

# MAŠTA

MAŠTA #4  
magazine for creative activism

IDENTIFY  
THIS



## Mašta: Magazine for Creative Activism

### What is Mašta?

Mašta is the international magazine for creative activism. It provides a collection of best practices of creative activism in which the mind of the artist merges with the thoughts of the activist. Mašta is Serbo-Croatic for 'imagination'. It also means 'whatever'. Whatever you imagine can be part of the magazine. We call it organic creativity: open, borderfree, experimental, unconventional, challenging, positive, playful, and provocative. It's growing from input from the streets and on the website [www.creativeacts.org](http://www.creativeacts.org). The magazine aims to tickle imagination and to inspire to act.

### Who are we?

Mašta is made by an international collective of writers, activists, artists and journalists who share the desire to concretely work for a nicer world without waiting for it. Mašta is linked to Loesje, a posterflying girl originally from the Netherlands, currently running an international organization ([www.loesje.org](http://www.loesje.org)). The magazine encourages people to express themselves and to act. To treat minds with fresh ideas. Mašta believes in and strives for a creative society, with space for human rights, sustainable development and fun.

### Platform

Mašta is a source of inspiration for engaged artists, humorous activists and playful humans. It is keen on finding local and global trends and astonishing creative acts. Both the website and the magazine function as a world wide exchange of a wide diversity of innovative and creative interventions in public spaces. We receive reports from individuals and groups who do creative actions in the streets and in other places in public space. Images, articles, artwork and ideas are shared. That is what makes Mašta.

### Past issues

You can download the past three issues from [www.creativeacts.org](http://www.creativeacts.org). Interested in paper copies to spread among your friends? Send an email to [contact@creativeacts.org](mailto:contact@creativeacts.org).

**www.creativeacts.org**



## Identify this

### Introduction

"I am completely myself," say people who want to live consciously, and have a good life. In western culture, being or becoming yourself is one of the most important personal achievements. By having a unique voice, appearance and approach to life, you can stand out from the grey masses. Developing a unique, authentic identity ought to be one of the main quests for each single individual.

The word 'identity', however, stems from the Latin 'idem', which means 'same'. Next to referring to unique individuality, it means being identical to others, to pre-defined labels that you either choose yourself, or those that are forced upon you. But what if the labels that are forced upon you, do not suit you?

These two separate meanings of identity are both being used in various forms of creative activism. In this issue, creative acts are covered which play with usual interpretations of (not) belonging to a group. Individual marks in public space make the city more alive. In the essay 'Other in the city' it is argued that signs of individuality in the urban landscape make us aware of the Other. This is what makes the city into an interesting and inclusive space. Throughout the magazine, you will find numerous practical examples.

National identity is possibly one of the most deceiving yet clearest identities, as is warned in the article 'Do historians own copyrights?' However, in 'Radicalize by ridiculing,' the recent Belgian political crisis shows that in some particular circumstances it can be progressive to call on the national identity.

Identity is inescapable and manifests itself everywhere. From mysterious ambiguous identities to countering corporate exploitation of creative activism. From strengthening the identity of cyclists to stealing the biometrical identity of a minister: This issue of Mašta kidnaps identity itself and threatens to reveal its secrets.

Food for thought and dynamite for action. Show what you have conquered, and see you on the streets!

— The editor

# Finger print hacking

## Who would you like to claim to be today?

The order 'Identify yourself' usually initiates a short ritual. Irritated but seemingly willingly you grab for your ID-card, after which, an Official meticulously examines the document. After that, if no irregularities are found, official recognition of your existence will be granted.

With the introduction of the biometric passport, the ritual could be extended to the attachment of your body parts to a machine, checking if your iris, your DNA and fingerprints are identical to the ones stored on your biometric identity card. As proponents of biometric data assert, fingerprints are unique, and non replaceable, so they could provide an excellent tool for identification.

Not true, shown already in 2004 by Chaos Computer Club (CCC), a German based group of socially engaged hackers. With a bit of superglue, a digital camera, wood glue, a laser printer and printable foil, anyone's fingerprint can be multiplied and used.

**With a bit of superglue, a digital camera, wood glue, a laser printer and printable foil, anyone's fingerprint can be multiplied and used.**

A manual and instruction video can be viewed from CCC's website.  
To increase public attention to this

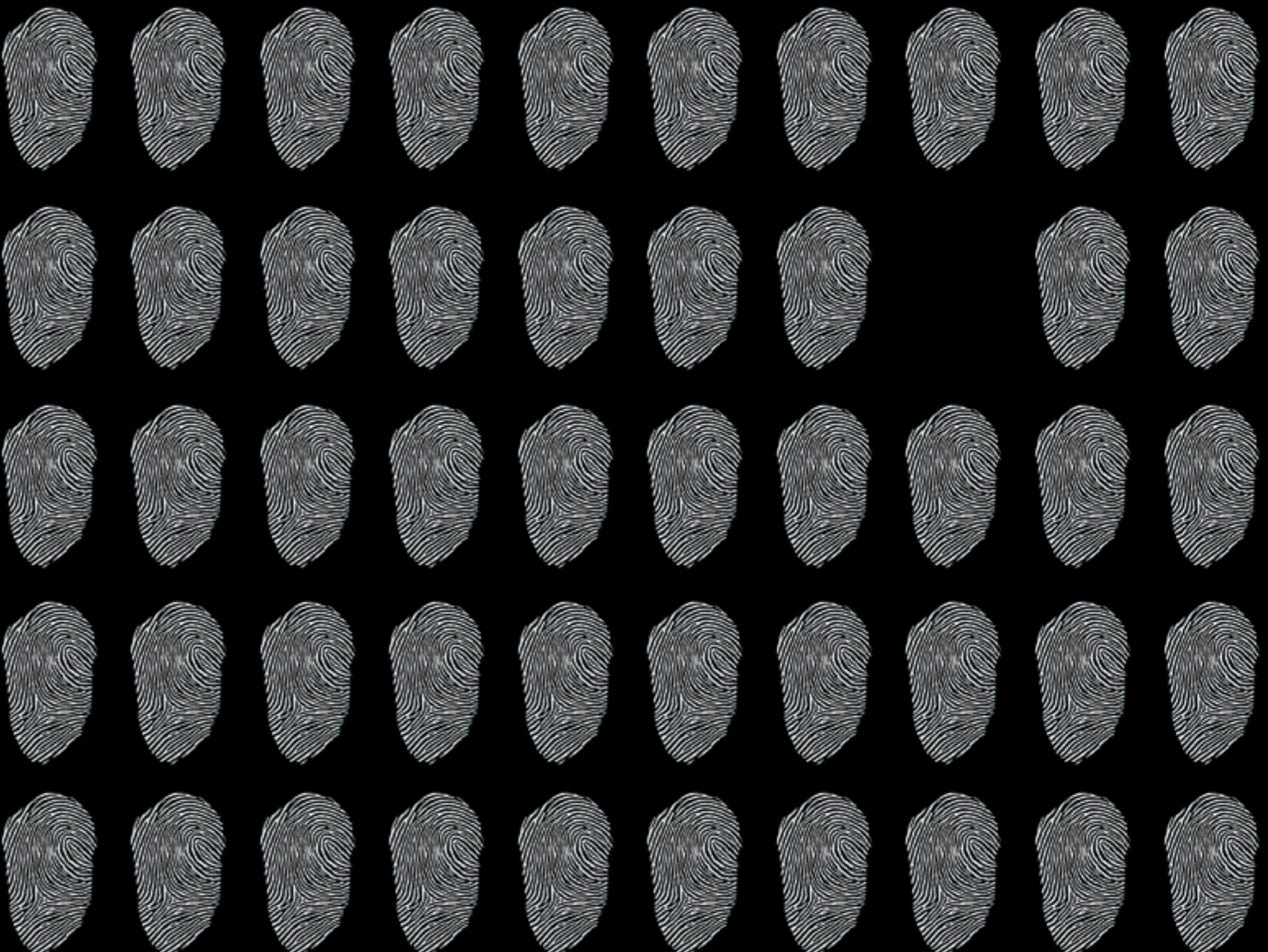
► For the manual: [www.ccc.de/biometrie/fingerabdruck\\_kopieren](http://www.ccc.de/biometrie/fingerabdruck_kopieren)

development towards a biological controlled state, the CCC has recently taken the fingerprint of Germany's Minister of Domestic Affairs, Wolfgang Schäuble, from a glass he touched during a public discussion. This fingerprint can now be downloaded, printed, and applied to your own finger. Now, anyone could identify themselves as the Minister at security checks that rely on finger print identification, or, for that matter, apply it tactically at your local crime scene.

***Apply the minister's finger print tactically at your local crime scene.***

"Fingerprints are not fit as a key for security systems," says Dirk Engling from the Chaos Computer Club. CCC has enhanced the public debate over the use of and trust in biometric data for identification. "I have successfully copied the print of my index finger to all my other fingers," says Engling. Who would you like to claim to be today?

***\_ Joep van Delft***



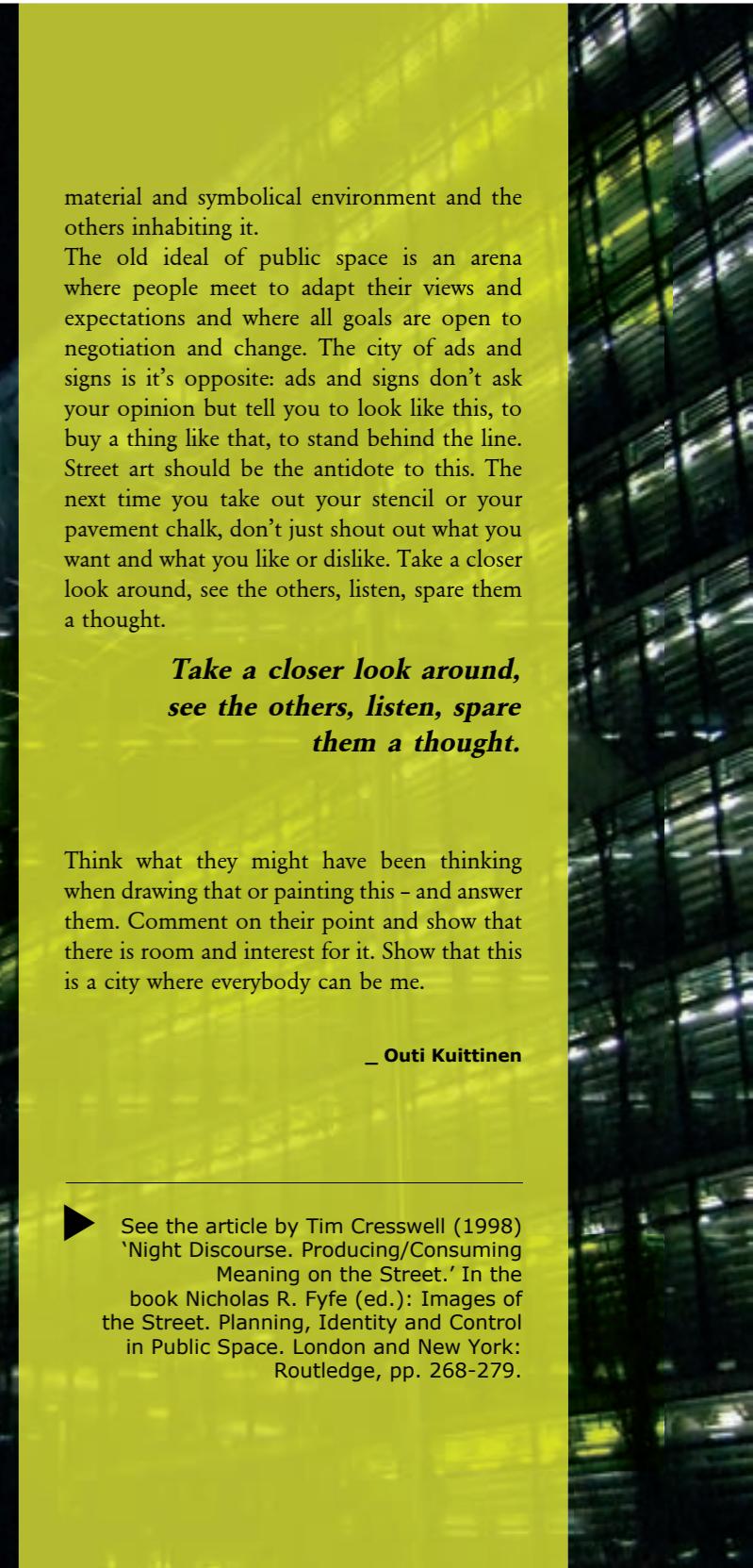
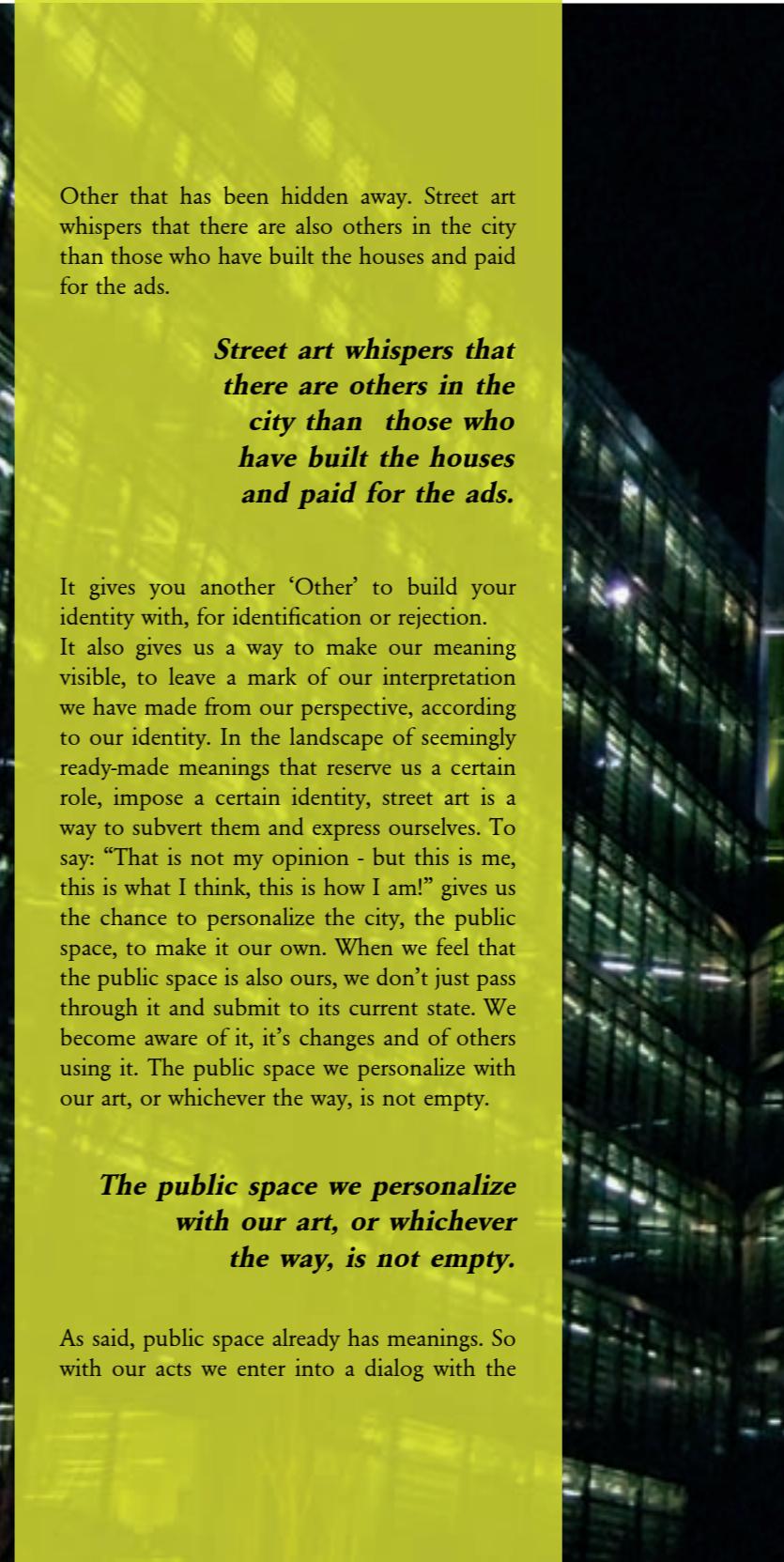
# Other in the city

*We are not born with an identity nor do we make it up out of thin air. To a great extent we build our own identity in relation to other people. Besides identity theory, the proverbial 'Other' is prominent in urban theory. To the famous urban theorist Richard Sennett 'city' is by definition a "human settlement where strangers are likely to meet."*

But it isn't only about meeting people in the flesh. Walking through the city we 'meet' others through signs, ads, and buildings. All these convey a meaning that is produced by someone. They speak someone's language, persuading us to think and behave in compliance with the meaning given by that someone. These meanings are interpreted and consumed by us walking on the street. Consumed, accepted and acted upon accordingly. Or consumed, resisted and subverted - given another meaning.

According to Tim Cresswell, street art, or culture jamming, guerrilla semiotics, night discourse whatever the label might be, potentially achieves two simultaneous political objectives. First it draws attention to the way the urban environment has been semanticized, given a meaning: the language and meaning of power, authority and commerce. This creates and reproduces expected ways of thinking and acting. Secondly, it creates new and alternative meanings, it asserts the ability to read and write differently.

In the landscape of authority, street art is the



Other that has been hidden away. Street art whispers that there are also others in the city than those who have built the houses and paid for the ads.

***Street art whispers that there are others in the city than those who have built the houses and paid for the ads.***

It gives you another 'Other' to build your identity with, for identification or rejection. It also gives us a way to make our meaning visible, to leave a mark of our interpretation we have made from our perspective, according to our identity. In the landscape of seemingly ready-made meanings that reserve us a certain role, impose a certain identity, street art is a way to subvert them and express ourselves. To say: "That is not my opinion - but this is me, this is what I think, this is how I am!" gives us the chance to personalize the city, the public space, to make it our own. When we feel that the public space is also ours, we don't just pass through it and submit to its current state. We become aware of it, its changes and of others using it. The public space we personalize with our art, or whichever the way, is not empty.

***The public space we personalize with our art, or whichever the way, is not empty.***

As said, public space already has meanings. So with our acts we enter into a dialog with the

material and symbolical environment and the others inhabiting it.

The old ideal of public space is an arena where people meet to adapt their views and expectations and where all goals are open to negotiation and change. The city of ads and signs is its opposite: ads and signs don't ask your opinion but tell you to look like this, to buy a thing like that, to stand behind the line. Street art should be the antidote to this. The next time you take out your stencil or your pavement chalk, don't just shout out what you want and what you like or dislike. Take a closer look around, see the others, listen, spare them a thought.

***Take a closer look around, see the others, listen, spare them a thought.***

Think what they might have been thinking when drawing that or painting this – and answer them. Comment on their point and show that there is room and interest for it. Show that this is a city where everybody can be me.

– Outi Kuittinen

► See the article by Tim Cresswell (1998) 'Night Discourse. Producing/Consuming Meaning on the Street.' In the book Nicholas R. Fyfe (ed.): *Images of the Street. Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 268-279.



#### MAKE YOUR OWN WHEATPASTE

All you need is:  
> a cup of very hot water  
> 3 tablespoons of plain flour  
> 1 tbsp of cold water  
> 1 tbsp of sugar

Make a liquid mixture of the flour and some cold water. Pour the mixture slowly in the hot water while stirring constantly. Bring to boil. When it gets thicker, cool it and add the sugar for better strength. This glue needs about half an hour after applying to take its effect, when it's sunny and warm even less time. If after using it you have some left, keep it refrigerated in a closed container for the next time.

#### TIPS

- > Put another thin cover of glue after you're done to protect the paper.
- > The smoother the surface is the harder is for the wheatpaste to be torn.
- > Make sure you press hard with your brush through the paper so that there are not any air bubbles between the wheatpaste and the surface.
- > If you tear the edges of the wheatpaste before sticking it and by that make the paper thinner, you will make the tearing down almost impossible.

# Wheatpasting

Put an individual mark in public space

Wheatpasting is one of the most effective street art techniques, the easiest to do, and one of the cheapest. Everything you need is already in your home: paper, pen/marker, flour and creativity. This is for everyone.

The real beauty and purpose of wheatpasting is that you can put an individual mark in the public space that every day becomes less public and more owned by the corporations, advertising agencies or the government. So, put your little paper leaf of individuality in the jungle of the commodified advertising signs. You can use it as a protesting tool, make a political statement with it, use it as an art media, make it subversive, cliché, or socially engaged... You have the total freedom to do it your way.

You can draw it on any type of paper, print it from a picture, make a collage, or even make a crazy combination of all of the above.

If you want to "go big" with your wheatpasting, but you don't know how to draw or don't have money for larger print, you can separate the image in a program for editing images in as many A4/A3 formats that you need, print it on your printer and just tile them when you glue so you'll get a big wheatpaste.

If you feel creative and don't have larger paper to draw, just take the yesterday's newspaper and draw something on it, or make a collage, and stick it somewhere out on the streets. It will look really cool.

If we could only recycle all the news into art.

Jasna Dimitrovska



► Check out:

[www.flickr.com/photos/judithsupine](http://www.flickr.com/photos/judithsupine)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaBJB3VDWvg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaBJB3VDWvg)  
[www.woostercollective.com](http://www.woostercollective.com)

# *“Creativity was and is our main ally”*

## Mujeres Creando, Bolivian feminist street actions



In La Paz, Bolivia, Mujeres Creando (Women Creating) are using the streets to address issues women are facing. All creative means are employed, supplemented by ground work of concretely supporting women and fighting for their case. An email interview with Julieta Ojeda, one of the founders of this feminist anarchist movement.

The three women, who started Mujeres Creando in 1992, have been active in different left-wing political parties. They noticed how in the left and traditional political parties women only played a secondary role as activists, secretaries or colleagues of the man. For this reason they shared the same ideas about activism, and the failed project of traditional politics. Mujeres Creando is also a reaction against NGOs that used the topics women and indigenous people as a way to get resources from international charity. In effect, this brought and still brings the acceptance of the political conditions.

“From these experiences we felt the necessity to create something new, something different from the hierarchical structures of political groups and NGOs. Then we had the resolution: this new group would be a feminist organization of women whose only instrument of political speech would be creativity. We use everyday creativity as an instrument to fight. We utilize it in all the spaces that we are creating. A very important challenge for us has been the streets. We use creative

instruments to make public space another place for political action. We are building a new feminist movement in which creativity was and is our main ally. It lets us create new theories and practices. It was also in this time that we realized that other languages and instruments of fighting were rubbish.

The street is vital for us. It is necessary to make politics there. We take this public space because it is of us all. We can see how our people, mainly women, take the streets to realize a lot of activities. In our graffiti, we use a very common spelling from the primary school, round and easy to read. We use graffitists who in many cases mix political national topics related to women's struggle. Furthermore, of course,

we use every single wall of our cities, from the center to the outskirts. Next to graffiti, we use other street interventions, that are not theater performances. We use the appropriate symbols and its capacity to mobilize and to question. The interaction it generates is very important. We use our body in the actions. This means that we are exposing ourselves. It is by no means a violent action, but it implies many

risks. With our creative actions, we want to make the women's struggle visible. Our presence in the streets installs new and fresh languages without asking or indoctrinating. Our capacity to surprise is our main weapon.

On our road, we've supported many groups and movements, for example, the autonomous feminist movement in Latin-America, or creating possibilities for discussion with other women, like prostitutes, homeworkers and micro debtors.

Traveling and contact with other groups is a consequence of this job. It's also, however, a nice feeling that we inspire other groups and people, women who fight against the situation they are living in.

We've been funded to travel to different countries from South America and Europe. The reasons for our trips are various: from the most committed political reason, to people from the art world who think that we make art. However we always say that we're not artists, we're street activists. We are conscious that these places give us the possibility to spread our production and the chance to generate resources to develop new projects.

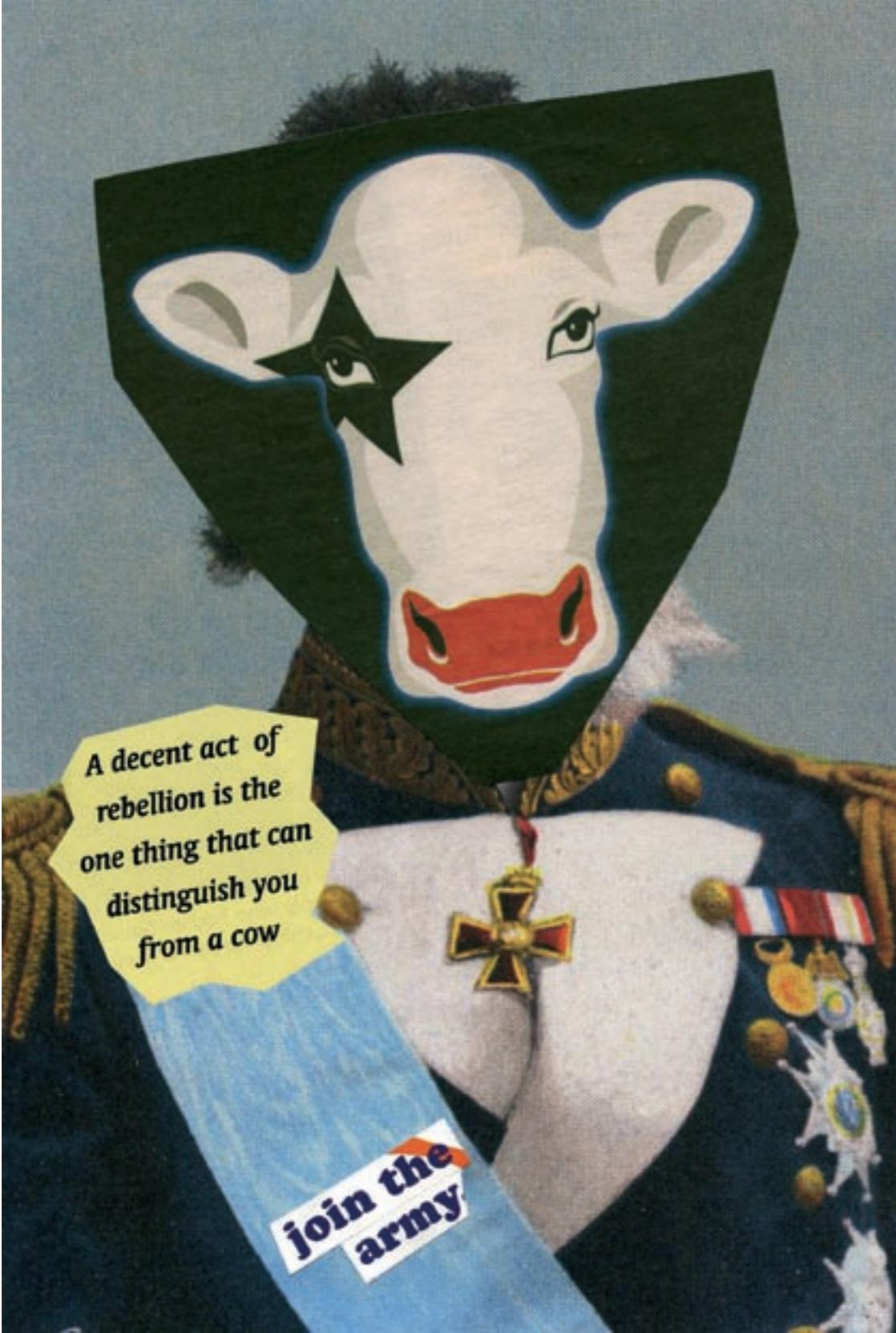
The other way is making a specific policy to create productive spaces for the self-management. So we use methods that give

immediate answers for concrete women. We have an office that offers juridical support, a nursery, and a dining room, etc. The house La Virgen de los Deseos is two years old. There are several areas working together in this house: a kindergarten, a radio station, a little hostel, an academic institute, a library, a store of handicraft, a dining room, a legal support office, an ecological store and a school library. All of this is supported by our work. We need it to specify our movement. It's a place of dignity, a place where lots of social sectors flow, feminist or not feminist. The main goal is to concede to the needs of these women by being a movement that has the capacity to reply to these requests immediately and concretely.

We are a feminist anarchist movement and I think we've developed our own way of thinking and a political practice. We have a history that travels with us and has a direct link with the social commitment and with the illusion to change the world. If I was not feminist, anarchist and activist, I would be a fighting Martian.”

**\_ Zoraida Guijarro Cayuela**





## Do historians own copyrights?

*At least once in their life, every human being has asked the biggest short question. The question that gives or takes away the meaning to the whole mess we are in - Who am I? It's a simple three word question that bears no simple answer. Or does it?*

*“All we have in common is the illusion of being together”*

Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of everyday life*

In theory there are millions of approaches to this essential issue of our existence, but as the American philosopher Judith Butler puts it, “identity is a matter of praxis.” Nevertheless, one of the most basic theoretical definitions of identity is made up on the basis of difference: I represent something that the others are not. This implies that identity is built on a negative reflection and can be considered on different levels. However, when the question of self determination is asked on a superficial level, it seems that the differential points of one’s identity are often taken for granted and rarely questioned. A great number of people consider that they answered the question the day they obtained their driver’s license and the right to drink alcohol – ignorance and arrogance is the worst combination of the human character.

No generalization is a valid premise, but I can’t deny all validity of the claim that lots of people consider that the question of their own identity is either a bit too philosophical or that it doesn’t require deeper self research. In both cases the common and considered rational reaction is to adopt the ready-made ►

deeper self research. In both cases the common and considered rational reaction is to adopt the ready-made identities that people are enforced with from every pore of society: the binary differential line of sex or sexual preference, the socio-cultural category of gender, the social division coming out the current cultural context, for example belonging to one social class or a group, the geographical location of one's residence, the dominant religion beliefs, and of course the exclusiveness of belonging to one nationality.

### **The national history myth**

A great deal of the traditional notions of how we perceive our uniqueness that defines our identity in the rather diverse being, has come from our deep feeling of belonging to one nation. When an individual takes the identity of one part of humanity that represents a nation, we can not escape the fact that this notion of identity makes the person less unique as an individual who lives an authentic life. On the other hand that same binding with the idea of artificial togetherness shows the desperate state of metaphysical loneliness of humanity and the desperate craving for "meaning" and "purpose" in life.

What does really drive the human being to have such great need to identify with narratives on which national history is constructed? What do I really have in common with millions of

people who are part of the nation that I'm supposed to belong to, cherish it and fight for it? Those common things might be things like the same borders, the same government, the same police, the same social injustice, the same poverty, or in general - the same mess that we are together in anyway.

According to research by the Marxist theorist Eric Hobsbawm presented in his book "Nations and nationalism", the contemporary meaning of the word "nation" isn't older than 150 years. But it's seems that the feeling of national identity is so natural and historically justified as if idea of "nation", as we consider it today, is built on a several millenniums long history. Nevertheless, Hobsbawm claims that the connection between the state, the people and the language, which represents the contemporary idea of nation, wasn't used until 1884. With this fact taken in mind, it's easy to make a conclusion that a big part of the so-called great national history is built from the romantic projections of the state ideologists and historians within the past and biased interpretation of the historical events.

### **Before we go waving flags we better really know what we (don't) stand for**

A superficial glimpse at the official histories of the states on the Balkan peninsula, can give you a very precise example on how national history can be manufactured mainly

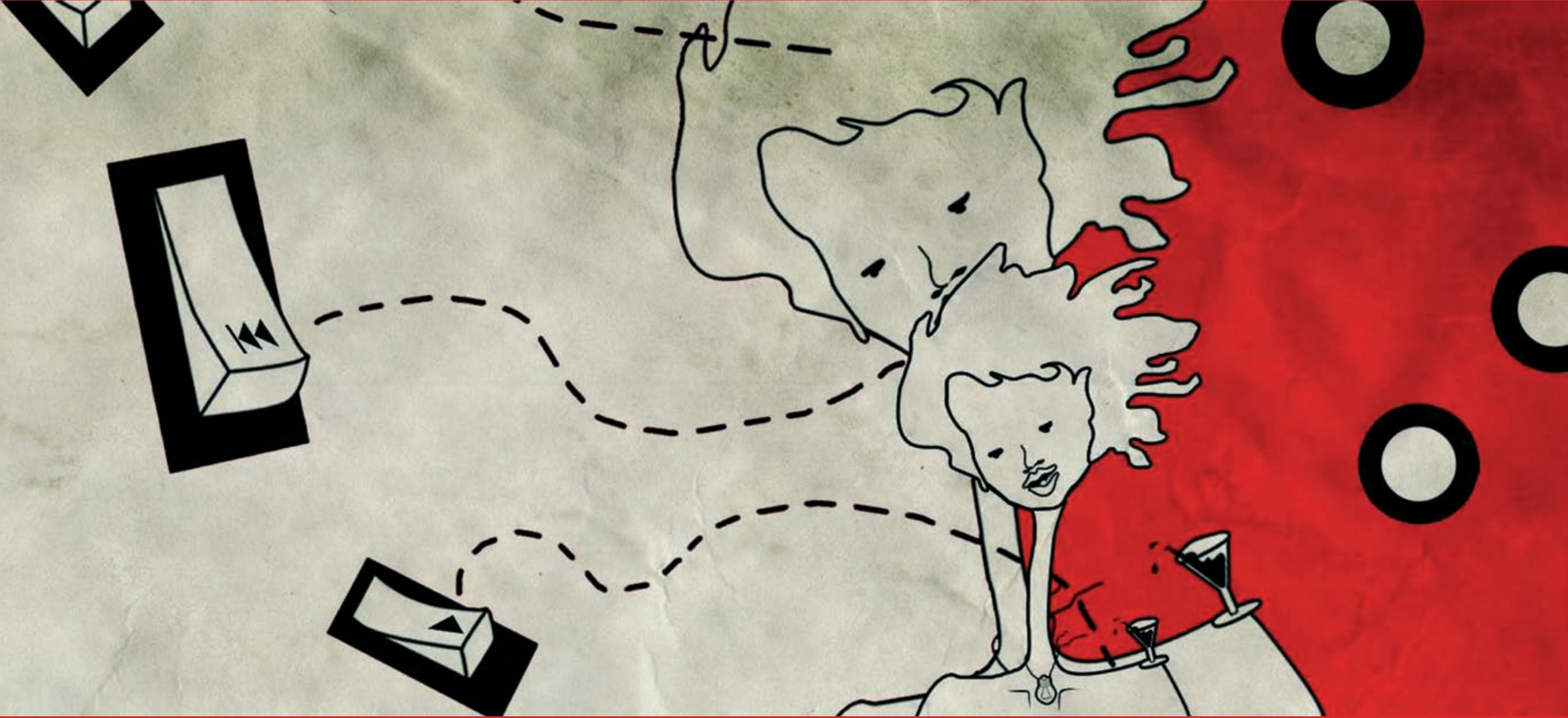
by the propaganda machinery of the states and throughout the decades has become a part of the collective unconsciousness. The biggest wars on the territory of Europe in the last half century, the civil wars (how can a war be civil!?) in Ex-Yugoslavia, originally were fought for reasons that were driven by that strong feeling of national identity and pride. Regarding this issue, the Macedonian theorist Elizabeta Seleva says that the wars have shown to us the validity of one Darwinist rule - that violence confirms identity. This claim will be more correct if we say that violence, indeed, confirms the lack of identity.

As an example of how strong the urges are to create the national history narratives and the practical level of indoctrination, I'll point out the data from a source on which information isn't supposed to be biased. History books are not a credible source, since they can't have quick revision of its contents, so that's why we'll take the online encyclopedia Wikipedia as an example. If you translate the texts on Macedonian and Bulgarian language that are posted on Wiki about the revolutionary figure Goce Delcev, you'll find out that in the same time Delcev is considered a Bulgarian from one side and a Macedonian national hero from another side. Both sides are denying each other's interpretation of the historical role of this person. Furthermore, this isn't an isolated case, on the contrary, countless historical figures share even more than three different interpretations of their

origin, life, works, struggle, etc. The irrational historical projections of the, not so old, idea of national identity that are made by the "architects" of national myths can even go back millenniums. For example, both Macedonian and Greek historians have different projections in the history of Ancient Macedonia and the historical figure of Alexander the Great. However, the fact is, that both contemporary nations have little to do with the actual ancient empire of Macedonia or ancient Greece. There is no distinction between "great" national histories and the even greater propaganda that was used in their creation.

History was meant to be trusted, not to be believed, but which interpretation of the (hi)story should we trust? Before we go waving flags - we better really know what we stand for. Or maybe it would be better to find out what we don't stand for. So, let's us see who we aren't and then we'll have a clean starting point to explore the real question of our identity.

**\_ Igor Stojanovski**





**The Belgian black-yellow-red was spread in unexpected ways and could be seen everywhere.**



# Ridiculize by radicalizing

**How the political crisis challenged Belgians to become creative activists**

*Belgium, the nation I belong to, has never been an issue for me. In the slipstream of a political crisis, a separatist mentality was forced for consideration upon Belgian inhabitants. Nationalistic feelings of separation have been both encouraged and countered by creative acts. I've never felt this much like a Belgian before.*

Between June 2007 and March 2008 Belgium found itself in a serious political crisis due to troubles between Flanders (Dutch speaking North of the country, 60%) and the Wallons (French speaking South of the country, 30%). During this 9 months Belgium did not manage to form a government. The political situation caught attention from the broad public after a media intervention made by the main Wallonian public TV station, the RTBF.

13 December 2006, the news show by RTBF was interrupted because of the alarming news that Flanders has declared itself independent. Images showed the closing borders between Flanders and Wallonia, and that Albert II, the king of Belgium, had left the country because he did not believe in a solution for the problems between Flanders and Wallonia anymore. Important politicians were interviewed over the new developments. Thousands of Wallonians called the RTBF in panic and thought they would not be able to visit their friends and family in

Flanders anymore. A couple of hours later the editors admitted that the item was a fake.

The RTBF had created this documentary with the goal of starting a public debate on the “communitarian matters” which is how Belgians refer to the problems between Flanders and Wallons. Up until then, the editors felt it had mainly been a political discussion, which did not keep normal people out of their sleep. The discussion on the possible separation was mainly made at a political level for economic reasons, or in some cases for practical language reasons.

The documentary succeeded in the goal of changing the issue of separation from a technocratic problem to a personal one: People talked about the documentary, and started forming an opinion on what they wanted with their country’s structure. I suddenly was aware of the fact that I am from the Flemish part of Belgium.

In the past, when people asked me where I am from, I would simply have

answered “Belgium”, without giving it a second thought of specifying it to Flanders. Now I was forced to reflect: Do I feel Flemish or Belgian in the first place?

*I suddenly was aware of the fact that I am from the Flemish part of Belgium.*

## Flags against nationalism

During the nine months struggle of forming a government, there was a lot of media speculated on Belgium falling apart. Would Flanders declare itself independent? This would have been quite a revelation as it is mostly a minority that wants to be independent, but now it would be a majority. I have never had the idea of any emotional, identity related causes for separation.

The Dutch newspaper articles were actually worrying me, as a Flemish Belgian living in the Netherlands. Was Belgium really falling apart? I could hardly imagine.

Luckily, my friend in Brussels, Tom, reassured me. It wasn’t as bad as foreign media made us believe. The Belgian situation is hard to judge if you have never lived in this crazy country. He told me that people in Brussels were demonstrating in the city and people bought Belgian flags and hung them from their window or balcony. This

is quite a revelation as Belgian people are usually very modest in expressing any form of patriotic feelings. The Belgian black-yellow-red was spread in unexpected ways and could be seen everywhere.

## The city of Ghent declares itself independent

What to do in a country that is according to some at the brink of a split up? Ridiculize by radicalizing! Ghent is a Belgian city in the East of Flanders. It is a university town with a lot of students. Many of them come from the West of Flanders (cities like Bruges or Ypres) to study and live there because it’s such a nice place.

In January 2008, some people started spreading posters and campaigning to declare the city of Ghent independent from the rest of Flanders. They had created a new political party called the New Ghent Alliance (NG-A, referring to the Flemish nationalist party NV-A “New Flemish Alliance”)

One of their arguments for becoming an independent city-state was that too much of the city’s money was going to Flanders, an argument often used by Flemish towards the Wallonians. One of their goals was expelling all the people from West-Flanders that do not want to adapt to the Ghent dialect and habits, or, as a compromise, force them to wear head scarves.

Although it was clearly a parody, they caused quite some commotion.

Someone put up an ad on eBay selling Belgium. Starting with a bid of one Euro, the sale soon reached a value of ten million euros. The text of the ad assured the kingdom “can be bought as a whole (not recommended).”

This offer was removed by eBay because it was an ‘unrealistic’ sale. Though a joke, this hinted at the absurdity of the Belgian political situation.

*Expel all the people who do not want to adapt to the Ghent dialect and habits, or, as a compromise, force them to wear head scarves.*

The mayor of Ghent received complaints from West-Flemish people that had been scoffed at by “true Ghent people”. Also the NG-A kept on denying that it was a joke for a long time, until they could not keep it up anymore because of people taking it seriously and starting discriminating West-Flemish people.

The cool thing is that the mayor openly supported the parody, and on 29 March there has been a great reconciliation party. Let’s hope this action has taught Flanders a good lesson.

**\_ Judith van Acker**

# Bike lifting



## Bike lifting

*Some years ago, cycling in Budapest could have been considered as an extreme sport. Only couriers and adrenalin junkies dared to race and swoosh through the city, slaloming their way between damp and honking cars. Committed individuals take up their daily struggle of cycling in the bike-unfriendly traffic. Critical Mass, an unconventional tour of bikers, demonstrates innovatively for the improvement of the situation for cyclists.*

All the cars produce a tremendous amount of smog, causing serious air pollution. The city would be a healthier place to live if less cars would travel in the city. Apart from drawing attention to the environmental aspects of traffic, Critical Mass also presses on another issue. The congestion and the mentality of car drivers make it dangerous for cyclists to enter the traffic. Cyclists of Budapest, young and old, participate with Critical Mass to show their need to be acknowledged as an equal part of the daily traffic. Public transport is not a friend of bikers either: a cyclist cannot combine these two ways of traveling. Unless broken or taken apart, a bike is not allowed in metros. In 2004, 'only' 4000 bikers gathered for the first officially organized Critical Mass event. Bike couriers

and sportsmen, together with ecologists, have since addressed these issues by demanding making the city fit for cycling. On April 20th 2008, at the end of a massive bicycle march throughout the whole city of Budapest, an incredible 80,000 participants did the 'bike lift' in the City. Bike lifting is characteristic of Critical Mass events.

In Budapest, there is still much room for improvement in the driving culture towards the cyclist. That is, a mentality change of car drivers. With all the miles ridden by bikes, the change Critical Mass is working for becomes ever more necessary.

*\_ Julia Vincz, Bori Soos, Larita*

► Get in touch with your local Critical Mass group:  
[www.critical-mass.info](http://www.critical-mass.info)





## Chalk bike lanes

Why wait if you can do it yourself?

Riga, the capital of Latvia, has narrow streets, pedestrians and cars. Surprisingly, there are cyclists as well, despite the danger the cyclists involve themselves in. We have two bike roads that lead to leisure destinations, to Jūrmala (city next to the sea shore) and Mežaparks (forest for walking, running, roller skating, and Zoo Park). None of them are used for daily cycling to school or work, mostly they are just for leisure.

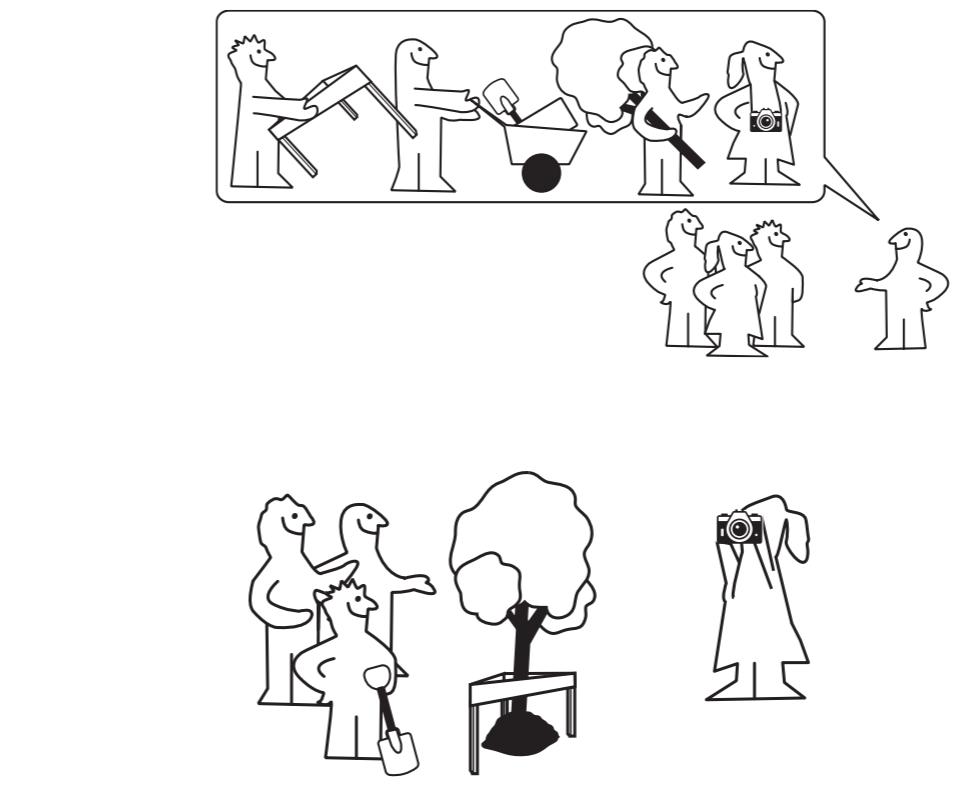
We have a city council, with a transport department. We also have some pavements wide enough to share between pedestrians and bicyclists. And what is most important - we have people, who care, about streets, about pedestrians, about pavements and even about the city council.

So we built our own chalk bike road, and will continue to do so, until somebody official will notice it, and paint it permanently. Newspapers write that we can expect improvement in five years at the earliest. Meanwhile we will keep on chalking.

— David and two Sanitas



► ...meanwhile in São Paulo...



# Stop stealing our forests!



## Do it yourself: Plant a tree

Want to take a stand against illegal logging?  
Join the worldwide movement and plant an  
illegal tree yourself.

► [www.stopstealingourforests.org](http://www.stopstealingourforests.org)

— Milieudefensie



# Festival against GMOs

*The earth and sky suddenly shake in a thunder like noise. For a moment, I cannot distinguish whether I am awake, or if I am caught up in a nightmare. When the noise caused by a seemingly infinitely long cargo train vanishes behind my ears' horizons, the crisping sound of a glowing fire replaces it. I turn around, feel that there is hay all around everywhere, and pull my blanket in an attempt to continue sleeping. To no avail. The smell of roasting sausages disrupts my attempts to continue sleeping. Where have I landed?*

It didn't take me long to remember. Yesterday, I arrived at a field occupation near Northeim, in the middle of Germany. Since one week, 35 activists occupy a field owned by a KWS, a German seeds developer and manufacturer. The municipality of Northeim has urged already in December that KWS should not use this territory to experiment in the open field for genetic experimentation. Formally, they appear to have no say in this. The city of Northeim is now being confronted with agricultural activity that they do not want.

To kick off the occupation, the activists organized a bike tour from the ecological university 70 km away, leading to a manifestation in the city. The same day the field occupation started. The Do-It-Yourself festival atmosphere of the camp is a strategic asset. Jens, one of the people who joined the bike tour, instantly decided to visit the field: "The people are right, the moment is right, the atmosphere is right, so I decided to stay."



***"The people are right, the moment is right, the atmosphere is right, so I decided to stay."***



GMOs, creating a mass movement. I think that is just as important as stopping KWS to pollute this specific field." Therefore, the activist group organizes public events, ranging from a Sunday morning breakfast, a soccer tournament, and diverse public discussions, both on the terrain and in the neighboring town on experimentation with genetically modified crops. KWS has also been invited to speak at these venues, an offer they declined.

Before the occupations, anti-GMO activists have destroyed fields of genetically modified crops. Under the shelter of a dark night, a group enters a field for an early harvest. These actions are highly illegal; therefore the actions have to stay undercover. While effective in sabotaging the crops, little opportunities to gain support among the public are seized. The occupation near Northeim shows that festival and politics, fun and determination go hand in hand.

***Festival and politics, fun and determination go hand in hand.***

## Epilogue

KWS has urged the police for assistance in evacuating the field. The activists decided in a long meeting to abandon the place before the ultimatum. Northeim has not been saved from GMOs, but the resistance has found a common place, and is ready to move on.

*\_ Joep van Delft*

## Fact sheet:

- Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), are the plants and animals of which genetic information has been altered by engineers.
- A plant is 'Roundup-Ready' after genetic treatment against the herbicide Roundup-Ready. Handy for farmers: When they use this specific combination, all plants will die, except for the ones 'treated'.
- Roundup-Ready sugar beet is a collaboration between KWS (DE) and Monsanto (USA). KWS has implemented the Monsanto-owned Roundup-Ready DNA in the sugar beet.
- The consumption of newly implemented protein has only been tested in a 90 days experiment on rats. Obviously, long term health effects, fertility have not been examined.

One of the objects at the field is a puppet, clearly visible from the road that goes along the field. The banner invites the car drivers to use their horns three times to express their support. With the help of a rudimentary mechanism and a long rope, the puppet answers by waving a flag three times. More than half of the cars express their solidarity. Even the high-speed train that rushes by the field used its whistle three times to express solidarity with the action.





# Fork you!

*ForkYou* is a movement of anonymous artists that has been making fork-art since 2001. In 2001, a little town in the south of The Netherlands was successfully forked. The newspaper reported the creation of the peace sign consisting of 3000 white, plastic forks, made by 10 people, and 'forking', as we know it now, was born. After that, new plans were made and more and more people got enthusiastic and joined up. Since then nine cities have been forked, most of them in The Netherlands.

At first only peace signs where made, but after a while new techniques where used to make more complicated designs, like bar codes, words, mazes and even a map of the world.

***The largest piece of fork-art yet was created out of approximately 60,000 forks.***

The largest piece of fork-art yet was created out of approximately 60,000 forks and the crew responsible consisted of over 50 people. All of the fork-art is made on spots where lots of people are going to notice it and it is also made overnight to increase the factor of surprise.

Forking requires a lot of preparation. At first a good spot has to be found to place the piece of fork-art. At the same time some drawings and measurements have to be made to assure that the piece of art is going to look tight. The forks are gathered into bundles of about 20. When the forking commences at night, strings and sticks lay out the shape of the art piece and some forks are put into the ground to create the basic shape. After that a lot of other forks are placed next to these ones to give volume to the outline. Some people are putting the forks in the

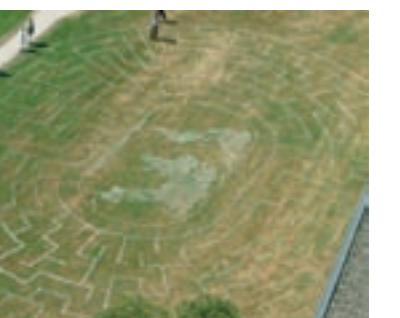
ground, while others provide forks to those people. Some people also have to keep an overview and talk to the police and other passers-by that are wondering what we are doing there late at night.

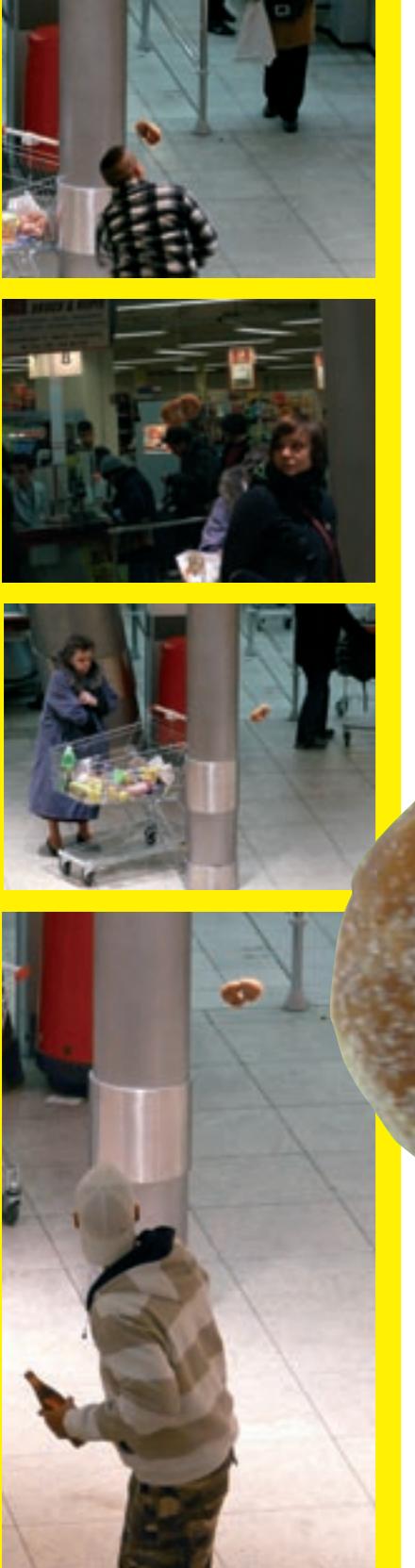
With this art, we want to inspire people to think about their existence and behavior.

***Most of the time we put a peace sign in our art pieces to emphasize our beliefs in universal love and positive vibes.***

Most of the time we put a peace sign in our art pieces to emphasize our beliefs in universal love and positive vibes. The art pieces are always constructed from plastic forks as a metaphor of mass consumption. The message can be explained in either a very personal or a more global manner. We are anonymous, because we believe it is the art (and the message) that is important and not the individuals doing it. Since we also care about the environment, we will clear the spot of exhibition ourselves, after about 10 days. All used forks will be recycled and used again in another art piece if possible. This is temporary art!

*\_ Tim Timmermans*





## Flying donut

*One day, which will be any day, a donut in the shopping mall next to you will defy the law of gravity. Between bargain prices and special products a new kind of surprise will arise.*

The donut is hung down from the second floor, next to the exit of a large food store. An almost invisible string creates the levitation experience. The little piece of bread silently makes its way down, and stops in eyesight of the consumers. The reactions are first class entertainment. Passers-by get a face of surprise when discovering the donut floating in the air before them. As soon as they realize what it is, they pretend they never saw it.

Does the donut lie in the belly of the beholder?



# Match identities

1. Alexander



2. Britt



3. Alfredo



4. Niti



Which person has which identity? Match the picture with the short descriptions below. You can find the answers at the next page.

**A. The taxi driver**  
Working as a taxi driver my profession is quite integrated in my personality. I would describe myself as a positive person who sees solutions instead of problems. Through my work I come in contact with many different sorts of people including school children, disabled and ill people. It feels good to know that I am respected for who I am and that what I do is necessary. It's appreciated that I'm open, have a positive attitude and offer a helping hand. However, since I'm a public person in the small town where I live, my integrity is important to me. I want to protect my private life and not let people come too close.

**B. The entrepreneur**  
I have my own company; we renovate furniture and decorate houses with textile and color. My job is very creative, developing and interesting. The best bit is when you can make the customers satisfied and get good feedback. But, you also have the overall responsibility, for money, personnel, everything. So although I'm very happy with what I do, I also view myself a bit more seriously these days. I have to take all the tough decisions, which makes me stronger, but sometimes it's lonely at the top. However, I do not think that this has changed who I am at the core. I'm the same, just a bit stronger, a bit more self assured and I sometimes feel the weight of responsibility.

**c. The young parent**  
I have not really thought about whether becoming a parent has changed my identity... it sort of happened and is a natural part of life. I'm a central figure in my family and an important person. Most of the people around me are in the same situation, young families with small children. We are all enterprising, poor but full of energy and confidence. I'm happy with the solidarity between us. We help each other and spend a lot of time together. I'm an ambitious parent and person, positive and happy considering the circumstances. I don't feel the need to develop myself outside of family life; the life I live now makes me happy.

**d. The single**  
I would describe myself as humble towards life, independent, a free thinker. The core of my whole being is an independence that is impossible for anyone to subdue. Of course there are benefits of sharing your life with someone, sharing thoughts or going on excursions, but for me the price is too high. It's very important for me to be able to make my own decisions about what I do and with whom. My friends are not arbitrarily chosen, but people I have a lot in common with. We have lots of fun and at the same time we can be honest to each other. The way I see it, if you have lived after your own mind, you can feel satisfied.

\_ Carola Stähli

# Save Poland

In three days almost everyone in the whole nation received an SMS, e-mail or phone call



To identify the old conservative catholic lady in Poland, you should look for the mohair beret. The ladies are constantly wearing it.



## Hide the ID of your grandma

Not long ago, Poland was surprised by a spontaneous campaign. After two years of intolerance, homophobia, swindles and other nice treatment, the conservative prime minister - the twin brother of our president - decided to resign. Some of the citizens were happy, some were sad, but for certain, all saw a great chance for change in the new elections. At this time, Poland was led by two major political parties: the catholic conservatives, and the liberals.

The people voting for the conservatives were mainly older people. Those who were not so enthusiastic about our membership in EU and scared about immigrants. These voters were the people most easy to mobilize. For the liberal party, the voters were mostly young and active people, but, when it came to the actual voting, very lazy.

We were afraid that the conservatives and twin brothers would be ruling the country again after the elections. Something had to be done to

kick the young people to vote. However, someone thought exactly the other way around. Why not do something to stop the old conservative ladies from voting?

Suddenly the message "Save Poland: Hide the ID of your grandmother" appeared everywhere. Nobody knows who first came up with this slogan, but after three days almost everyone in the whole nation received an SMS, e-mail or phone call with this message. It was one of the most popular topics in Polish search engines, portals, newspapers and the news: politicians couldn't avoid the action. Some of the conservatives even proclaimed it as assassination of democracy, and suspected it was made by Russian intelligence.

After the elections, we, the proud citizens, can say that

it was the biggest and most spontaneous campaign in our country. Now Poland has liberals, instead of conservatives in power. No ID was hidden but the turn-out

was the biggest in our history.

— Kalor

Answer to Match identities: The correct answer is that all the descriptions are of Britt (B), description of which photo is this!



## Pillars for the people

Advertising pillars, you find them on the most prominent spots in city centers. It's a pity that only with a lot of money can you buy this part of public space. Usually only companies have the resources to place their message there, while many people would also like to express themselves on such a visible spot.

**Time for action!** An anonymous group hung big white sheets over advertising pillars in the main shopping streets of Arnhem (NL). They asked passers-by if they felt like writing or drawing something on it. The white sheets became colorfully filled. If only temporarily, public space was for the public once again.

# Mirrors and speech

## How do you see yourself?

There are two enormous moments in a young human's life, according to the psychologist Jacques Lacan. These are: the first time they recognize their own reflection in a mirror and the first time they speak. These are moments that shape the boundaries of what is us - where we begin and end. Where we place our identity.

We, four identity-seekers, took a full-length mirror with us and placed it in front of people and got them to speak - asking them simple questions about how they saw themselves.

*\_ Jonathan*



Misha - "Looking in the mirror does make you more self-reflective".

"I'm a person. Soil. Earth. You start as earth and end as earth."



Darren - "We're a drugs rehab group"  
Gary [laughing] - "You don't want to know us"

Alan - "Do you want to know how we see ourselves now - or before?"

Either, both.

Alan - "Looking at ourselves now we are totally different from what we were."

Michael - "The important thing is being an individual."

Gary - "Don't discriminate against us because of our past. Treat us like you treat us."



Marlies - "I have a dual identity, German-Glaswegian. I am comfortable with this dual identity. I think a lot of people have more than one identity."

How do others see you?

"As someone who understands their culture, but they don't understand mine."

How would you like people to see you?

"Cool, calm, collected. Interested in one thousand things. Activist. Inspiring."



Bob - "Don't know. Hopefully I go unnoticed to many people. Ghostly. An apparition. Maybe influential to some. Hopefully sexy to some girls."

# Adbusters busted!

*Adbusting used to be about attacking the corporate soul of commercials, opening up a space of fun and relief from the capitalistic bombardment of the mind. Instead, adbusting is now evolving to a marketing strategy itself.*

Along the river in Berlin, in one of the areas with a strong graffiti culture, a commercial poster with the message "Don't spray - chat" was put up in the beginning of March. Under the handwritten message a small creature with three eyes was proclaiming a new cheap mobile contract. When being confronted with the message, my own first thought was: "Fuck this! Who are you to tell me that?" The posters were still fresh and sticky, and I simply re-stuck the words on the poster to "Don't chat - spray".

Throughout the coming week many of the company's posters could be seen on the streets. They had put up a number of different versions, including posters looking like they were already adbusted. For the more provoking ones, other people did the same as me. They changed the message, sprayed new ideas or crossed out the text. This effectively made the posters stand out from other commercials on the street. An adbusted poster will always be original, and it will be more visible than the commercials around it. The whole campaign was designed to provoke active engagement from creative activists. When I realized I had done exactly what the company had wanted me to do, I felt used.

*— Julia*

In cities like New York and Miami, companies have ordered street artists to make the company's logo on walls. The companies copy the aesthetics of street art to sell their brand, framing the artists into a target group, ready for commercial exploitation. Here in Berlin the three-eyed little creature was sprayed on walls in public space, as graffiti with a commercial message. This also provoked a reaction where most advertising graffiti was commented straight on the walls, or plainly censored by a layer of paint. The idea of using graffiti with a commercial message has by this campaign taken a step further. Not only street art, but also the methods of street activism have been integrated in the marketing strategy. The creative activists are in this case made into willing, active participants of the campaign. Now the companies are using the creative power of adbusting, subverting adbusting itself into a force for commercialism. Hiding the commercial message away with a quick-and-dirty piece seems to be the best counter for now. It is time to change the adbusting tactics. To raid the commercial specter, innovation is the key. We are at play.



*The whole campaign was designed to provoke active engagement from creative activists.*



*When I realized I had done exactly what the company had wanted me to do, I felt used.*

*It is time to change the adbusting tactics.*

# Claim the name

## Open identities as tools for action and confusion

*Sometimes, the one who says something is more important than what is said. A ready-made identity, free for anyone to use, is an effective way of performing actions. Using a common or fictive name to claim an action guarantees confusion and fun.*

*Open reputations and virtual identities have been useful in numerous situations.*

**— Joep van Delft**



### Luther Blissett

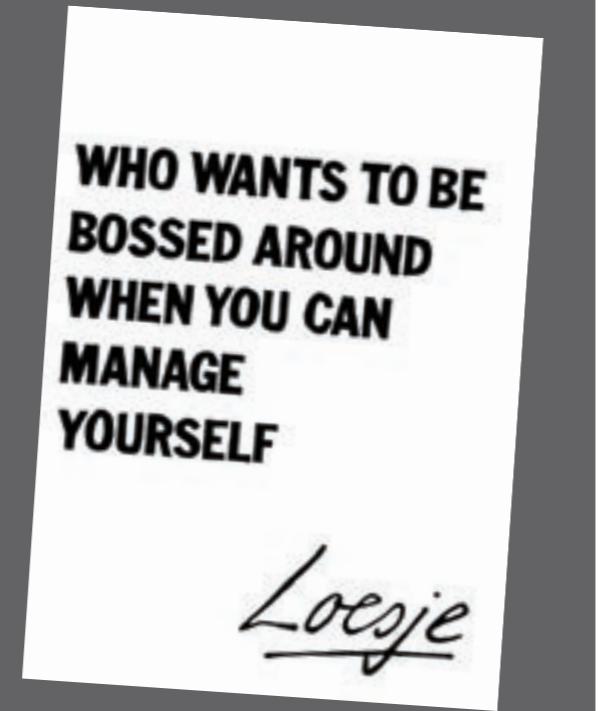
Luther Blissett was an English football player, who played a few games for AC Milan in the seventies. Strangely enough, he has been the victim of identity theft. By the end of the nineties, he represented the 'Robin Hood of the information age,' claiming media pranks in Italy, Germany and Spain, as well as in South America. Luther Blissett has grown to

be a public figure. Despite the ritual suicide, Japanese style, a Seppuku, by the veterans of the movement in 1999. In 2007, Luther Blissett claimed a hoax again. In the days preceding the launch of a new Harry Potter book, a group of catholic hackers claimed to have got into the system of the publisher, and they made the end of the book public, renouncing it as neo-paganism. This email was sent to an email list for hackers, but soon got picked up by mainstream media.

After a few days, Luther Blissett arose from the dead and claimed the hoax, and pointed out the vulnerability of the media for tactical mis-information.

### Loesje

Loesje is a Dutch girl's name. On the 24th of November 1983, she was born under unclear circumstances. After this date, the signature of this girl has been used to sign short texts on black-and-white posters which are spread on the streets. Loesje comments on everything between big political issues and events in her personal life with a positive and transcending approach. Aiming to give color to life, she creates awareness and trigger people to form their own opinions and ideas. By signing the slogans with this girl's name, the posters function as a quote from this playfully aware, encouragingly positive, and disarmingly outreaching girl. Currently, people in more than thirty-five countries spread texts with the signature of Loesje. - [www.loesje.org](http://www.loesje.org)



### Spartacus

Spartacus was the leader of strangely unique event in world history. He led slaves in the rebellion against the Roman Empire. He formed an army, which, to the dismay of the Roman leaders, escaped the Roman army. When, after a few years, the whole group of liberated slaves was captured, the Roman commanding officer wanted to release all the slaves, on the condition that Spartacus would step forward and let himself be arrested. This proposal was unacceptable for the former slaves. One of them said to the authorities: "I am Spartacus!" This example was directly followed by all the captured free men, chanting: "I am Spartacus!"

### The Yes Men

The US-based group The Yes Men takes up specific corporate identities, and appears in public, famously impersonating organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Dow Chemical. A basic strategy is to create a website that parodies the website of the targeted organization. Appearing credible, opportunities present themselves for what they call 'identity correction': They get invited to speak at some venue seemingly on behalf of that organization. In the case of the WTO, they take on the neo-liberal thought and draw its logical consequence. In this way, the Yes Men let WTO concisely announce the "formalized slavery model for Africa," for a "(re)privatization of humans themselves." Since their indecent proposals are rarely met with criticisms from the corporate world when they take the philosophy of corporate practice to its logical and horrible extreme, the cynicism of neo-liberal ideals and corporate practices are brought to surface. Why does only using an identity that you can identify with, when "impersonating big-time criminals in order to publicly humiliate them," make the crimes more visible? - [www.theyesmen.org](http://www.theyesmen.org)



### Subcomandante Marcos

In Mexico, the Zapatistas, a native Indian people, wants to live its life without the military and economical interference of the Mexican state and the NAFTA, the free trade zone of the Americas. In their rebellion for self-determination, the EZLN, the zapata liberation army, is led by a disguised and mysterious figure of Subcomandante Marcos. Subcomandante, since this figure refuses to be a leader in- and outside the militant actions. In 1994, Subcomandante Marcos, answered to reporters on the question of his mysterious identity: "Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South Africa, Palestinian in Israel, Jewish in Germany, a woman alone in the metro at 10pm, a landless peasant. All of the minorities searching for a word, their word, which would make a majority out of us, the eternally fragmented ones."

## Brides on tour

I encountered an article about two women traveling in wedding dresses through countries around the Mediterranean Sea. In April, they hitchhiked from Milan to Tel Aviv. Along the way, local women stitched embroidery on their dresses. This art project intended to show how far you can get with trust and help from strangers and to investigate (cultural) differences and -especially- similarities of the people they encountered. Embroidery is a shared tradition of all the cultures around the Mediterranean.

At one point the brides decided to separate and meet up later on in another location. During this part of the journey, one of the 'brides,' Pippa Bracca, was raped and killed. Her companion, Silvia Moro, despite the grief and loss, was determined to continue the journey. She said that the murderer was just one monster who came along their path. So many other people have helped them, and all their efforts should not be forgotten but continued.

I was as shocked by the horrific history, as I was moved by the positive attitude of Silvia Moro. The dedication to continue the project really made a big impression on me. With her decision, she made clear that one should always start with trust in humanity. Numerous experiences confirmed the rightness of this attitude. One terrible event cannot change that.

I started to search for comments on this appalling event. The Media gave very little

attention to the incident. However, the tragedy lives on in the online world, where bloggers expressed their opinion. Some of the reactions said that it is naive to go hitchhiking alone as a woman in this area, stating that one could expect something like this to happen. I got angry about the people with this "I told you so" attitude. It is easy to speak out from your ivory tower and say that someone shouldn't have done something because it ended badly. When you try to avoid anything that could go wrong, you will just lock yourself up in a protected environment where nothing exciting can happen. Not in a bad way but not in a good way either. Life is about the unexpected and dealing with that. Nobody can look into the future and see the outcome of events. If we go out and enter a world we do not trust, how can we bring a change to the people out there, or even have a conversation with them.

One of the things that defines us as being human is the drive to search for new things. Maybe in today's world, commercials, computer games and movies provide us with all the excitement and exploration we need to be satisfied. It might also warn us of the dangers of not staying in the comfort of the known. Maybe it takes away the need to go out in the real world to discover what is happening there. Curiosity and the need to explore are for me the most significant signs of humanity.

— Lotte Huys

## Lose your identity

To emphasize, criticize, shout out or shut down the concept of identity, it helps to start with yourself. This is an amazing activity to find out what identity actually means. Let each person take five cards, and write one thing on each, a thing that actually makes them who they are, and stick the cards to their bodies (some examples would be Anarchist, Mother, Lesbian, Poet).

Then, person-by-person and round-by-round, everyone has to remove one card at the time. And explain: Why is this identity the least important for you?

It is an amazingly difficult task for almost anyone. Am I more a woman or more a student?

Am I more Jewish than gay? Am I more an art lover or a German? Try, and see for yourself.

— Rinske and Evan



# Think queer!

*An identity is something that we feel we are, but also a label created by society that tells us what we are when we do certain things or are somehow part of certain groups. Maybe some people are okay with that. Maybe you can think of the times you've felt most happy or inspired in your life. Was it something to which you belonged, or something to do with feeling like a part of something? The problem comes however when certain identities are not respected, discounted, or regarded as not normal.*

In the seventies and eighties a wave of different movements started to speak up for different groups of people with certain identities that were discriminated. It was the time of the second feminist wave which made the private (identity) political, but also self help and advocacy groups and organizations concerning lesbian, gay, disabled, indigenous and people from minority ethnic backgrounds came together to fight identity-based discrimination. But Identity proved not to be a simple label. Soon it became clear that even within the women's movement, the disabled women were a special group with an own identity and whose struggle was not covered by the feminist mainstream. Black lesbians had to deal with different and more difficult discrimination than white lesbians, and were even discriminated by their fellow lesbians.

So, what to do?

This is where the road forks out. There is the roundabout of identity politics, with ever more detailed groups, identities,

ways to be discriminated and ways to fight it, or there is the road of Queer theory that claims that the idea of identity is the problem itself. So what is the problem with identity?

## *The summaries hijack the concrete experiences.*

Aren't we some weird (in my case at least) combination of experiences, ways of dealing with experiences, influences from other people, how they perceive us, and how they treat us? How can we deny the boxes we have been put in and have used ourselves throughout our whole lives? But what would you be in a world without boxes? Can we think of ourselves in any other way than having identity? And if we can, how does that thinking help?

According to Queer theory there is no identity, no mysterious deep, inner, constant factor or feeling that makes us who we are. Instead, we are what we do. My gender identity can change



with the clothes I wear, or don't. My sexual identity depends on with whom I enjoy having erotic experiences with. But actually this is not so much about identity: these are acts. Concepts like identity offer themselves as handy summaries of the experiences we desire, but they appear to have a hidden agenda. The summaries hijack the concrete experiences, and shape your desires into something artificial. It is only our society, and our own thinking created by our society, that creates this framework called identity. And it is only through this framework that people can be put into discriminated positions. Moreover, these frameworks don't even fit us most of the time.

Queer is an academic reaction to the so-called identity politics. Queer might be just another label, covering non-heteronormative people. Queer theorists, however, would say that Queer is non-definable, as 'queer' stands for the idea that definitions, of people as a certain kind of identities, is a problem, maybe even the problem of people fighting against discrimination.

If identity politics is a roundabout of dividing people in smaller and smaller groups, Queer is a road without direction, leaving all running randomly around. Although change and changeability is at the heart of the idea of Queer, Queer itself cannot change the existing. To change the existing, it should first of all be recognized as being existent.

**\_Rinske and Evan**



*There is no identity, no mysterious deep, inner, constant factor or feeling that makes us who we are.*



# Fashion Allun

*Fashion shows communicate the newest ways of commercially constructed desire. They set the body and mind of the audience, and make it hungry to spend money on beauty. Anorexic girls show the travesties of beauty ideals. Fashion Allun has enough of this staged lookism, and perform with a different approach.*

The cloths Fashion Allun uses are putting the concept of recycling into practice. Unexpected materials like plastic, cardboard, net for the picking of olives, food packages, salad leaves, and computer cables are brought back to life. Even though the materials come from daily life, they take on new meanings that are exceptional, sometimes sinister or ironic, but always playful. They

reveal and highlight tensions and multiple identities of the models, as well as the prejudices of the viewers. In the shows, the living clothes take possession of the model's will, oblige her to do what they want to represent. The outside temporarily takes over the inside, forming a praise to trash, by which we could be swallowed up.

**\_ Fashion Allun**

See also: [www.allun.it](http://www.allun.it)



## Captured into patterns

*On the fourth floor I leave what I no longer need. I try to find the belongings I might use. I spend almost no time at home. Last night I slept somewhere else again. I change clothes, brush my teeth a second time and walk down the stairs.*

*I leave for buying a cake. I cannot remember which one of the women working at the bakery serves me this time. I see them every day, and the days easily replace each other. They are polite. Purchasing the cake is such a routine, it might as well never have happened.*

*The new kiosk sells sausages and bread. A handwritten sign tells me they still look for personnel. If I get fired I could work there. I would be good with selling sausage. I hardly eat any meat. I like to talk with people. I imagine myself having conversations with alcoholics in daytime and by the night selling sausages to wasted youngsters that hardly can stand.*

*I choose a position where I will not disturb anyone. I pass a mid-aged man that seems slightly afraid. I sit down next to a black dressed young man, whom I quickly diagnose as depressed. His hands seems to be too long, weak and out of proportion. Opposite to me there are two silent women. They look more silent than the rest of the people present, though nobody speaks.*

*Outside a man speaks constantly with a voice just a bit louder than the norm commands. He tells me capitalism likes people to die. Capitalism profits when people die. I close the door. Nobody expects me to do something else than exactly that. He keeps on speaking. I lock it properly.*

# Virtualize your identity

*The passport is a document typical of the modern age. It perceives itself to be a representation of an actual person. The information by which the person is defined is rational and measurable. The social security number points out the status of the person as a part of society. A wheel in a larger machine, with a duty to do a job. However, the passport doesn't seem to fit our present culture any more. In the Netherlands, there has been fierce debate about the "double passport" that immigrants sometimes carry. But the problem with this is not that immigrants don't fit the present system, it is more that the passport doesn't fit the present reality of identities.*

To emphasize the passport as a midpoint of identity, we assume that our identity is centred. But immigrant identity, postcolonial identity, and also "postmodern" identity does not have one focal point, and is probably better understood as a network. An autobiography also doesn't have a central narrative, but is more a collection of loosely coherent stories.

Websites are the medium that fits the contemporary identity in a better way.

**Websites are the medium that fits the contemporary identity in a better way.**

Like our identity, the website is always "under construction." Websites don't rely on a single, particular aspect, but every part of it can be viewed as thoroughly as you want. Today's identities are always linked to multiple places, and other sites of meaning. The links make the web, and

all targets are subject to change. New connections emerge, old ones become obsolete.

**Identity has always been virtual**

The particular construction of affiliations expressed by these links is of more relevance than ever could be conveyed by the singular relation state-subject. This rather messy construction that is partly uncontrollable, where the whole emerges from less or more than other parts, resembles far better, as an idea, our identity than done by a passport.

It is therefore no coincidence that homepages or sites like MySpace are today's main forms through which identity is constructed. Identity has always been virtual. Only now it is becoming obvious that it is time for a virtual passport.

**\_ Ruben Meintema**

# Travel like an American president



In 1974, the Swedish-Norwegian artist Kjartan Slettemark received his passport issued by the County Administration of Sweden. The photo showed, instead of his own face, the face of Richard Nixon, the US-president of that time. To Nixon's portrait, the artist added his own hair and beard. He assumed Nixon's identity, as the concluding part of a series of artworks called 'Nixon Visions'. Except for the passport, the 'Nixon Visions' contained 20 collages where Nixon's face was cut and mixed with a famous Swedish coffee advertisement. The collages were wheat-pasted all over Stockholm. The following year, to complete his work, Kjartan travelled successfully to New York and back with Nixon's portrait in his passport.

**\_ Julia Vernersson**

# Magic makeover

A little magic makeover took place in Latvia on a sunny Sunday in April. Some great friends, good mood, music, fifteen kilos of rainbow-palette paint, brushes, gloves, waterproof coats and an old house. Eyewitnesses claim there was a lot of joy, color and positive emotions.

Does a makeover work as the first domino stone of greater change and development?

Is the superficial makeover an experiment for discovering and expressing one's inner self? With makeover plaster nuances can be covered, but the real reason or necessity for changes might still be there - under the layers of graffiti color and silicon, plastic, posters and synthetic hairs. A makeover can excite an impulse, a slight hint to catch your eye-sight and attention. To make you believe that miracles are possible, and then inspire you to action. But in the end: is it the process or the result that makes you move?

*\_ Rūta Vimba*

*Is it the process or the results that makes you move?*



### Distribute Mašta!

Want to help with giving this magazine out to nice people? You can! We will happily send you some copies to spread among your friends, or to put in nice places.

Please get in contact with [contact@creativeacts.org](mailto:contact@creativeacts.org), and you'll receive some for free. As long as they are in stock, of course.

Mašta #4 is spread in among others the following countries:

Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United States of America, and Uzbekistan.



Send entries for  
the next Mašta to  
[editor@creativeacts.org](mailto:editor@creativeacts.org)  
or upload it to  
[www.creativeacts.org](http://www.creativeacts.org)

The deadline submissions  
and contributions to the  
next Mašta is  
the 1st of January 2009

### Call for submissions

Do you have interesting thoughts ruminating in your head? A picture that speaks volumes? Had an exhilarating encounter with perspective trembling street art? Or got out in the streets yourself to leave inciting, world altering marks? Send it to Mašta, and run the risk of having it published in the magazine!

The next issue will carry the title Transform. Get your thoughts and actions guided by this theme...

...or not. Also cool interviews, art work, thoughts, reports disconnected to the theme are warmly welcome. As long as you think it is connected to creative activism.

Don't hesitate to send your submissions in. If you have got inspired, inspire others too!



#### Credits

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#### Colophon

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## Mašta #5: Transform

Reality is flexible. It tricks your intentions and surprises your expectations. But what happens when you start surprising your reality back? Experiment with pushing, given options towards new directions. Start stirring up the patterns of everyday life. What new possibilities will emerge, and how?

An act of beauty changes the surroundings excitingly: It's like being in love!

But when exactly does a slight alteration add up to a transformation? And what transformation would you like to achieve? In burning barricades, a crowded train station or in the corner of a street, you might find the transformation you did not know you wanted. Why not pick the pieces to create your own reality the way you like it best?

Send in reports from transformative creative acts, favourite utopias and with a short-cut to get there, or crazy art work, interviews, poems and whatever you can imagine before the first of January 2009 to [www.creativeacts.org](http://www.creativeacts.org) or [editor@creativeacts.org](mailto:editor@creativeacts.org).



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