugurate an economy of expenditure instead of contenting itself with one of general reproduction?

### Everyday

BDU start and finish in the middle of everyday life. This is not an attack, but an inversion. True to scale, the objects are present here in their mass psychological significance, not in their utilitarian value. The larger-than-life multiple plug apparatus belongs to the video “Neon Tetra”, a room illuminated by a damaged neon tube. And while, in the “Dual-not-duel” video, the artists’ mutual attack against each other still has real resonance, it disappears the moment a gigantic pistol appears which, precisely through its over-stylization, loses rather than gains in power. Where it is no longer conceivable as a prolongation of the body, it loses its potency. “SIZE MATTERZ”, since alone a conception of size that can still be mentally connected with the object’s everyday function confirms our perception of its reality. New size relationships give rise to tensions, the extent of which depends on their combination.

During the transition from Jackson Pollock’s Abstract Expressionism at the beginning of the 1950s to Claes Oldenburg’s superdimensional Realism in the early 1960s, the subject’s relationship to his everyday environment in American culture underwent a violent shift. What had still been, in Abstract Expressionism, the formlessness of a historically-destroyed subject in a world that had become practically unidentifiable, abstract and hardly tangible, with Oldenburg became concrete, tangible, and overbearing, since rather than hiding the monstrosity of the world behind abstraction, it worked with and through it. In “The Street” (1960), he offered for sale

the garbage he and Jim Dine had collected, and in the now-famous “Ray Gun Museum” (1956), he expanded this search for concreteness in mass culture and its trash into a performance of the objects themselves, in which masquerade and true existence exchanged places. Oldenburg swept out the drag of the earth and collected an inestimable quantity of objects, packaging, trash, puddles, leftovers, and industrially-produced items whose form resembled the ray guns out of science fiction stories.

BDU search for the objects’ similarity to themselves – and this also means bringing them into the drag. Likewise, the manifesto occupying the space of an entire room does not, as its avant-garde predecessors of the previous century, construct a new, utopian, and thus initially transcendental world, but rather combines what can be obtained from the late-capitalist present day in new ways. The gesture remains radical politically, but the meaning of radicality has been transformed: for BDU it consists not so much in designing a new, completely different world and rejecting the present on every account, as in – disassembled in fragments and materials – affirming, asserting that what is missing has in fact always been present in it, in its expenditure.

The revolutionary Russian Constructivists of the 1920s had demanded that the artistic be assimilated into the general production, in this way eliminating the alienation of work, its industrial division. At the conclusion of the BDU manifesto we read, “We are working on a future in which there are no longer artists, but only non-artists.” The Productivists centered around Osip Brik, Vladimir Tatlin and others had called for artists to disseminate Productivism, for all producers to be made into artists. However in our day, this ever-present creativity has become a threat, a paradigm of societal reproduction which coerces each individual into expanding himself constantly. Thus with BDU, the artist-subject becomes a negative transparency: in order to become, through art, a non-artist. As a blow to their own profession as artists, BDU demand the dissolution of the work order that has historically held its own, however no longer by storming its machines, but by allowing every aspect of everyday life to become the point of departure for a new production. Since why should we give up the objects in art as lost when art’s step forward into immateriality with the conceptual art of the 1960s led, historically, above all to its discursive self-pollination, to the expansion of the market with its forms of production into a conventional mental sport, and to an ever-greater distance from the hedonism that is in any case already lacking in our late-capitalist everyday life. In the end, the capitalist order appears to us as an outdated rite of permanent self-flagellation which has survived and is waiting to be concretely surpassed. The demand remains universalistic, but it is directed toward the world rather than against it: it is materialistic.

## Material stock

BDU (re)produces a materialism that is derived from its materials, its social and individual function, and not from the idealism that historically preceded it and its production. Subjects and objects of its pre-history now turn up only as objects. Helmut Newton’s famous photograph Big Nude III (Henrietta) (1980) had already been the exhibition of an object anyway. Here with BDU it is taken seriously as an object and, from an icon of a (middle-) class, it becomes a utilitarian object of another (employed) class. Its life-size becomes life-threatening, but hardly in a bodily way – it is a decal of pop culture, allowing no contemplation. It is a kind of empirical materialism which BDU is pursuing in the objects’ potency.

With Georges Bataille, “The time has come for us to use the word Materialism to signify the interpretation of raw appearances excluding any idealism, and not a system that is based on fragmentary elements of an ideological analysis that had been drawn up within a religious context.” BDU’s materialism is of this a-religious kind. It produces objects, but no icons. The religious, which since Bataille’s words has, alongside materialism, served as the structure of the everyday life of capitalism, constantly strives toward the immaterial, toward laying out, agonizing, ensoulment, and conservation. These elements are no longer to be found in the material stock reconstructed by BDU.

The visitor cannot orient himself through an archive of loaned references, in order, upon arriving in the security of his own educational repository, to be included himself as a participant. It remains for itself, along with the material whose nature first becomes perceptible through its alienation from its customary context. The archivistic certainty about the past is dissolved here just as much in the objects' pre-history as in that of the two-person collective. Materialistic practice requires no CV and no self-references, but is newly constructed from every point.

## Formless

In 1914, the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovski wrote that there is, in the world, nothing to be discovered or unveiled, but only to be produced. Formalism was intended to enable people to perceive their world, and also to integrate it into themselves and bring about a revolution in it. Shklovski's rejection of the unveiling of conspiracies and apparently hidden meaning is still valid today, and still today, the only way of integrating something into oneself is the observation of the world as a material for construction. But the material from which things are constructed has radically changed since Shklovski. The emphatically new has disappeared from it. More and more, it appears formless, identical, undifferentiated. More and more, global industrial production is interested in the uniformity of material in the style of difference. The affective, somatic desire becomes increasingly threatening here. Polished through an endless succession of educational series – in German television, daily urging citizens to maintain order – the work ethic necessary in society is not only reproduced, but the hedonistic desire of individual subjects is at the same time increasingly demonized. In the work ethic of our time, hedonism only seems to be conceivable as aggression. People are told that only through the repression of his bodily needs can he be made into a person capable of socialization. With "Super Nanny", there is wailing and supplication, but the patients are only released as "cured" when their difference from their environment has been eradicated from their will. Every element of "SIZE MATTERZ" is directed against this formlessness of desire. In it, the attempt is born to regain the world and its objects by being taken by a desire, understanding it in relation to its function in society and in this way breaking through the assertion of destructivity, positively transforming the desire. The force for the abolition of society is drawn from society itself, just as with Karl Marx, the productive forces of industrial production always form the preconditions for its own future abolition. The performance here is no longer by the artists, but rather by the objects and subjects in their placement.

Visitors thus have every reason to feel themselves observed. As it was written for many years on the door of Berlin's Club SO36, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean you are not being followed." The security that comes from the constant combination of functions of order that determine our everyday life also implies the loss of self-confidence. This self-confidence is today granted almost exclusively to the artist-subject who, as representative is expected to reflect an imagination that is by definition excluded from the pseudo-religious structure of everyday revision. BDU hope to take this self-confidence from the artists in order to give it back to the everyday subjects. Peter Saville described in an interview that during the transition from the 1970s to the 1980s, the cover of the band Roxy Music became a reality for him – for Barking Dogs United, the crash of the art market at the end of the 1980s seems to become real in the art of the present.

## Kerstin Stakemeier



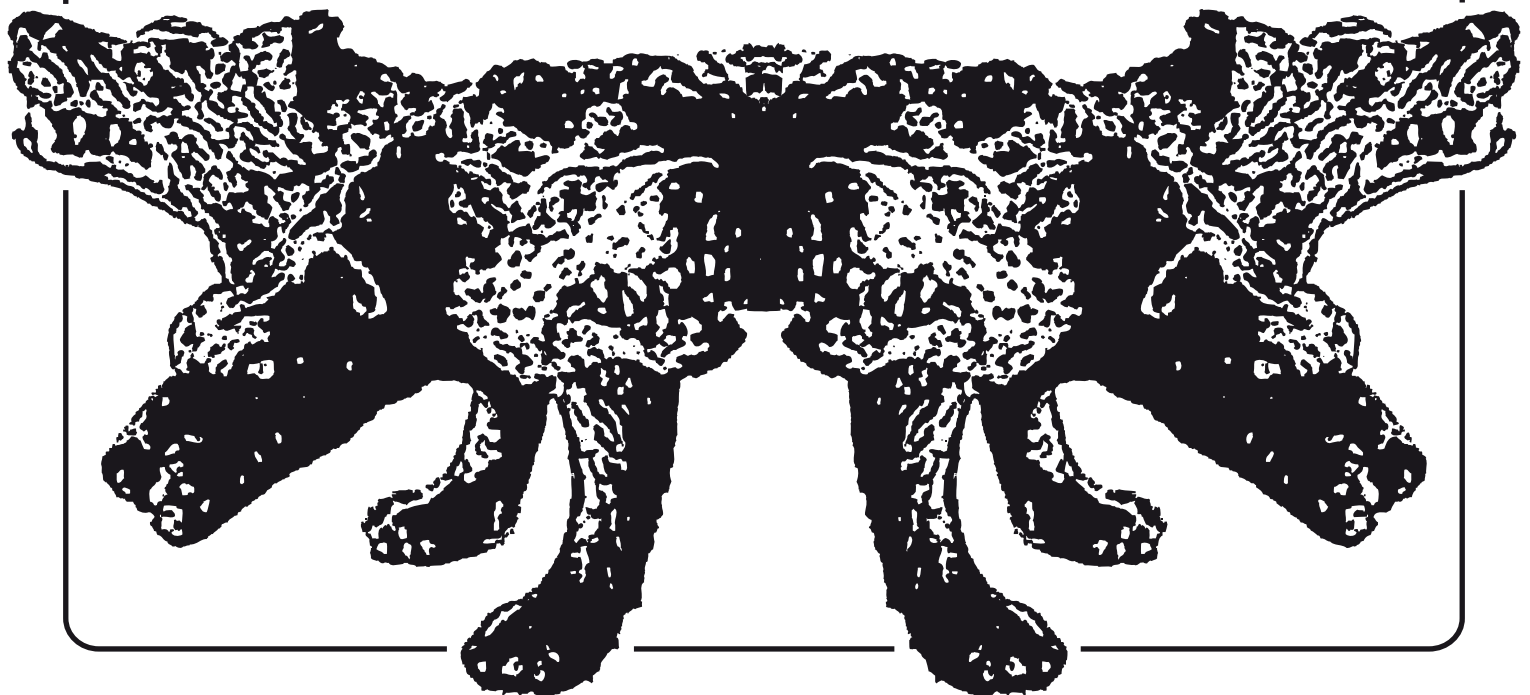
# BARKING DOGS UNITED MANIFESTO

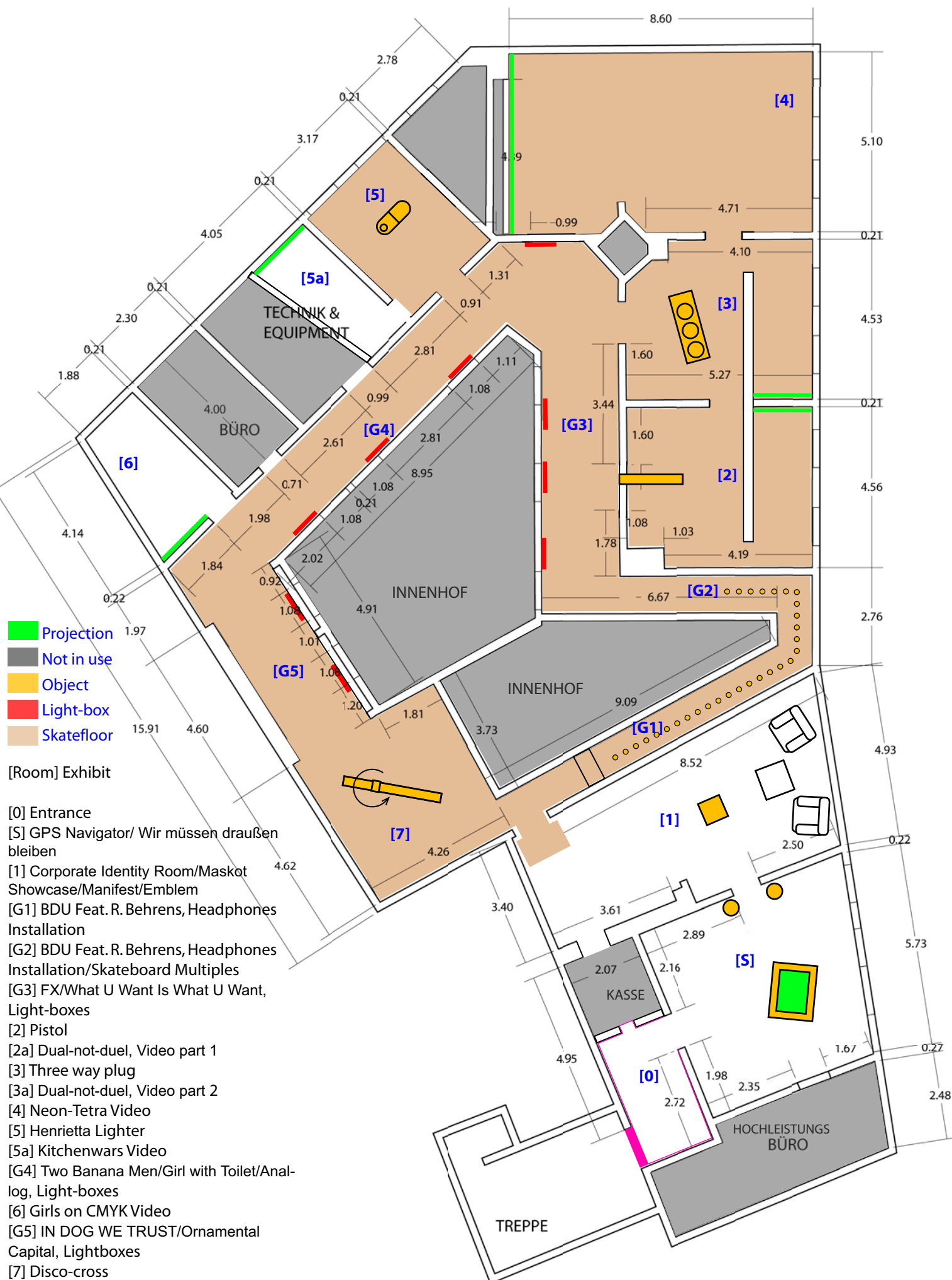
Barking Dogs United, do cook, watch films, read newspapers, listen to music, check e-mails, and talk on the phone. Do the dishes, do go shopping, and do frequent the 99cent store. Do draw, make photos, videos, objects, and installations. Do dance, make music, and like to party. Do drink, mainly beer, and do smoke. Barking Dogs United do watch porn movies, and do masturbate. Do believe in bender, do play with guns, and do shoot bulbs happily. Do work, do get sick, do go out for dinner, do brush their teeth, do wash their feet, and feel so good. Do play lotto, and do want to win, fuck. Do pay their taxes, do travel, do live abroad, do leave abroad, and do come along. Barking Dogs United, do brainy stuff too, like brain fucking, brainwashing, brain drilling, brainstorming, brain crashing, brain-crossing, trashing, and thrashing. But anyhow, Barking Dogs United do it both ways, do construct, do repair, do build, and do cause damage. Barking Dogs United do not own a dog, but do wake up, do go to pee, do make coffee, or tea, do turn on the laptop, do down and upload, do go under the shower, do get dressed, do walk to work, do work at work, do take lunch-break. Do go back to work. After work, do go to the supermarket, do fetch Italian, do go for beers and burgers, do use bad language.

Barking Dogs United work for a future in which there will be no more artists, only no-artists.

Barking Dogs United do end their manifesto here.

Weimar, 2005.







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**Barking Dogs United** is an Artist Duo founded by Nikos Arvanitis and Naomi Tereza Salmon in 2005.

**Nikos Arvanitis**, born 1979 in Athens, Greece, studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Austria, at the Athens School of Fine Arts, Athens, Greece (Erasmus scholarship) and at the MFA course „Public Art and new artistic Strategies“ at the Bauhaus University of Weimar, Germany with scholarships from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the A.S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation. He won the first prize on the „ZeitGenosse Schiller“ Competition for public art, Weimar 2005, and was nominated for the „5th DESTE Prize“ of the Deste Foundation, Athens, Greece, 2007. His Artistic work consists of big format drawings, videos and installations, combined with Sound/Music, as well as public interventions. His Work has been exhibited in Austria, Greece, Iceland, Germany and Belgium. Since 2005 he is a member of the artist Duo „Barking Dogs United“.

**Naomi Tereza Salmon**, born 1965 in Jerusalem, Israel, studied Photography at Hadassa College, Jerusalem, Israel, and the Master-of-Fine-Art-Program „Public Art and New Artistic Strategies“ of the Bauhaus-University in Weimar, Germany. She is winner of the Sharet Foundation scholarship for 1990. In 2000 she received an art- working grant from the state of Thuringia. Her works combine photography, video, sound installations and objects, as well as interactive Internet interventions. She has participated in numerous exhibitions and competitions in Europe, Israel, USA, and Japan. Works as assistant Professor at the Bauhaus University of Weimar, as an independent curator and as a member of the advisory board of the non-commercial local radio station ‚Radio Lotte‘ in Weimar. Since 2005 she is a member of the artist Duo „Barking Dogs United“.

[www.NikosArvanitis.com](http://www.NikosArvanitis.com), [www.NaomiTerezaSalmon.net](http://www.NaomiTerezaSalmon.net)

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**Kerstin Stakemeier**, born in 1975, Dipl. rer. pol. at the Freien Universität Berlin, M.A. History of Art at University College London. Research associate at Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, doctoral dissertation at University College London on the subject of „Artists as Amateurs.“ Together with Nina Köller (Berlin), she directs the art initiative „Aktualisierungsraum“ in Hamburg.