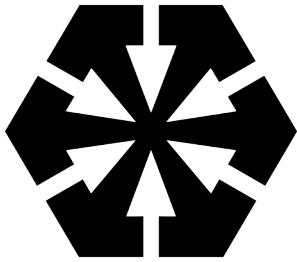


BANK OF NO



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Working Group:
Noah Fischer
Raúl Hott
Nurtane Karagil
Csaba Nemes
Joulia Strauss

Produced by A. G. Leventis Gallery and Point Centre for Contemporary Art
in the framework of "Life Zone - Life Point" by Paweł Althamer.
Nicosia, Cyprus, 2016.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BANK OF NO (Austerity Dance)

Noah Fischer (US), Joulia Strauss (RU), Nurtane Karagil (CY), Csaba Nemes (HU) and Raúl Hott (CL)

*Deep within the cold night of Cypriot Austerity stands a bank.
In front of this former headquarters of the financial crisis, now without visible brand or logo,
a strange sculpture emerges from just below the surface. This is the debt spiral: its sharp
glass point pierces the air. The 2013 crisis in Cyprus represents only one point of a new
politics of inequality, which can be seen across the globe.*

BANK OF NO is a “rebranding initiative” where art meets the banking crisis; a practice whose dimensions stretch into painted graphic installation, street art intervention, political direct action, and communal dance.

At the core lies an international working group with DNA from the 2011 political movements, including core organizers of Occupy Museums, Gulf Labor, Free Artists Hungary, and Living Memorial. The initial crystal of a practice fused together at the 2012 Berlin Biennale-itself a clash point between the art world and politics. From the “muddy” navigation of urgent activism from inside an art institution, a network of artists formed to connect various crises between contexts which at first glance seemed opposite: From authoritarianism in Hungary to domination of the public sphere by private interests in the US and occupation of Southern Europe by Northern: a new troubled panorama.

This new practice utilizes traditional artistic tools and art world spaces while resisting the codified political gesture. This requires a continual crossing between interior and exterior of art institution; between the street and the museum; between yes and no. Rather than seeking an “outside” – entities from art institutions to banks are rebranded; passed through filters of hyper reality or absurdity. The group employs with equal weight the practice of painting, sculpture, manifesto writing, and anarchist organizing as needed, from case to case.

BANK OF NO tests this method by proposing a panoramic view opening out from the specific political and economic conditions experienced in Cyprus. In research leading up to the work in Nicosia, a collection of key locations and symbols were discovered while proposing a new theory relating the political panorama to the body; the practice of dance.

Laiki Bank

In the financial crisis of 2013 the second largest bank of Cyprus closed: Laiki (popular) Bank. Part of the bank -the “good bank” was absorbed into Bank of Cyprus, while part of it still in limbo as a ghost bank or “bad bank.” Abandoned bank branches still stand around Nicosia while the logo which used to be everywhere in Nicosia has now been abandoned: a ghost logo. The logo itself seems to be based on the shape of the old city of Nicosia, and also is a sort of panorama. Bringing back this ghost logo became a core mission.

Debt Spiral

Outside of the former Laiki Headquarters (now offices for the Bank of Cyprus) stands an iconic sculpture by Greek artist (Varotsis). The metal and glass cone entitled “Anelisis” (advancement) stands as the first visible icon on the major road leading into/out of Nicosia. However, the meaning of this spiral has changed with the crisis. The spiral of glass shards today looks like a premonition of diminishing financial and social returns of Capitalistic market logic: a debt spiral.

The Evil Eye

Cyprus has a Cold War history deeply connected to the newest technology of surveillance and also to the traditional belief in the Evil Eye. Common around the Mediterranean and especially in Turkey, the Evil Eye is a kind of panorama--a blue panorama, which can also be seen as protection against the deadly envious gaze of extraction which in Capitalism kills through debts and financial anxieties and financial violence and its crisis spinoffs. From a text by Hakim Bey:

"Envy is an abstraction because it wants to "take away from." The Evil Eye is its weapon in the psychic/physical world. Against it, then, must stand not another abstraction (such as morality) but the solidest of fleshy realities, the over-abundant power of birth, of fucking, of azure breezes. The amulet we fashion against an entire society of the Evil Eye can be no more & no less than our own life, adamantine as stone & horn, soft as sky."

Dance

The element of dance releases and injects vitality to the bodies of the participants. It is a horizontal space where the addition of the audience and the artists of this project execute this action together. Sound is a powerful environmental stimulant, and identity is permeable to it. Austerity Dance evokes a feeling of unity and connection, through the multitude that dances. Individual identities connect to construct a collective identity greater than the sum of their parts. producing feelings of ecstasy, joy, bliss, euphoria, transience, empathy, freedom, and loss of control. The multitude becomes both the receiver and the emitter.

WORKING GROUP:

Noah Fischer (US) (initiator of Bank of No)

Website: <http://www.noahfischer.org/>

Noah Fischer's practice spans sculpture, writing, performance, and political organizing. He is the initiating member of Occupy Museums, a direct action art group that grew out of the Occupy Wall Street Movement in 2011 and has developed a practice merging performance, aesthetics, and politics. Projects have been exhibited at the 7th Berlin Biennale, Venice Biennale, ZKM museum, Art League Houston, and Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. Working with Sotheby's Art Handlers Union and Gulf Labor Coalition among numerous other groups, Noah has designed direct actions at Museum of Modern Art, Frieze Art Fair, Guggenheim, and Whitney Museum which have been widely reported in the New York Times and international media. With artist Coco Fusco, Noah organized The Artist as Debtor platform, concerned with sustainability of arts communities in the face of financialization. His sculptures and installations have taken on subjects from currency to political rhetoric. He is also a long term collaborator with Berlin Based theater group andcompany&Co, and maintains a studio practice in Brooklyn New York.

Nurtane Karagil (CY)

Website: <http://nurtanekaragil.blogspot.com.cy/>

Nurtane Karagil _holds BA in Fine Arts / Painting from the Hacettepe University, Ankara – Turkey and MA in Fine Arts from the University of Brighton, England. She also did her Erasmus studies during her BA in Photography from the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University , Czech Republic. She has been working with art collectives since 2012 and curating exhibitions in an unordinary spaces. She is also giving art lectures at the Eastern Mediterranean University. Her practice is mostly painting and installation which cover cultures and politics with a childlike aesthetics. Her recent works exhibited in "Travelling alone in a big sack" (Malta Design Week , 2014), " Treasure Island" (Nicosia Municipality Art Center – Cyprus, 2014) , "How should be a war remembered ?" (Cer Modern – Turkey, 2015). She is active in MAGEM, which is youth center in Famagusta and also participating in community awareness projects like FA/DE (mural art project – Renewal, Cyprus) and art residence programme called "Stepping Over the Borders" (EMAA, Cyprus)

Csaba Nemes (HU)

Website: <http://nemescsaba.com>

The works of Csaba Nemes focus on events of the recent past and the present day simultaneously, both on a personal and historical scale, while watching and portraying such events as processes. His works allow the interpretation of past and current events of Hungarian society beyond the usual media clichés and refers at the same time on the history and status of the former socialist region. In his artistic practice, he uses different mediums like drawing, painting, video and photography. He is a lecturer at the Art Academy of the University of Pécs and is represented by Knoll Gallery Budapest/Vienna. Recent exhibitions include: in 2014: "Dont try to make it Logical" (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka (Croatia) and "Private Nationalism", m21 gallery, Pécs (Hungary); 2011 "History in Art (MOCAK), Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow and Loophole to Happiness, Muzeum Sztuki Lodz; 2010: Let's Talk About Nationalism! Between Ideology and Identity, Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn; 2008: "Revolution, I Love You", CACT-Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki (Greece); 1999: The "Passion and the Wave", Dolmabahce Palace, 6th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey; and the 23d Sao Paulo Biennale, Brasil in 1996. As a member of the group Free Artists, he has played a prominent role in artist-led protests against the rightwing takeover of culture in Hungary. He was the winner of the 2013 Leopold Bloom Prize organised at Ludwig Museum Budapest, as a result of which his solo exhibition is organised at MMSU Rijeka. His work is featured in private and institutional collections of the Ludwig Múzeum - Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest; MAC (Musée d'Art Contemporain) Sallaumines, France; Michael Ringier, Switzerland.

Joulia Strauss (RU)

Website: <http://joulia-schrauss.net>

Joulia Strauss is an artist born in St. Petersburg and based in Berlin and Athens. She studied at the New Academy of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg and University of Fine Arts, Georg Baselitz class, in Berlin (Master, President's Prize). Her sculptures, paintings, performances, drawings, videos, were presented at solo exhibitions such as: "Modulating Politics", Kunsthalle Palazzo, Switzerland, 2011, "Welcome to the Mediterranean Basin", Beton7 Gallery, Athens, 2010, "Cat-Notation", COMA Gallery, Berlin, 2008, "Medienspiritismus. Videokabinet", Guelman Gallery, Moscow, 2003, "Virtual Kingdom of Beauty", Pergamon Museum, Berlin, 2000, and were shown in group exhibitions, among others, and multiple times in-part, at Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, NY, Tirana Biennale, Oostende Museum of Modern Art, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Esther M. Klein Art Gallery, Philadelphia, Wolfsburger, Fraknfurter, Hamburger Kunstvereins, 2nd Athens Biennale, Fourth Moscow Biennale, Tate Modern, London, ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Museum Ludwig, Budapest, 5-6th Athens Biennale. In collaboration with Peter Weibel and Friedrich Kittler †, Joulia Strauss currently works on a book "Gods and Writing around the Mediterranean", Wilhelm Fink Publishing. Together with Daniel Mütsel she has recently edited a special issue "Global Activism" of the magazine Krytyka Polityczna. In Spring 2015 Joulia Strauss has initiated a self-organized university Avtonomi Akadimia, Athens.

Raúl Hott (CL)

Website: <http://raulhott.net>

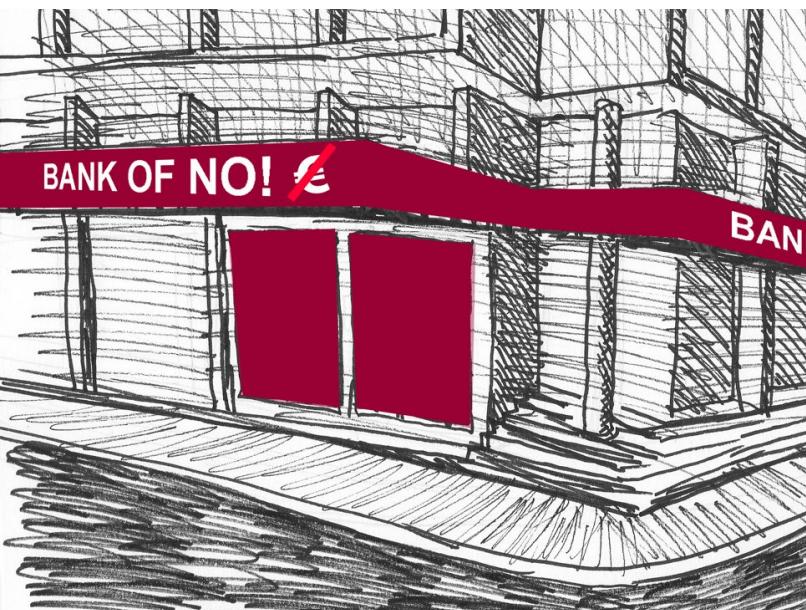
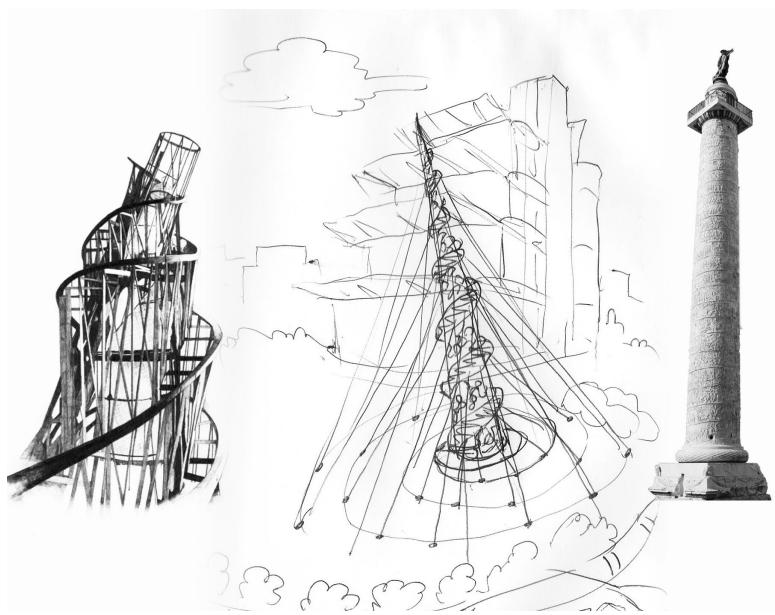
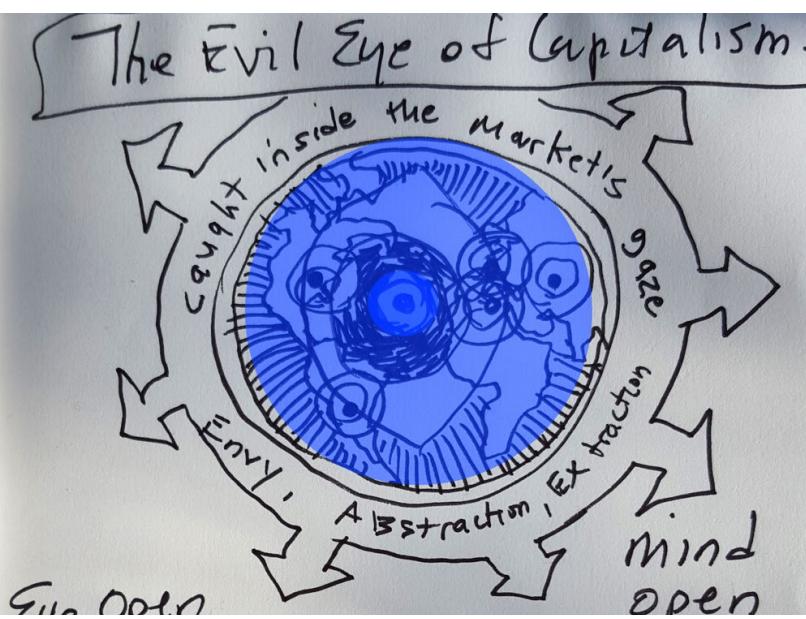
Raúl Hott is a Chilean architect, educator, and cultural producer that does work about the body. Raúl holds an MFA in New Forms from Pratt Institute. He designs collective experiences for public spaces and natural environments. Raúl's practice is collective and collaborative. Live events in city settings like *The Open Body* gathered more than 50 participants as active performers in a basketball court in Brooklyn. *BIRDERS*, his second walks series, happened in several parks around NY State. This project culminated with an invitation by The Walk Exchange to host a walk of *BIRDERS* at Central Park. Raúl has been particularly drawn by pedagogy since 2007, teaching in different Art Schools. During 2012 and 2013, he taught with the Professor Lisa Bateman the Installation class at the Fine Arts Department at Pratt Institute. In 2013, he was awarded with an Education Fellowship and Residency program at The Wassaic Project. His work has been featured at Art in Odd Places Festival, Trestle Gallery, Mykonos Biennale, Ed. Varie Gallery, Blackburn 20/20 Gallery, The Toronto Design Offsite Festival, Governors Island Art Fair and Brooklyn Zen Center, among others.

The Crisis



BANK OF NO 4

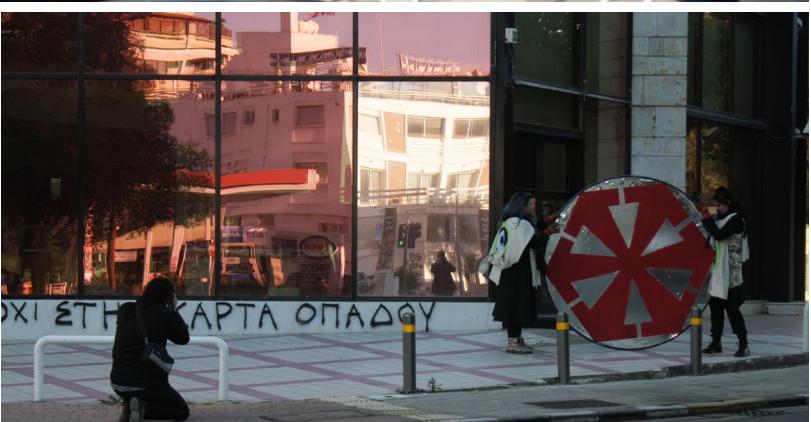
PROCESS



Action: Returning the Laiki Bank logo to the Bank Headquarters

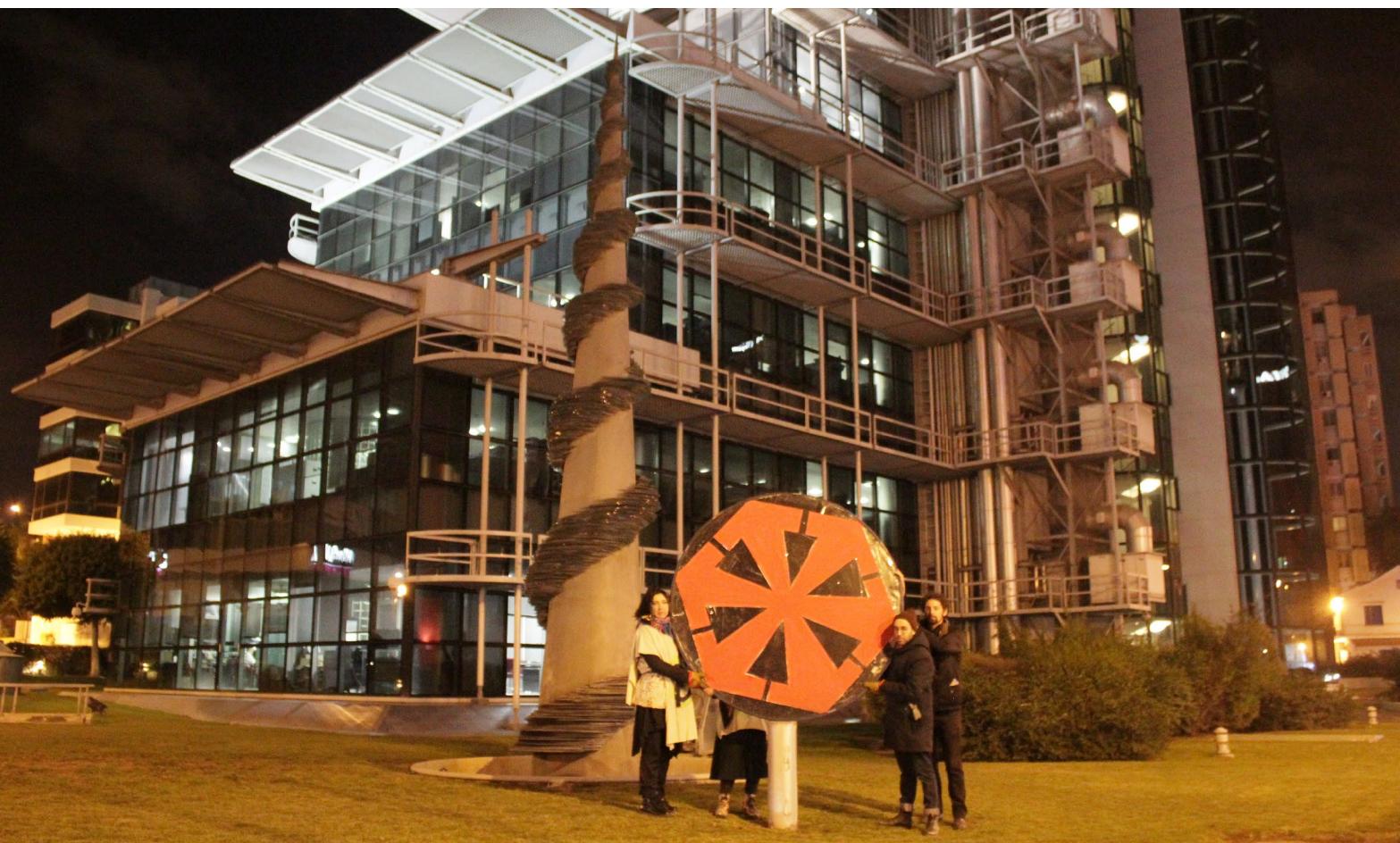


Action: Returning the Laiki Bank logo to the Bank Headquarters



BANK OF NO 7

Action: Returning the Laiki Bank logo to the Bank Headquarters



Action: Returning the Laiki Bank logo to the Bank Headquarters



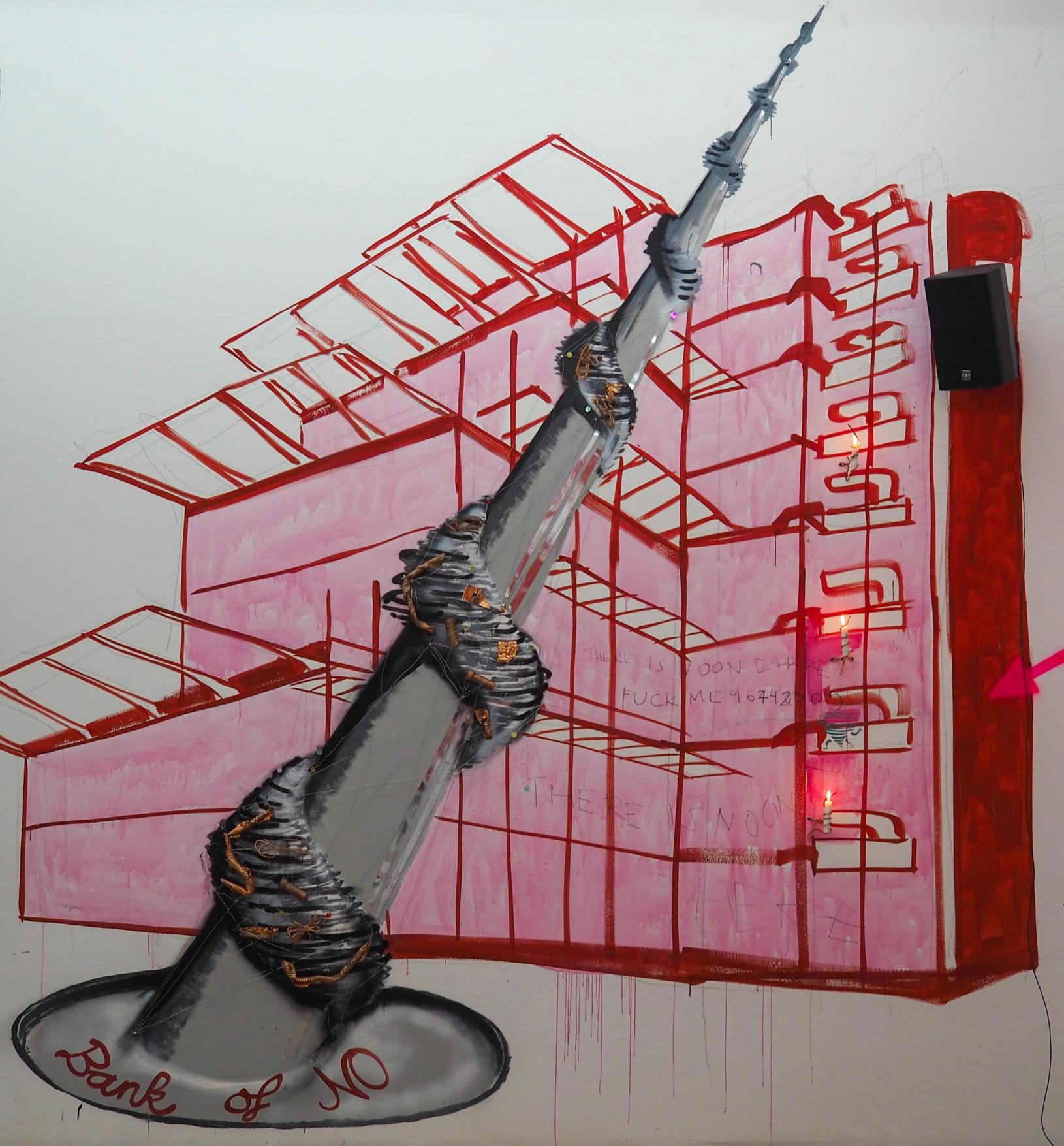
BANK OF NO 9

BANK OF NO: Inside Point Centre

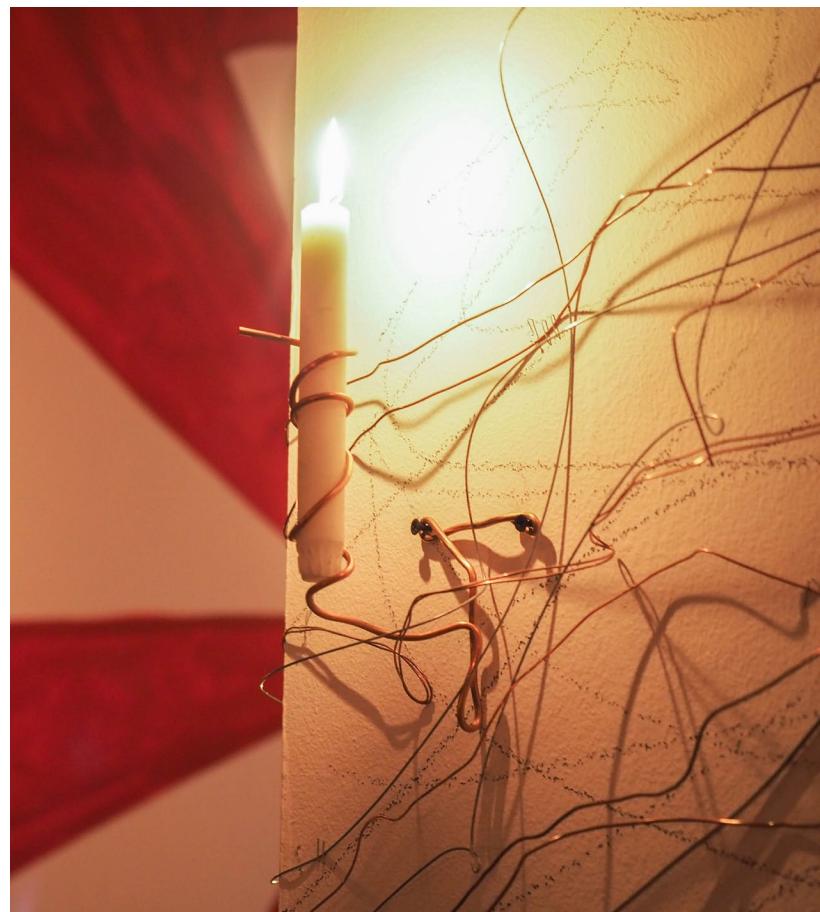


BANK OF NO 10

BANK OF NO: Inside Point Centre

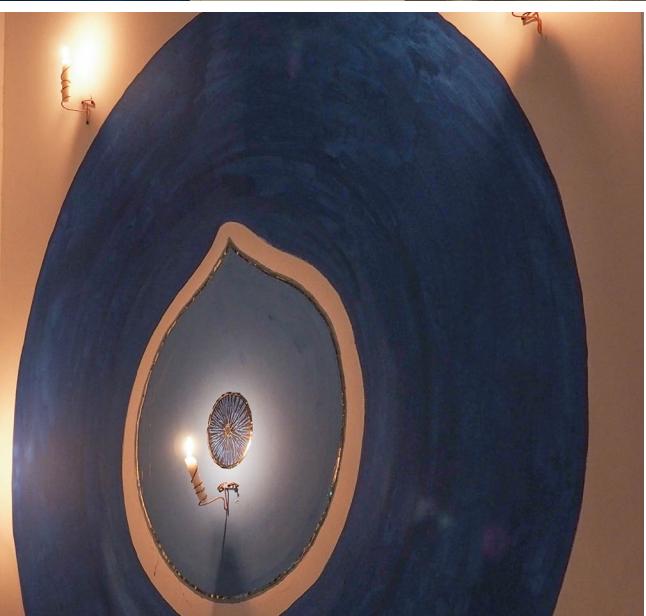


BANK OF NO: Inside Point Centre



BANK OF NO 12

BANK OF NO: Inside Point Centre



BANK OF NO 13

BANK OF NO: Inside Point Centre



BANK OF NO 14

Austerity Dance



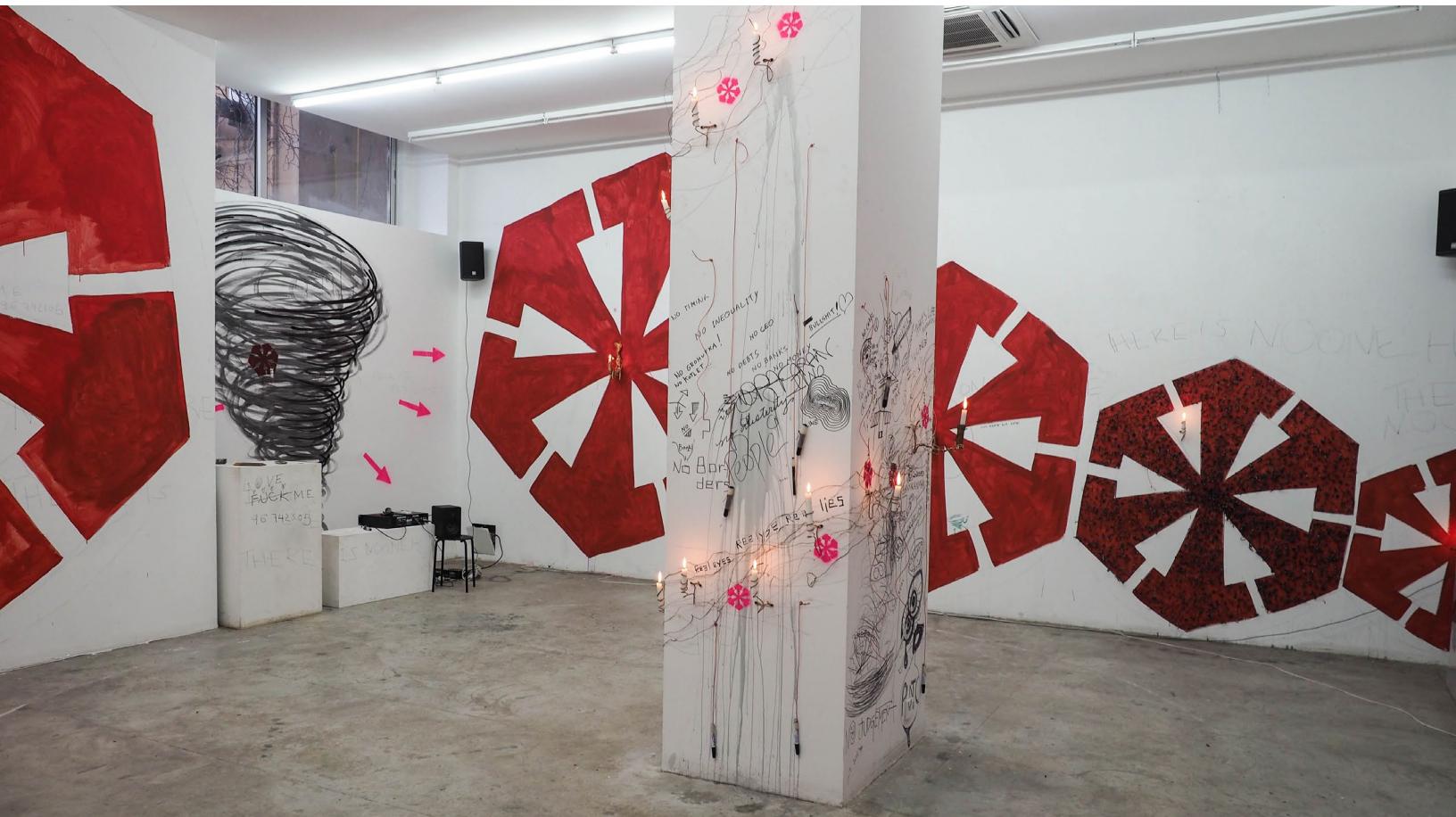
Austerity Dance



Austerity Dance



Austerity Dance



Videos

Bank of No (Action)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDWvWCDkyuw>

Austerity Dance (Documentation)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YbKKnOc6Pw>