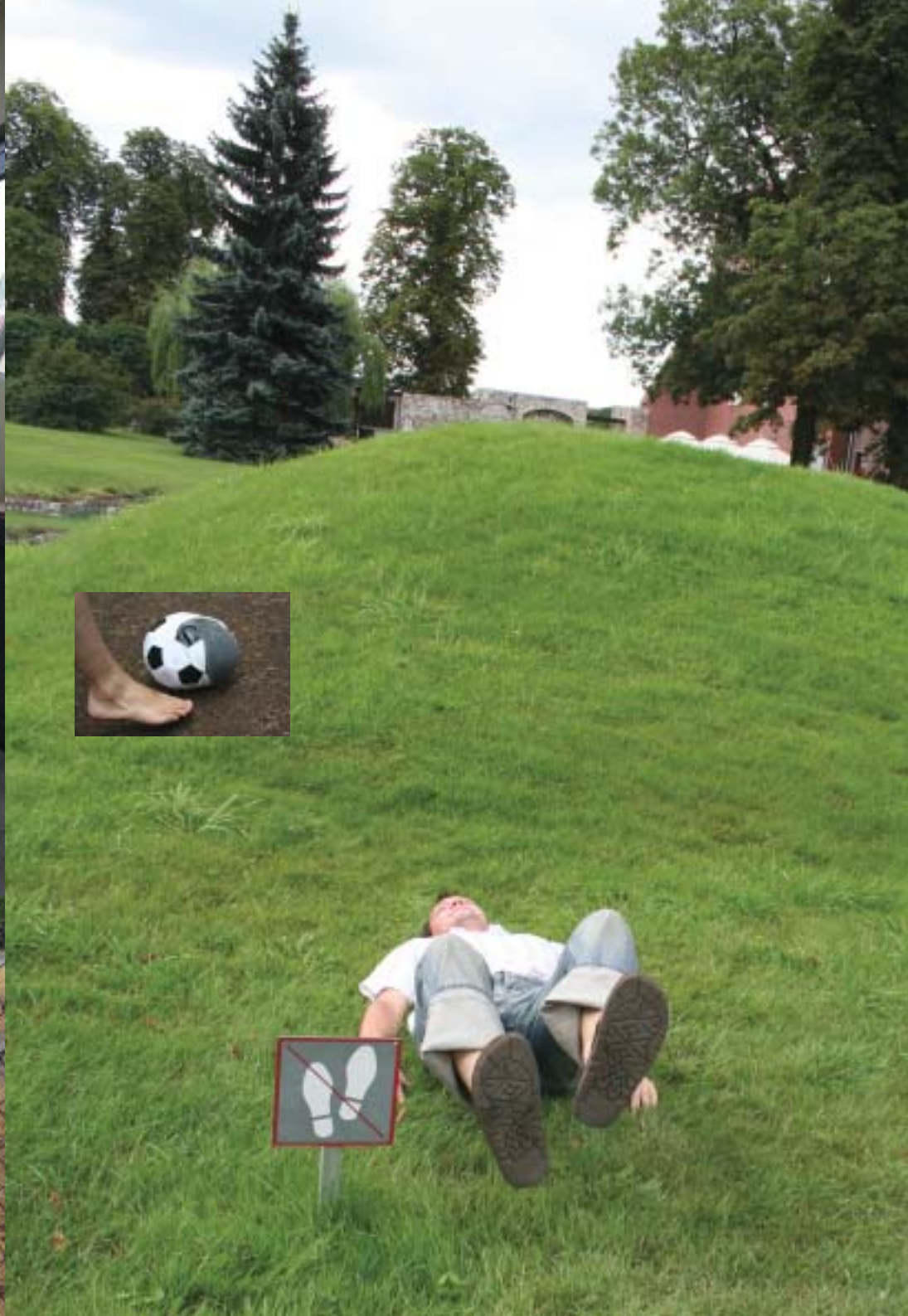




CREATIVE ACTiViSM







DISCUSSION:

No LOGO ACTIVISM OR CREATIVE ACTIVISM?

Frans: No logo activism or creative activism?

Activism sells. Activists of today rebel against big brands and logos by carrying around their own brands and logos. But wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt is as much being a fashion victim as wearing Prada. 'Activism' has become a highly commercialised lifestyle; in which the image of being 'authentic' and 'against the system' is used as an effective means for companies to brand and sell their products. What can an activist do about this? A lot of activists choose the negative option: to fight the system, the logos, the brands and the corporations. But if you really want to be an anarchist activist, you should get loose of your black and red icons, and choose for the no-logo way. That means in practice: never leave a name! You can just start your no logo actions by doing things that are not in any way organized or could end up in another form of branding your name/logo, spreading an image, or even as a use for your artistic activities, art school, etc. You just go out and be spontaneous, play and change the world around you without any more effect than just what you do. Don't take pictures. Your actions should just be as they are. Anonymous, creating small moments of humanity in the streets. It is fun to do, but your ego will not like this too long. Most activists are not enlightened Buddhists. Some moment you want to be noticed or seen, or have a result. So you better leave the 'negative' section and join the positivists. Creative activism is to create your own alternatives, your own media, your own images and 'activist branding'. You go out in the streets, start your own media, and spread your own ideas and images. You will create a whole world of imagination. And your imagination can grow into new forms of reality. Another world is possible when you create it. So, one day you will find yourself selling T-shirts, black spot shoes, magazines and activism gadgets for an interesting target group of highly educated, critical world citizens. This is just what you should do. Creative activism is about

creating alternatives. If your ideas and actions become a success, you have to deal with the effects. This is a big problem for a lot of revolutionaries. It is easier to fight the negative than to realize the positive. But it is worth a try. And maybe one day you will rule the world with your creative activism media empire. Do not doubt, just make it happen.

Marc: Why should activism be creative?

You ask the question, 'why should activism be creative?'. I think this is an important question. I would say that activism should be creative, because creativity implies the ability to find new ways or new forms of making things happen. It can change reality. In your article you say that it is easier to be negative than to formulate the positive alternative. Being an activist alone, one won't find new, positive ways; being a creative activist, one is making them.

Doeko: Is creative activism innovative?

Is creative activism innovative? I would say yes and no at the same time. Not every new idea will be considered innovative since sometimes it is too close to clichés or just doesn't have enough new elements in it. Sometimes it can be the opposite, namely too many new elements and then people will not consider it as innovative but will probably see you as a weirdo. Old ideas can be considered as innovative if their context is innovative. Spreading a poster in a town where no one has ever done it, is that creative activism? I would say yes, for me it's not about constantly inventing ideas no one ever thought of but more about putting ideas in the right context and by doing that make them innovative.

Frans: Should activism be creative or innovative?

Activism is a way of living in which you actively engage you with the world you live in. One could say being an activist is the opposite of not caring about the world around you,



and just living your own life. Should you be creative or innovative to be a 'good' activist? No, but of course it makes a difference if you put something old and stereotyped or something entirely 'new' and creative into the world. Creative activism is the mix of 1) engaging yourself actively with the world you live in, and 2) using the sources of imagination, creativity and inspiration to give form to the world around you; resulting in forms of creative expression. Should an activist always be creative? No, sometimes you don't need to be creative, sometimes a stupid, simple action that is done a thousand times is enough. Context is important, street art in Berlin is less innovative than street art in Mongolia. So what about going there next summer...

Marc: Anybody been in Mongolia?

Hmm, that makes me quite curious about activism in Mongolia. Possibly, common forms of activism in that country could be very creative when placed in Berlin... Anybody been in Mongolia? Apart from creating alternatives, creativity also helps to get the message of your action through to the public. Creativity effects the people's imagination, their feelings and their thoughts.

Doeko: Uncle Sam

I think that in many countries the use of street theatre would be seen as creative activism but I think just the use of theatre isn't always creative. Often you see that clichés such as 'Uncle Sam' (carrying around a big image of Uncle Sam during anti-US or anti-war actions) are being used and that has been done many times but again maybe not in that place on earth.

Marc: Creative actions

I agree that stuff like street theatre or dressing up in some way for a demo (like Uncle Sam or Robin Hood) is not very innovative, though the question was raised before whether creative activism should be always innovative. A key word could be imagination. Creative actions like street theatre trigger my imagination and my emotions. Especially when the image is new for me. Uncle Sam doesn't do that to me anymore. Therefore it is, in my opinion, not very creative. Creative actions should be doing something new, for their context of course. I use the word 'innovative'

for raising new images and statements as well as for new forms of action.

Frans: Creative imagination

So it is not about being innovative or not, but about the question: are you using your creative imagination? Do you only react on what is happening or do you take the time to fly around the situation, see it from different perspectives, and imagine how it could be, how you would like it to be? Yesterday I had a discussion with my neighbour about what is a good way of being active in society. He said it is most important to be practical, to realise things in practice. I agreed, but added it is also important to connect the practical action with reflection and imagination. Only creative imagination would make the world flow away into pink clouds, only practical action misses a good idea, and a sense of what is happening, a sense of reason. For a good action you need to reflect over the situation, fly around the subject and research your motives to do something with it; to use your creative imagination; and to act in practice. Acting in practice should contain more than just publishing or spreading your ideas, but somehow include realizing your ideas.

Joep: Creative tactics

No one is original. The best anyone could possibly do, is to disorder and reorder existing thoughts, images, sounds. Creativity is not more or less than a productive search for new combinations. Creative activism is about activities that rebel in one way or another but escape the usual image of activism. Aren't you getting tired as well by yet another strike? By another protest march? These forms of activism are easy to neglect: media and politicians have developed effective strategies to cope with them. Creative activism should pose a new challenge to the powers we contest (including numbing routine and ecological waste), to create space for change by making oppositional forces immune to easy refusal. So, it's not only fun, creative activism a necessary tactic.

to be continued...

join the discussion yourself on
<http://www.creativeacts.org/forum>



The power of surprise

The unexpected breakfast in bed, the little gift out of the blue, a stranger you meet in the streets and end up being best friends with... but also a street robbery, a sudden earthquake or being taken out of your bed and put in jail because some people think you don't belong somewhere.

Sometimes you like to be surprised, sometimes you don't and some people never want to be surprised. One way or another, surprises have a certain power to catch you off guard, when you're the most vulnerable.

Surprising someone in a positive way is a delicate thing. You have to know the person well to estimate whether your surprise is going to be appreciated. No fun in spending hours and hours on a nice oven dish when the only reaction you get is "but didn't you know I'm allergic to cheese?" In that case the one being unpleasantly surprised is you. So know the interests but also the (im)possibilities of the person you want to surprise. The best thing is to require this information unnoticed by the other. 'Accidentally' overhearing a conversation or just asking his or her opinion on something in a casual way are good examples to achieve this.

The next step is timing. No matter how much someone likes to go on a survival/canoe trip, it's probably not a good idea to have the bags packed and ready on the moment he or she is just taken into the hospital for a big operation of some kind. So pick out a fitting time and place for your surprise and the impact will be big and have the wanted effect, as long as the person isn't a surprise-hater of course.

Million change

But what to do when you don't have anyone around to surprise although you really feel like it? The easiest thing to do in that case is to surprise yourself and to look at the

world as one big surprise! Imagine being a child again and seeing things for the very first time. Stop taking everything for granted. Sometimes I just think of the fact that it was a one in a million chance that I came into this world and have become the person I am today in the place I am right at that moment and I feel surprised with life itself.

Be creative, look at the clouds and see how they can make images with your dreams or thoughts. Be amazed by their ever-changing movement of shape but still remaining cloud! Always having a monster under your bed or a clown in your closet might work for the more experienced surpriser and bumping into yourself as you least expect it is probably the best way to be surprised for a longer period of time.

Strike

Some might think the above sounds kind of hippie like but the power of surprise also has a downside. In the same way as you can surprise someone in a positive way, you can also turn it around and use it to hurt someone. Knowing the enemy, especially the weak spot and finding the right moment to strike are well known war tactics. The time you need to realize what is going on before you can act on the situation is the most dangerous. You'll get way behind on the person who planned the whole thing and knows exactly what the next step will be. You have to be a very creative and impulsive person to find a way out of an unpleasant surprise. And that's the advise I can give you on how to avoid negative surprises: keep sharp and keep up your level of improvising and creativity.

So concluding from all this 'surprise' goes far beyond mere presents. It's in every small thing that catches your attention when you didn't expect it. It's about being open towards it's power, be aware but also let yourself be positively surprised!

Lotte Huijs

Books on the streets

Imagine you are walking on the streets and instead of seeing posters hanging on electricity boxes you see books hanging there. That's what some friends and I did last summer in the city of Arnhem, the Netherlands.

On the World Press Freedom Day May 3rd 2006 we created a book in 1 day with over 500 people, with freedom of expression as main topic. These books had to be distributed. From the post office we got these plastic bags to put custom documents in that you can stick on the outside of packages that you want to send. We had too many of them and I put a book in it.

The book fitted perfectly in the bag and I made a joke that we could put up books in public spaces to spread them. I walked outside to test if the plastic bag would hold on an electricity box and it did. An hour later, books were hanging in different crazy places for people to take home. A day later several books were still hanging. Maybe people didn't dare to take them home? I will say that it looked funny.

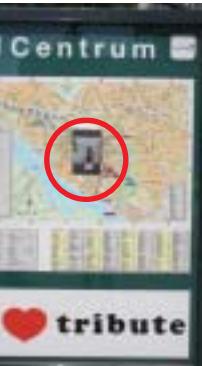
Do it yourself

If you, too, want to try such an action, you can go to the post office (at least in the Netherlands) and say that you want to send packages abroad and need those plastic envelopes that stick on the outside. They will give you as many as you want for free and on the back of the bag you just have to remove the paper and it will stick on many surfaces without damaging it. It's an easy action and fun to do. Especially watching how other people react is great!

Doeko Pinxt



If you want a copy of the 1-day book, check out www.loesje.org



Positivity works

Grandmothers, multi-nationals, writings on toilet walls, they say it all the time: 'be positive and you'll get most out of life', 'don't worry, be happy', 'just do it', or one of the other million sayings... So let's be honest, it's rather cliché to state that positivity works. But it does.

What is actually the benefit of being positive or doing something positive?

I think positivity works because it's appealing to the ones exposed to it. A positive thought or sight can tickle you, inspire you or make you smile. It is a constructive attitude, it stimulates progression towards the better.

Let us believe the maximum of positivism, then everything is possible. Our thoughts would be borderless. Our imagination could create anything. And even if we would realize only half of that, what a creative boost this would be!

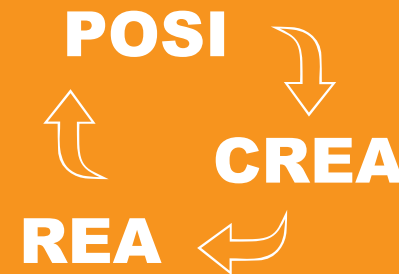
It can even be seen as a continuing spiral. I just mentioned creativity coming out of positivism, but it can be turned around as well. You can gain positivity by being creative, by finding out that you can see possibilities and are capable of realizing them (the so-called Hey! I Can Do This!-Moment).

POSITivity: looking at / for possibilities
CREAivity: seeing possibilities and ways to realize them
REALization: turning ideas into reality

The so-called Hey! I Can Do This!-Moment is great. I'd recommend it to anybody who likes to contribute to reality.

Luder Esveld

One big smile





With nine people and a van we drove to a town called Kielce. We wanted to play in public space. We wanted to change the images in the street. Call it a street action. When we arrived we split up in two groups to go and buy whatever we thought we would need. So after some serious shopping we ended up with:

- Two rolls of toilet paper
- Two rolls of thin white painters tape
- One roll of big white painters tape
- A knife
- Some black and red markers

And this is what we did with it

Deniz, Gro, Hanna, Joost, Kristine, Linda, Mara, Niko and Paco



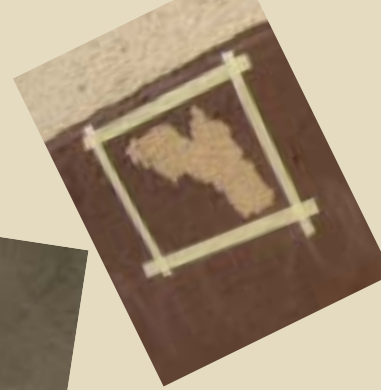
WE PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACE

PUBLIC SPACE EXPERIMENTS

We created a series of time machines in public space. Time machines can bring you wherever you want, if their construction is good. As we forgot to keep them going, we lost track on them. But what happened with by-passers, who accidentally got thrown into another era? Street art is something temporary, stupid! We left our traces and went on.

We found ourselves a way of brainstorming with objects in public space. Important is that you don't prepare; you just do what you feel like. You look around in the city as if everything is your material. You look especially to objects that are loose: trash, a note, a bike tire. You search for ways to re-create what you found. With these actions, you change the meaning of objects in public space. The act is simple, but effective. Playful and without pretensions. You bring a bunch of prefixed images and texts, a letter gun, tape and some old magazines. You go into town and find yourself a good spot. It could be an electricity box or a piece of trash. You create it into something fantastic. Important is, that you create it 3-D. A lot of street art is two dimensional, flat, as a drawing or text. This action is different: you are not writing on the wall, but changing the meaning of space. Your objects turn into something else. They become a time machine, a central post for urban communication, a temporary art exhibition or a hanging garden. Just in five minutes, you created something new and authentic. You walk on. Maybe it is gone next week, but the magic has had its effect. Of thousand by-passers, one should have been touched. And by the way, did you create just to impress? Important of your action was, that you changed the meaning of the world around you, you found yourself a new way of interacting with your environment. You are no longer a passive consumer of public space, but a creative actor. It gives you a magical feeling. Now just play on.

Frans Prins



Jette-sur-Mer

'Jette by the sea'

In 1983, as part of an artistic project, a street was turned into a beach by Wodek, a Polish artist living in Jette (Brussels, Belgium). In the weekend of June 10th and 11th, 23 years later, he did it again and this time he also added water to the beach!

For the official opening of a new exhibition with 111 artists around the central theme 'Sea', he got permission (and sponsoring) from the local authorities to flood part of a street under a bridge and put a beach next to it. The story behind this is that because of global warming, the sea levels have risen and now Brussels is a coastal city.

The 'sea' was constructed by placing rectangular plugs in the drains under the bridge and then adding coloured water. The sides of the tunnel were painted bright blue and yellow, to suggest dunes, and sea sounds were played.

Next to the beach there was a shop that sold buckets, beach balls and other beach stuff. And if you went up the stairs (next to the gigantic post card from Jette-sur-Mer 1983), there were picnic tables, couches and of course Wodek himself selling vodkas and snacks and of course you could also enter the exhibition. Because it was a very hot and sunny weekend (30°C), a lot of people in bathing suits came to the beach, and thus became part of this artwork.

Tom Buytaert



Is this public art?

"Very cool!" was my first thought. Last February I saw huge memos stuck on big, stately buildings in a main street in Madrid, Spain. The memos stuck on the buildings just said things like 'don't forget to buy washing powder' or 'call mum.' My first idea was that this was a piece of art. Some famous artist probably?

Later, I started to doubt about it as being a piece of public art. Could it be a commercial? I didn't notice a name of a company on it. Did I know the letter type used on the memos? Did the memos have a certain design that looked like it belonged to some company, a mobile phone provider's house style for example?

Maybe the company wants me to be interested in making more phone calls? Was it just a commercial for a memo company?

I didn't associate the design of the memos to any company's style I know, but does that mean that these huge memos are actually art and not commercials? I don't think about myself as a paranoid person, but I know that the advertising world has dozens of tricks to have products find their way into my mind, to stimulate my likes subconsciously. Big billboards in the streets are annoying more and more people so of course advertising agencies try and find different ways of influencing people. Was this a new one?

I still don't know. I don't really care as well. For me it felt that it stated that the city could be your living room, so for me it was cool anyway.

Marc van Dijk





Public space in Minsk: commercialized dictatorship

A wet dream for control freaks, but a nightmare for the ones that love freedom. The streets in Minsk contain a bizarre mix of symbols of communistic dictatorship and capitalistic consumerism. Communistic icons, state propaganda and commercials for international brands go hand in hand, as if they were good old comrades. Lenin watches over your MacDonald's hamburgers.

Minsk is a designer's paradise. After the city was almost completely destroyed during World War 2, the designers of Stalin and consorts had free reign to rebuild Minsk into a model city according to modern soviet standards. There are broad streets, big squares and grave, stiff designed buildings, dressed up with red stars, hammers and sickles. The soviet architecture is pompous and megalomaniac but has its own, absurdistic charm. The metro stations are stylish and seem to be designed for a science fiction movie. Recently, the city of Minsk has been filled with big flat screens on public squares and in the metro system. Short films and spots push the people to consume and obey. In the metro stations you find hypermodern flat screens that present a mix of commercials for Marlboro mixed with cartoons and clips to support an 'orderly society'. Roofs of big buildings are covered with big brand labels like VW, Siemens or Nokia. And this is probably only the beginning, because there are not yet that many shops to be found.

The streets in Minsk are clean. National Cleaning Day is only one of several ways in which the state keeps the streets clean. Graffiti exist in its absence: light differences in colour reveal the hidden writings on the walls. There is clearly no space for free expression in the streets. You are supposed to behave and if you don't you will be punished. The entrance to the metro has gates where you can pass freely, as long as you show a ticket. If you don't follow the rules with a valid ticket, the gate will crush you from both sides. That's how the system works. The fear for being crushed keeps most people in track.

There are little cracks in the system. Not everyone is leaving public space as a sphere of total control. After the presidential elections last spring where president Lukashenko stayed at power, demonstrations were held. They were violently oppressed and the public squares were empty again. Now other tactics are used: flash mobs. By SMS, email and word of mouth people find out about the next action. At a certain time and place they gather, do a small action and leave again. Actions only take a few minutes, mostly too short time to interfere. Reading out the constitution loud in front of the KGB building. Bringing candlelights to a certain spot. Holding hands on a bridge. Nothing harmful, hard to catch, a silent protest. Just for a few minutes the street can be yours. Even in a commercialised dictatorship.

Frans Prins



Who is afraid of the Klitink Cultus?

Klitink



Clitinc/Klitink did a public action, in the city of Breda, the Netherlands. Like most larger cities nowadays, the city-centre is filled with surveillance camera's, and actions against them.

Public area means that it's open for general public, no exceptions made. Since the city centre is called "public area", you can question if it's really that open, because you're constantly being watched. Of course, the reason is for the safety of the general public.

But why are people feeling unsafe? It's not that the public area is the most crime-related area of the city. Au contraire! If compared with other regions in the suburbs, the city centre is pretty damn safe!

When entering the public area, you are notified of the hidden surveillance cameras by numerous warning signs. With semiotics in mind, these signs, instead of reassuring the general public, create a form of fear. The subconscious will relate these signs with possible crime: "There is camera-surveillance in this area. Camera-surveillance prevents crime, hence in this area

there is crime, because otherwise there would be no need for camera surveillance."

But who's watching? Maybe this is the beginning of George Orwell's 1984?

Maybe big brother is secretly gathering information on all of us, researching our life-pattern, our habits, our culture; and sells that information to grand-capital megalomaniac multi-galactical business centres? Maybe there's some secret voyeuristic underground commune with big bucks to spend, who gets turned on by it, which result in strange orgies including elephants?

Overnight during some normal week, a group of 3 people, loaded with heavy-duty glue, industrial double-sided sticky tape and cut-to-size warning signs went out to the "public area". They followed their predetermined route changing all the "camera-surveillance" warning signs in the area with their own-made. After that night, instead of the city of Breda, the Klitink cultus was watching over you. You feel much safer now, don't you?

www.klitink.com



Manifesto of Klitink

his text derived out of pure necessity, for modern day life is a life completely subservient to the mass - production and consumption - society.

The streets are covered with propaganda-like advertisements, extolling over-reproduced unnecessities, the fashion-shops are filled with uniform mass-fabricated products, the music industry is undifferentiated where every tune sounds the same as the tune before, even if you compare different styles or genres, and every TV-channel brings you the same pre-rendered formula, a consistency of the same general programs.

The mainstream culture absorbs these given guidelines without a moment of consideration.

And the sub-cultures just follow along, to fit in a certain type of pigsty. Everybody adapts to the group they want to belong, adjusts to the dress code and social intercourse of that particular group but still proclaiming that they do not adapt, that they are so different from the mainstream culture. Like pigs in mud they are, digging and digging, deeper and deeper into this mess.

We will not adapt to these external requirements of mass-society, but we choose to stay faithful to our internal

Klitink is a living and revolting machine, in constant state of revolution, continuously expanding itself in the vast desert surroundings called modern society. Exploring the immense subconscious with vehicles beyond comprehension, logging dreamscapes, mindshades and bliss-like chimeras, Klitink's sole purpose is to open up the portal to an introspective world, creating a surreal expression of visual poetry. This is a summary of the thoughts and the theories of Klitink.

cravings of the individual. We turn our back to the mainstream society with their uniform lifestyle, we laugh at the pitiful sub-cultures for their ignorance.

Because of this, society will label us as a rebellious confederacy, and for some part, this is true. We choose our own individual path, instead of the pre-rendered path of mass-society or subcultures, and because of this, it is hard to fit in to society's standards.

If this is considered rebellious, so be it. We are active on spreading our thoughts and theories, we are constantly plotting against issues we do not agree on, we are trying to open some long closed eyes, and because of this, we collide with society's standards.

If this is considered a confederacy, so be it.

Throw away this rigid, strict lifestyle that ties you down, tear off this mass-produced skin that hides your individuality, and dare to live a free life -your own life- without the piercing pressure of an antique archaistic society.

We will burn every single page of this manifesto at the moment it becomes outdated, and replace it with a brand-spanking new and improved one, that suites the spirit of the time. We will not be conservative about our own opinions, in fact, we are willing to let go every single assumption, if other opinions proof to be more suitable, and therefore beat the crap out of ours. We keep an open mind.

Klitink officiates as a sanatorium, as a sanctuary, as a moment of contemplation.

We have killed the inventor and flushed his notes, destroyed his laboratory, and raised Klitink in the air as a newborn baby. We have thrown away our blinding blinkers in order to be exposed to the magnificent world surrounding us, we have burned the premeditated maps so we can travel freely into the unknown, all in favour of the experience. **We glorify the childhood state,** in which everything is new, where a whole wide world lies in front, ready to be explored and nothing is taken for granted.

In Klitink, everything is as much right and wrong, as it is not. We live for the experience.

We love dynamics, we love flexibility!

We do not want to be bound to one working manner, we do not want to be tied up to one style, we do not want to be placed in one sheep-pen with a label stuck in our ear.

We are interchangeable, we are dissolute, we are inscrutable, we are wrong, we are right, we are left, we are unexpected, we are boundless, we are countless, we are incorruptible, we are rash, we are highly low-budget, we are unquestionable, we are desultory, we are art and we are artless, we are a harsh sounding device in a soundproof booth, we are the antidote for the disease we are, and most of all, **we are not welcome at other peoples parties.**



Athens



Athens



Madrid



Athens





ADBUSTING
what is it & where did
it come from?

Adbusters is an organisation based in Vancouver, Canada. It all started when a guy named Kalle Lasn stood in a Canadian supermarket parking lot frustrated because he had to insert a quarter into a cart to shop there. He jammed his quarter in so that the cart became inoperable. This was his first “culture jam”.

This small step led to much bigger ones. In 1989, British Columbia's forestry industry, under attack by radical environmentalists, fought back with billboards and television ads. Along with wilderness cinematographer Bill Schmalz and other activists, Lasn launched a counter-ad. But television stations refused to air it. So the activists protested in front of logging company headquarters and complained to the media. They garnered press coverage, and the industry's ads were pulled after hundreds of people phoned the networks in support of the environmentalists. Exhilarated with their success, the protesting cabal started the Adbusters Media Foundation.



Adbusters is also a magazine. In 1989 it was a quarterly magazine with 5000 copies, now it's a stunning bimonthly glossy with 120000 copies and readers in 60 countries. It's a magazine with critique on the society, articles ranging from weird art to „how-to-be-a-better-activist” and of course their famous spoof ads, in which they take on their hated enemy, the multinational corporations.

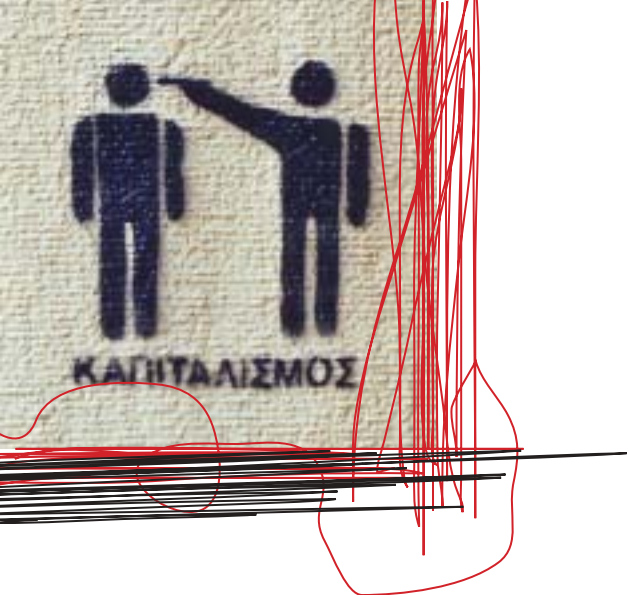
The aim of Adbusters is to rid the world of the corporation by taking them on with their own weapons. Marketing. Changing their ads into counter-ads, goryfying instead of glorifying their products. Their campaigns, aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of consumerism have become worldwide events. Buy Nothing Day, Turn Off TV Week, events meant to get the people to think about the world they live in, and the lives they live.



Adbusters have inspired many people to do actions, and to start their own kind of adbusting campaigns, to change a world that they see as a world of greed and destruction, ruled by ruthless corporations.

www.adbusters.org

Meindert de Vries



“I surely do not want to see racist and fascist slogans on my way to the tube station.”

* Loesje is a girl who likes to stick her and her friends' own posters all around the world.

Do we want everybody to conquer back the streets?

Since I met Loesje* 1½ years ago, I started noticing art in the streets. Suddenly there were all these posters, stickers, graffiti and stencils around me. I live in Berlin and this is a very creative city. In certain areas you feel even overflooded by impressions. I like to walk through the streets and look around and be aware of this other kind of life. There are so many interesting ideas and you get very inspired. If you walk with open eyes, of course.

I think that -like me for a long time- a lot of people don't see any street art. This makes me question how effective street art is actually? Does the art or the message reach people? Does it reach only a certain group? Not everybody meets Loesje to open his or her eyes.

For me street art is a nice way for people to express themselves. You can see the same methods all around the world, sometimes even the same thoughts or similar ideas. Sometimes it is very specific how people in one culture express themselves through street art and then it's very different from other places. It is interesting to see this. This is a reason why I like street art to be around.

Racist slogans

For me there is one problematic thing with street art: if the streets are public space and I am free to use them for my right of freedom of expression and put art and posters on the streets – this includes that everybody has that right. „Everybody“ means also people that put art or messages in the street that I really dislike. For example, I surely do not want to see racist and fascist slogans on my way to the tube station.

Besides, if everybody were allowed to express themselves on the streets it would create a public dialogue. Which is not bad. But couldn't it also end up in the misuse of public space? In a mess?

I haven't found an answer to these questions yet. They come up in my mind from time to time. I like to stick posters and stickers – but I am careful with myself to want to „conquer back the streets“. What do you think?

Myrtó Apostolaki

Opinion

Opinion

Who's street?

Wherever you go, you're confronted with inhumanly good looking men and women, who blind you with their snow white teeth smile, make you go pale with the tint of their skin or make you feel like an elephant by showing their muscular non fat zero calorie bodies. And they're all trying to sell you something, like toothpaste, liposuction, cars, bras, houses, life or insurance for it. Preferably by making you feel unhappy.

Who gives them the space for that?

Our governments - our leaders - sell our streets to these nasty corporations that want you feel too fat, ugly, unhappy and wanting to buy stuff.

Your opinion on the street is illegal, it's vandalism, because you did not pay to have it on the street.

Your work of art, no matter if it's graffiti, a sticker, poster or a chalk painting on the pavement, it's illegal, vandalism, because you did not pay or got a license to be on that street, in that tree, or on that wall.

You should have hired JCDecaux. This company has also a view on beauty, as can be seen on their website, www.jcdecaux.co.uk.

In 45 countries and 3500 cities they decide what the streets look like, and get paid by the corporations to wash our brain.

Some cities have special police squads that hunt those terrorartists, who violently spread art and opinions on the streets, radically beautifying the world without even thinking about the positive effects this can have on the common man in the street. Before you know they are



criticizing the government, the corporations and start thinking for themselves, or worse even, not buying things they don't need!!! Luckily there are laws about that, so they can fine those criminals or even put them in jail.

So, what about those adbusters?

Somewhere along the way, people decided that enough was enough, that the streets were their streets as well, and that it should be a place where you could walk freely, without being confronted with sexist messages, environment destroying car ads and corporate lies. The streets should instead be filled with art and opinions instead of lies and deceit.

They started Adbusting.

Who are those mystical art terrorist mutants who come in the middle of the night or day to “reclaim” those streets, those billboards, trees and walls?

One example is a group on this site; www.ouvresa.tk They have the key to the streets and are willing to share their secret! Here, you can find how to make one yourself with help of simple materials. Just open up those billboards and hop, there you have a space for your own message, opinion or work of art.

And well, wouldn't you like that? To have your work hanging safe and dry, where hundreds of people can see it?

Maybe it's time to shove those advertisements up their creative arses and the art on the street... Time to reclaim the streets!

Meindert de Vries



Athens



Rome



Rome

Neither executioners nor victims

Conscious objectors struggle in Greece

„Sergeant, Sir, I suffer from colour-blindness: I see each and every target identical to my heart.“

Aris Alexandrou, Advice to an insubordinate (Poems 1941-1974)

We, the association of the Greek Conscious Objectors, began a struggle, in the mid-‘80s, so that the possibility to refuse military service for reasons of conscience would be recognized in Greece, too. What in our country sounded like an excessive demand of a tiny minority, in the Western world was a self-evident right, constitutionally guaranteed for every citizen, since the dawn of the 20th century in some cases.

The objectors have been, and still are, going through an ordeal with successive sentences by the military courts and many months of imprisonment, systematic harassment and the intimidation of their families by the police, denial of exiting the country, and also restrictions: in practicing a profession, in acquiring personal property, in exercising their right to vote, etc.

Despite all that, the number of declared objectors to military service for reasons of conscience has expanded, slowly yet steadily, activating to date several dozen opponents of violence and militarism (Indeed, should one also count those invoking reasons of religious conscience, the number rises to several thousand).

“We dared to take the decisive step.”

We are not attempting here to interpret the reasons why a significant percentage of young people turn their back on military service. The answer to this question is given from within each person subject to military service before the critical moment of enlistment, with the result that 1 in 4 never “wear a military uniform”



Decisive step

We are merely interested in speaking about our own reasons and our personal motives. We dared to take the decisive step and declared our refusal to enlist through our public declaration, which we addressed to the media and the competent recruitment services. Driven by our moral principles, we declared our opposition to all forms of violence –military or revolutionary, legal or illegal– and refused our participation in the army, the foremost machinery for the promotion of violence.

Our motive has not been the evasion of the ordeal of the military service or any other petty self-interest. Our motive is our ideological opposition to violence in any of its forms, even when it is used for supposedly „pacifistic“ aims. Our motive is the international anxiety caused by the expansionism of the superpowers, our opposition to the escalation of warlike arms acquisitions, our disagreement to the established ideology that acclaims the army to the status of prerequisite for ensuring peace.

Our motive is our solidarity with the downtrodden Greek and Turk breadwinner, who sees the fruits of his/her daily toil being transformed into weapons of mass mutual annihilation. Our motive is our opposition to the machinations of Western imperialism that seeks the division of humanity into Christians and heathens and, behind the scenes, is cultivating new fronts for military confrontations.

Combating war

We are not merely uttering generalities in support of just our struggle.

We are confronting imperialism in practice, struggling for disarmament. We are confronting chauvinism in practice,

*“We do not accept the role of the „executioner“,
for which the venal heralds of nationalism are
seeking stooges”*

cooperating with the objectors of the neighbouring countries. We are combating war in practice, refusing to serve it. And it is now universally accepted that conscientious objection is a fundamental component –if not the spearhead– of the peace movements.

It is, after all, a fact that modern history has only praise to show:

*for the 22,000 deserters and objectors of the German army during World War II (15,000 of them were executed);
for the hundreds of French soldiers and the mass of people who supported their refusal to strike on the Algerian liberators in 1961;
for the 110,000 who burned their draft cards, refusing to fight in the imperialist U.S. war in Vietnam;
for the 111 professional American soldiers who deserted during the first Gulf War;
for the 200,000 young men who refused to fight in the recent civil war in Yugoslavia;
for the hundreds of American soldiers who sought political asylum in other countries, sick from the annihilation of civilians in Iraq, during the last three years;
for the dozens of Israeli soldiers who chose prison rather than becoming accomplices in crimes against civilian Palestinians;
for the 1,300 Israeli conscientious objectors in recent years (300 of those during 2005);
for the 300,000 insubordinates by the count of the Turkish army (some of those are declared conscientious objectors who suffered a lot in that country's prisons).*

The United Nations, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the European Parliament, Amnesty International and a multitude of other distinguished organizations has for many years, never ceased criticizing Greece for violating the human right to conscientious objection, welcomed as a step forward Law 2510/97 that provided for „alternative service“. A newer legislative measure (Law 3421/05) did not remove any of the blatant injustices against the objectors, did not remove the degrading provisions, neither did it suspend prosecutions.

Hesitant

The political world stood hesitant towards the objector movement. Grey crusaders of totalitarianism shamelessly demand the cruellest punishment of conscientious objectors (some bigoted writers have even demanded the death penalty) or their „treatment“ with

lobotomy, as Archbishop Christodoulos has proposed in articles and speeches. They direct their shots selectively to the conscientious objectors, because the latter have the courage to manifest their opposition to militarism and violence. They are not hiding, they are not licking anybody's boots, they are not planning carefully how to get transferred and they are not asking for favourable treatment or a political favour.

*“The United Nations, the Council of Europe,
the OSCE, the European Parliament, Amne-
sty International and a multitude of other di-
stinguished organizations has for many years,
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the human right to conscientious objection.”*

At the same time, these same crusaders are overlooking the masses of the insubordinate -the ministry of Defence estimates their number at 45,000- they are overlooking the suicides and fatal accidents of soldiers, and they are overlooking the „discharges without enlistment“ of the patriots of popular music halls and TV shows.

Rally

Our voice has joined those of all anti-militarists of the planet. It has become a petition, a protest and a rally with the demand that the war on conscientious objectors must stop, that the prosecutions and military trials must end. That a courageous step must be made towards peace by decriminalizing conscientious objection, by granting an amnesty to the older objectors who are being saddled with repeated sentences, by rewarding the social role of the “alternative service”.

War is a crime against humanity and militarism, as an executioner, weaves the funereal shroud of its future victims. We do not accept the role of the „executioner“, for which the venal heralds of nationalism are seeking stooges, nor are we willing to aid and abet future crimes against our neighbours or humanity. Neither do we accept, however, the role of the „victim“ that the military and religious intolerance have in store for us.

Conscientious objection is not only a universal human right; it is also the ultimate refuge in order to save our individual dignity.

Lazaros Petromelidis
Dimitris K. Sotiropoulos
Aggelos Nikolopoulos

Greek Conscious Objectors Association



the sun is going down. a tag game. by Forever Child



About beauty

Opinion

Gorgeous guys on television, the new lipstick, a Porsche, a work of art, beauty can be found in a lot of things. Picture perfect living rooms full with feng shui candles. Plastic surgery. A dog's wardrobe.

For many years all have been working towards beauty. Beauty being a state in which the largest amount of people finds the object beautiful. What is this human craving for beauty, what's wrong with ugly things. Why, even in the ugly, we look for beauty?

To get to know more about our craving for beauty, we should first know how beauty is defined. Is there a definition of beauty? No, there isn't. Beauty is an opinion and the verdict lies in the eyes of the beholder.

Various people find various things beautiful. When first seeing work by Erwin Olaf, a photographer, the first thing that came up in my mind was, "this is beautiful". The very picture was of a little boy, pale and white, stabbed in the back and blood coming out of the wound. The picture was very aesthetic. No scream of horror. While others seemed to be shocked by this work, I really loved it. It wasn't the beauty of a top model or something really trendy, but it was the pure power of the picture.

Should you look at cultural backgrounds to define beauty? I think you should. In some cultures beauty is fat woman, long necks, stretched lips, colourful artwork and big woven rugs on the wall. In other cultures these things are looked upon as being ugly. But even though there are cultural differences, they can also change during the years. Since the boom of plastic surgery and the large increase of art-school students it seems that beauty is something good, the greatest good to conquer. Even though not everyone agrees, making yourself more beautiful gives you better chances to perform well, be better paid and even have better

sex, a newspaper survey proved sometime ago. So your urge for beauty would also increase your living standards. At least in the Western world, where the western values rule.

Size D

People are willing to pay high prices for beauty, but how do they know that they are buying the right beauty? Examples are given to us everyday in overpriced fashion magazines, television and other media. Even though you would think that beauty is fed to us through these media, they actually have the people as their source. It's like a chain reaction, one person acts or wears something someway, another person digs that and all of a sudden it's a hit. Trends are also the victim of time, same as beauty. In the 90's there was this huge desire to get a boob job, and size D was considered a small one. But with the turn of the century more and more women are saying goodbye to their implants. That makes you wonder if in the end, let's say twenty years from now, that all those people that are now having painful and expensive operations will have wasted it all because that beauty doesn't apply to them any longer.

And then one of the bigger questions is how it comes that a lot of people see the same things as being beautiful. There are big differences even in the same culture. So who tells what is beautiful, who sets the trend? We do not have one point of view. People have different tastes and prefer other stuff. Unity doesn't exist in beauty either.

Meaning

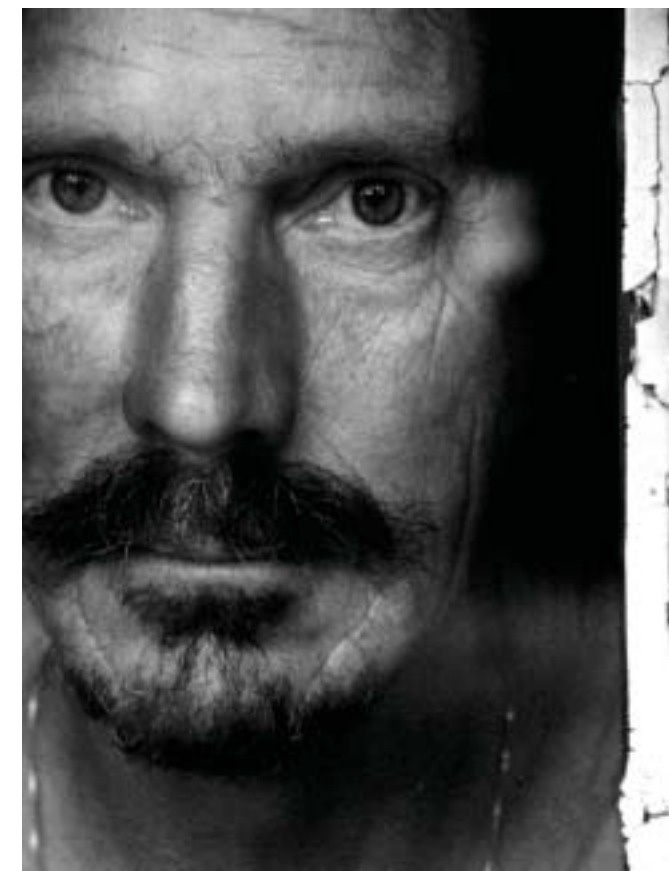
Many say that young people are beautiful. Then, how does it come that it fades during the years. I guess it's not the people that are beautiful, but the fact that they're young.

What I'm trying to point out is that beauty cannot be defined, not even by the opinion of the majority even though marketing managers and the fashion world might be trying to tell you different. While walking down the street you may regard things as being beautiful, but in many ways. By handcraft, technique, appearance or impact, by meaning or fabric. There is not one kind of beauty. But one thing is a fact. Beauty for many is on the outside.

Farah Marzak



"The very picture was of a little boy, pale and white, stabbed in the back, and blood coming out of the wound. The picture was very aesthetic."





Mijn ^{ster} beste ^{reder!}
nederlandse
franse
illustratie vanne blanch
"op bezoek"



Hard times for the pride festivals in eastern Europe

This summer the pride festivals in Poland, Latvia and Estonia have had resistance from aggressive anti-demonstrators. Also in other countries pride parades had to cope with anti-demonstrators. However this happened more peacefully.

In Warsaw –where the march was celebrated in spite of some political oppression against it- the police had to protect the parade from people throwing eggs and insults on them. In Riga even excrements were thrown. Here the police have been criticized for being passive in protecting the



festival. That happens more often. In Tallinn there were both police and private security guards on site, but they were too few to prevent attacks from happening. 30 young skinheads injured 12 people of whom 1 ended up in hospital.

History of the Pride

June 28th 1969 the police raided the café Stonewall Inn in New York City. This had happened before, but this time the people at the bar stood up and fought against the policemen that arrested some of them for carrying clothes of the opposite gender or for other minor reasons. The riots at Stonewall gathered thousands of protestors on three nights to fight for the rights of homosexuals, lesbians, transvestites and transgenders. The following year a march was arranged to remember the riots. From those days on during summer the 'HLBT community' has celebrated so-called pride festivals around the world.

Reykjavik Pride Festival

The sexual minorities of Iceland demonstrated their human rights in Reykjavik on the Gay Pride festival 10th-13th of August. The event culminated on Saturday 12th of August in a pride parade which draw 30.000 people to downtown Reykjavik.

Reykjavik Gay Pride, 'Hinsegin Dagar' (Different Days) has been organised since 1999. The event has grown year for year. Five organisations co-operate in arranging the event, the biggest of them is Samtökk ,78, an organisation for Icelandic lesbians and gay men founded in 1978. The pride parade and outdoor concert on Saturday are the main attractions of Reykjavik Gay Pride.

Thousands of people dress up in colourful costumes, or just as they like, to walk down Laugavegur, the city's main shopping street. Friends, family, fellow citizens and many foreign visitors, cheer them. The parade was opened by dykes on bikes, who were followed by carriers of the rainbow flag, after them came floats: glamorous drag queens rounded up with political messages, a big female dance group and men dressed in leather.

The atmosphere was relaxed and cheerful.



Along the road people had lined with rainbow flags and other gayish gears to watch the parade proceed. It looked like the whole town had come out this grey but luckily not rainy day.

'Seek out a cure'

That was not the whole truth; the same day there was an unnamed Christian coalition that published a full-page ad in a newspaper encouraging homosexuals to „seek out a cure for their disease“. A debate followed, where Icelandic health officials condemned such rehabilitation attempts, and the Lutheran state church made sure to distance itself from the coalition.

At the same time with the pride parade there was also a small anti-demonstration at the central Ingólfstorg. Still a lot more people were gathering on Lækjargata where a medley with Icelandic and foreign artists gave their input on the pride celebrations, among the international guests were drag queens Ruth and Vigdis from Norway and



the band Shitting Glitter from the USA. In the end everybody tuned up in the song of the day Gloria Gaynor's „I Am Who I Am“ in Icelandic „Ég er hvem ég er“.

Love as pure love

During Reykjavik Pride I met a bunch of young people from different countries willing to answer some questions:

Jonas from Sweden thinks that people are born gay. He has been to Stockholm Pride before and thought there was better weather, but the show in Reykjavik is wonderful, he adds singing along to a Carola song performed by a drag queen on stage. The next question makes him serious, about the aggression towards people celebrating Pride in Riga. Jonas thinks that it's frustrating that people can't see love as pure love.

Susie from the USA is selling Reykjavik Pride bracelets and rainbow flags. She works as a volunteer for Seeds, doing different things in Reykjavik. Susie thinks humans should take an example of the sexual variety among animals, because animals don't think in terms of right and wrong. She says the attacks on Pride festival in Riga was wrong, because people should be able to celebrate what they want to.

Fun all along

Clemens from Germany feels like a pink elephant. He feels he doesn't fit in among the people in Reykjavik, but maybe he will feel comfortable when he gets used to how people are in the city, because they mix and mismatch their clothes and act differently than Germans. Clemens thinks it's interesting to see how many crazy people have joined the Pride festival. He

thinks people in Reykjavik are more open-minded than in central Europe and all people, even non-gay, have fun all along.

Alice from Italy thinks the event was very well organised and a lot of people in different ages joined. This was the first time she saw the city full of people. And she liked it.

Alice from Italy thinks the event was very well organised, and a lot of people in different ages joined. This was the first time she saw the city full of people. And she liked it.

Maria Nordlund



BREAK DANCERS

Krakov
August 10th

The Rynek Glówny is the most famous square in Krakow, Poland, forming the heart of the old town where tourists find the Mariacki Church, Town Hall Tower and the Cloth Hall. One will encounter a little violin player dressed like Mozart once did, and carriages in which you can be driven around like in the old days. All around in the old houses are bars and restaurants. In the middle of the square, just in front of the Cloth Hall is a drum kit and eight young men. In once the show starts: break dance.

The sound of drums echoes over the square. At least a hundred people gather in a big circle around the men. One after the other they do their thing. They move and dance. Sometimes in a small group together. People get enthusiastic. How did these guys end

up here, between the little Mozart and the carriages?

For at least a quarter of an hour the show continues. Some people drop money in the caps on the pavement, others just clap their hands. "Wow, we did it!" one of the younger ones shouts when they all take a bow. Is it to earn a little money for the holiday? Is it for the adrenaline? One says that it is not normal to do this kind of thing at this place of the city. Nobody does this at Rynek Glówny, not in summer when all the tourists are here. But they just thought about it, asked permission and got it. "And that is incredibly cool!"

Marc van Dijck





My dreams about you

Thinking about you all the time
I'm never to rest
Not that I mind
For I dream of the best

I find us flying over Asia
Walking imaginary lands
Beyond the borders of Fantasia
To whatever ends

Loving you
'till the sands of time have flown
Touching you
Until our ancestors have grown

Impatient to the bone to hear
Our gossip, news and stories
Until humanity's finally banned fear,
Feeling bad, and worries

Afraid of death does not exist
Only fear for pain of losing
That is whereof my dreams consist
And in the end, they keep me moving

Leander van Splunter

FOOD not BOMBS

On Friday we collect all the left-over fruit and vegetables at the local market. When we explain about our action most people at the market are very willing to cooperate. From a local bakery we get loafs of bread. On Saturday we prepare the food into a hot vegetable soup and fruit salad. We use a big kitchen in a local squat. In the afternoon we hand out the meals in the shopping centre area. Everybody that is interested can join in eating with us. Also we had some flyers available explaining the ideas of 'food not bombs' and about animal rights specifically. One of things I like most about this action is that you can do it with (almost) no money and just a small group of friends.

Food not Bombs is a worldwide movement (or a loose-knit group of independent collectives, as stated on a website) with people handing out free food as a positive action against overconsumption, worldhunger and (in our case) animal rights (by handing out vegetarian/vegan food)

www.foodnotbombs.net

Lut van der Molen



INTER - ACTION

This is how it's done. First you find a theme, a subject of the action. You see something happening in your neighbourhood or on the news or it's a special celebration day that provides the theme. But you can also just feel the need to bring a certain subject forward that you think is important to discuss or let people think about. Then: do the action.

When you have a theme you have to decide what you want to do with it. What reactions do you want to get from people, what do you want to say with your street action?

You can start a brainstorm on how to put this subject in the streets in a positive or provocative way. If you just want to inform people about a situation, it may be a good idea to spread some flyers but if you think this theme needs a surprising effect you can think of a more creative way of attracting the attention of your audience.

Gifts

For example, spreading little gifts related to the subject with some explanation on or with it. You can use figurative expressions and take them literally by personating them in the streets. With living statues or street theatre you can also easily get the attention of passers by. Do make sure your message is as clear as you want it to be. If people don't understand what you are doing, they aren't likely to remember what they have seen. Unless it's so remarkable and weird that it totally blows them off their feet of course.

And then, when you get to the place to be, where it's all going to happen, make sure everyone knows what he or she is doing to get the best result. But the most important thing of all is to have loads of fun doing it! If you are enthusiastic, you can get other people thrilled and influenced by your positivism.



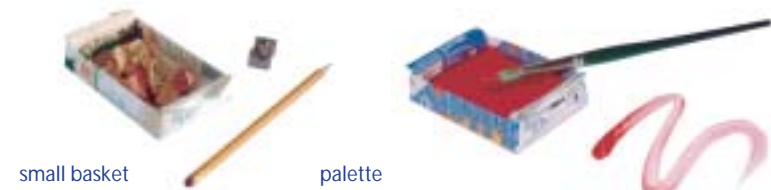
Action by Loesje in Berlin

"Put a living statue about consumerism in the middle of a shopping street on a crowded Saturday and it certainly won't go unnoticed!"

The good thing about actions in the street is that people can come up to you and ask what you are doing and you are able to make your statement stronger. You have direct interaction with people on the street. You can ask their opinion and start good discussions. You can also make a statement that people won't easily overlook. Put a living statue about consumerism in the middle of a shopping street on a crowded Saturday and it certainly won't go unnoticed!

So just take your ideas out into the streets, start small, keep it simple. Try new ways of getting people's attention and play with anything you walk into. Why keep your right to remain silent?

Lotte Huijs



1_drink the liquid until it's empty



2_raise the corners



3_flatten it until the whole air goes out



4_approach the borders to the centre, following the bending



5_create triangles with the edges



6_press it to the centre again



7_press the upper side to the external direction... you've done it!



Has the web really helped you to get somewhere

Of course you don't want to travel only in the summer holidays. But who has the money to travel and meet friends abroad more often than that? Fortunately, you are not dependent on expensive travel agencies to have a good time abroad. Skip the commercial ways. You can do it yourself in a creative way! A weekend for a city trip, a year on the road? Why not hitchhike to your local Hospitality Club-member and enjoy? This way you travel in a cheap, adventurous and possibly environmentally friendly way. Here is how.

Hitchhiking

Don't take an expensive train ticket or a polluting plane. Don't sweat for hours in a crowded coach. Also possible is: hitch-hiking!

Hitchhiking is fun. You meet many different kinds of people, listen to their stories and you can tell your own. You'll get to the most bizarre spots, you'll be offered a place to sleep, and make new friends. It's also for free.

Tip. Travel from gas station to gas station. At gas stations you can ask people personally if you can drive with them and you see with whom you get into a car.

Tip 2. Take a decent map with you, then you know where the gas stations are and where you're sort of heading towards.

Plan your hitchhike

When you want to be assured of a ride, the internet might be able to help you out. There are several sites on which drivers look for co-passengers who want to join them for a little money. Especially in Germany this method is very popular. The advantage is that you kind of know whom you're travelling with (everybody is registered and you have their phone numbers). Disadvantage is that it costs

you a little money. To compare: travelling this way from Amsterdam to Berlin will cost you 15-25 euros. By train this ride will cost you around 70 euros. A well-known Dutch site is www.hitchhikers.org. Here you can only offer rides and react to other offers. Very often it's long distance rides from one side of Europe to the other side of Europe. In Germany www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de is used a lot. Together there are over a million people involved and the sites offer lots of international rides. Check the web for more local sites.

Your network

If you think the things above are too adventurous or dangerous, then you could also look for a ride in your surroundings. Maybe you've got a truck driver in your family or among friends. Apart from that many more people go on holiday of course. Maybe they've got a free spot in their car, which you could fill. Or perhaps somebody is driving to the other side of the country for their work or so and they would like to have some company on their way there. Think about where the people around you go to and ask if you could ride with them. You may well be surprised about how many people you know and where they go.

Accommodation

Youth hostels are getting more and more expensive. For (wild) camping the weather should be okay. Approaching a boy or girl in a disco every night in order to have somewhere to sleep will get tiring quickly. A nice solution is joining the Hospitality Club.

What is the Hospitality Club?

The aim is to bring people together - hosts and guests, travellers and locals. Thousands of Hospitality Club members around the world help each other when they are travelling - be it with a roof for the night or a guided tour through town. Joining is free; everyone is welcome. Members can look at each other's profiles, send messages and post comments about their experience on the website www.hospitalityclub.org.

The club is supported by volunteers who believe in one idea: by bringing travellers in touch with people in the places they visit, and by giving 'locals' a chance to meet people from other cultures, they can increase intercultural understanding and strengthen the peace on our planet. Which is a good thing, isn't it?

"I see real friendships and strong bonds developing across borders"

"I am 21 years old and member of the Hospitality Club (HC) now for two and half years. For an exchange year I live in Brussels, Belgium, though I study English and French in university in Berlin, Germany. Next to hosting and visiting people, I do voluntary work for the HC like updating geographical data when people misspell their home town and also insert the data for our map on Google online." Martin Jähnert (Germany)

How did you get in contact with HC?

"I was searching for tips on hitch-hiking, because I wanted to surprise a friend in Estonia and go through Poland and the Baltics 'by thumb'. The founder of HC, Veit Kuehne, has done a lot of hitch-hiking, and from his site I got to HC - then I just met him for a small chat on his experiences and used HC for the trip to the Baltics... It worked perfectly well, I met so many great people on the road and in their homes - the only one who wouldn't let me stay at her place, was my old friend, and a member of HC saved me..."

Can you tell me something more about the ideas behind HC?

"HC tries to promote different goals - another way of travelling; the exchange of ideas, knowledge and good vibes between people from different backgrounds, not only geographically and politically, but also in sense of socialisation and age; the spread of intercultural connections hopefully prevents people from fighting against each other. And, of course, it is a way to make travelling for backpackers easier, nicer, and also affordable for people who don't have a big cash-machine in the basement."

So, do-it-yourself-globalisation?

"For sure, HC helps the globalisation... but it also tries to improve its impacts. In the end it's about the members, who are forced to self-organise. The exchange happens person-to-person, that means, nobody tells you „this is your host“ or anything like that.

HC itself has become really big now, 200.000 members, a vast amount. Still, it keeps its structures: it's all for free, and all run by volunteers. It will keep on growing, but it is important not to lose the mind about the numbers: What counts are the

small experiences, a new word in a foreign language you learn, be it *przepraszam* (Polish, excuse me), *multumesc* (Rumanian, thanks), or *ni hao* (Mandarin, hello). The hidden beach or valley a local host helps you discover. A warm smile and a hot soup after a long travel to a place you've never seen before."

Is HC a new phenomenon?

"The internet provided new ways of communication. HC uses the possibilities of the web very effectively. HC doesn't stand alone. There are different other organisations with similar goals, certainly. Other hospitality networks are the 'ancestor' SERVAS, in which people are invited through postal letters. On line are the smaller 'competitors' like the Couch surfing-project or Global Free Loaders."

How do you know if it's safe to host a stranger via HC?

"Basically safer than other cheap ways of travelling. It's common to ask for the passport number of the member in the first mailing contact, and verify it when (s)he arrives. I check the comments before I host, if there are strange comments, I do not host. And I also give comments to the point, so the next member that is asked for accommodation will be able to judge whether to host the particular member or not. This leads to very few incidents, every member knows: bad behaviour leads to bad comments, and this again to isolation, to not being accepted as guest or asked for accommodation."

What's the thing that appeals most to you in HC?

"I like that friendships are developing across borders. The background of the people stays interesting, but becomes less important than his actual ideas and his being. Everywhere around me I see real friendships developing, strong bonds between the members in one city or region and another. They are meeting up wherever they can. There are just so many people with a similar spirit."

Anything more you want to say?

"Join! At the moment I am reading Von Schönburg's „Die Kunst des stilvollen Verarmens“ (The art of how to become poor while keeping the style), a nice book trying to show that money isn't the key to the joy of life. And on every page where he describes people with an adorable lifestyle, I feel reminded of many different HC members."



“HC taught me to trust people more. Before I was surprised how people trust strangers and just give them keys to their place the first time they see them, but now I do the same. Sometimes I have a feeling that it became kind of a lifestyle for me. I guess the new lifestyle changed me in a positive way :) It made me more trusting, open-minded, easygoing and spontaneous. HC is just a very ‘friendly’, sociable and exciting way of travelling.”
(Leva Grumbinaite, Lithuania, member for 2,5 years)



“There are thousands of members, it’s just great... to think about all those people and how they meet each other around the world... And there are just all kinds of people with all kind of backgrounds, everyday lives and future plans. Different home streets and favourite places. People from all ages, whole families... My last guest was a Slovenian guy who was biking around the world in five years. I’ve visited students, different kinds of families, couples, communes. Every meeting has left a trace in me, and many warm memories were engendered. The HC idea in practice has shaped my world view and conception of the human being, although sometimes it’s also confusing to see how the location in the world & political situation of a given state effect the thoughts of a single person, in a positive way.”

“Remember, that Hospitality Club is NOT a dating service, even though the slogan is: „Bringing people together“. Though, don't feel guilty if you happen to find your true love through the club... I didn't mean to!”

(Linda Kuha, Finland, member for 2,5 months)



“Most people who sign up for a community like HC share a natural open-mindedness and curiosity, a willingness to share and a very appealing freedom from prejudices. Staying with such people when being out travelling usually gives a much deeper experience than just hanging around in some hostel with other backpackers. The chance to stumble onto something interesting and getting in touch with the local flavour of a place increases vastly by meeting people from the area where you are staying. Also, it is nice to have guests from all over the world coming by to stay at your place and be able to share your local reality with them.”
(Magnus Löfqvist, Sweden, member for 2 years)



“Me and my husband travelled to Italy this summer. Our artistic hosts have inspired me in many ways. All of them have really shared a piece of their cultural heritage with us. I really loved the creativity of my Italian hosts, because even though Italy has a rich cultural tradition it is very difficult to create innovative initiatives (Italy is comparatively conservative and for some it is hard to find a job). All of our hosts have actually succeeded in one way or another to develop such initiatives, one arranged a lot of local activities, such as moonlight movie night, the other one had a jazz jam session for HC members, the third one a discussion theatre workshop. One by one they set examples of the next generation of cultural creatives.”
(Ilse de Jong, Sweden, member for 1 year)



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Page 2 Left: Marjolein Pieks & Forever Child.
Right: Marc van Dijck

P. 3 Hanna Verhaar, Tom Buyaert, Melissa Valso

P. 4 Photos upper left and middle: Marc van Dijck and Luder Esveld. Photo bottom left: Hanna Verhaar, Tom Buyaert, Melissa Valso.

Photo right: Marc van Dijck and Malgorzata Macias

P. 6 Niko Pentikainen, Marc van Dijck, Lotte Huijs

P. 8 Doeko Pinxt

P. 10 Doeko Pinxt

P. 11 Marc van Dijck, Luder Esveld

P. 12-15 All photos by Linda Kuha

P. 16 Tom Buyaert

P. 17 Marc van Dijck

P. 18-19 Frans Prins

P. 20-21 All photos by Klitink

P. 22 Marc van Dijck

P. 23 Vasilis Scourboutis

P. 24-25 All photos by Paco Lucassen & Marc van Dijck

P. 26 Myrto Apostolaki

P. 27 Lotte Huijs

P. 28 Top: Myrto Apostolaki. Bottom left and right: Farah Marzak,

P. 29 Linda Kuha

P. 31 Forever Child

P. 32 Top and bottom: Forever Child. Middle: Viktorija Panovaite

P. 33 Forever Child

P. 34-35 Illustration by Anne Lück

P. 36-38 Maria Nordlund

P. 39 Marc van Dijck

P. 40-41 Doeko Pinxt, Luder Esveld, Marc van Dijck

P. 42 Top: Lut van der Molen, bottom Marc van Dijck

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P. 44 Melissa Valso

P. 45 Eva Silinska

P. 47-48 Viktorija Panovaite, portraits Marc van Dijck

P. 49 Luder Esveld & Marc van Dijck

P. 50 Luder Esveld

What is Mašta?

This magazine is called Mašta. The word has a double meaning: imagination, as well as whatever. Whatever you imagine can be part of the magazine. We call it organic creativity: open, border free, experimental, unconventional, challenging, positively provocative, flowing and playful. It’s growing from input in the streets and on the website www.creativeacts.org. We want actions and creations around the globe: creative acts. The magazine is a result of the acts and the acts are a result of the magazine.

We are a collective of young activists, artists, journalists and other creative souls under the name Creative Acts. We are linked to Loesje, a poster-flying girl from the Netherlands who runs her own international organisation: www.loesje.org. Like her we support a creative society with space for human rights, sustainable development and fun.

We realized this sparkling magazine to create a platform for young people to share their opinions on the world, life and politics and to share their imagination tickling artwork. The topic of this first issue of Mašta is Creative Activism. We received reports from individuals and groups who did creative actions in the street. Editors and photographers have shared their ideas. All this together has made this issue possible.

You want more?

Check www.creativeacts.org for more articles, photo’s, video clips and poems. The organisers of Mašta would like to welcome you as an editor too. Please share your work on the website or send it to the editor@creativeacts.org.

Creative Acts

Mašta is a magazine
realised by Creative Acts.

Contact us: info@creativeacts.org
Contribute to the next issue:
editor@creativeacts.org

<http://www.creativeacts.org>

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Thanks to: Loesje; all contributors whose
work is published in Mašta and/or whose work
is published on <http://www.creativeacts.org>;
all contributors whose work isn't published
in Mašta; Alex Whillas for proofreading; Mara
Linnemann for fundraising; all creative people
joining the Creative Acts workshops on the
Loesje summer camp in Poland, August
2006.

Printed by: könitzers druck + medien gmbh,
Berlin

Publisher: Foundation Loesje International
www.loesje.org

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The content of the articles do not necessarily
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Creative Acts is made possible thanks to the
financial support from the Youth Program of
the European Union.



Mašta #2:

play

If you think playing is childish, go back to kindergarten. According to us, playing means openness, an imaginary mind and freedom of expression. Not getting stuck in dogmas or big ideas, but experimenting and playing with your ideas. Taking the freedom to change the world around you, expressing yourself the way you want. Playing is an act of ultimate freedom.

„If I can't play, it's not my revolution“

Playing can be an art of creative activism. Not fighting against the world you live in, but changing it by creating the world you want to live in. An act of engagement and perception, a positive provocation. Making the world to go forward by playing with it. Next step in evolution: Homo Ludens, a playful humanity. And we ask you to contribute to it...

Play with your imagination, play with reality and send us your results!

**Send your creative acts and
mind-bending thoughts to
Mašta #2 before
January 3, 2007,
to editor@creativeacts.org
or contribute online
www.creativeacts.org**

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