

Forms of Participation

Tellervo Kalleinen/Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, JOKAklubi, and YKON

February 4 – April 8, 2012

Curated by Yvonne Volkart.

Opening reception: February 3, 7 pm

with a winter buffet.

“Off Art Talent Show“: 9.30 pm, restaurant Ziegel oh Lac, Rote Fabrik,

performance by **JOKAklubi**, and guests.

Finissage: Sunday, April 15, 3-6 pm,

with a participative game by **YKON**.

Guided tours: Thursday, February 23 and March 15, 6 pm.

In this show, the artist couple Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen is invited to present its projects and collaborations. In the centre of the show are four video installations, “I love my job“, “People in White“, “Dreamland“ and “Archipelago Science Fiction“, accompanied by an installation and a participative game of YKON, and a performance of JOKAklubi. The aim of the exhibition is to present the different and unique aesthetic forms of participation and humour, which we deem crucial and exemplary in the discourse of public sphere and politically engaged art.

In 2009/10, in the framework of the group show “Im/Possible Community“, Shedhalle produced a very successful Complaints Choir Zurich and had an in-depth open discussion with Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen and guests. We realized then that we shared a lot of ideas about the dark moments in life and how to overcome them. We also realized that Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen’s collaborations with people, mostly by making movies with them, is very special and unique. Therefore, Shedhalle wanted to give them the opportunity to present their projects which are all fundamentally based on participation, collectivity, and constantly changing constellations of people. In the centre of the show will be four new video installations, that is “I love my job“ (2008–10), “People in White“ (2011), “Dreamland“ (2011) and “Archipelago Science Fiction“ (2012) which will be finished for the exhibition. These works are accompanied by an installation and a game of the group YKON, and a performance of the group JOKAklubi. Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen are part of both groups. In all three group projects, people are invited to participate, but in very different ways.

Video works by Kalleinen/Kochta and Kalleinen solo: The videos are the final artificial and aesthetic product of a long and collective process in which many different people are involved. What these people have in common is the wish to reflect and come to terms with their problems and living conditions by way of narrating and playing them. Together with the other participants and with the professional aesthetic help of Kalleinen/Kochta-Kalleinen, they make a movie, which means, in a certain sense, they make an abstraction of their lives. In “I love my Job“ e. g. everything is about the problems and the “horror“ at work. By an open

call, people are addressed to summarize their problems at work, to write a script, and, if convenient, to play the main character. Kalleinen/Kochta-Kalleinen then make the short movie. Thus, on the one hand, this movie (re)stages the problem, on the other hand, with its fictitious and absurd end, it opens up for new ways of agency. Although the themes are variable (job, dreams, psychiatry, future, and so on), it is impressive to see how power, domination, and abuse of power determine our lives, bringing fear and horror upon us. But all of their videos have something deeply human: They show us how to confront these problems and to tackle them, or live in peace with them.

Another form of participation is articulated with the group JOKAklubi (in English “everybody’s club”, with the Finnish artists Mirka Raito, Niina Lehtonen-Braun and Tellervo Kalleinen). They are combining music, arts, and performance. Their surrealistic projects are breaking out from their interest to create surprising visuals into even more surprising situations. Their sharp humour is playing a big part in the shows – touching absurd sides of human life. The interactive JOKAklubi shows build a sense of community here and now. Local people (not only artists) who like to be on stage and play, are addressed and influence the course the evening takes. For Zurich, “The Off Art Talent Show“ will be staged. It invites people to present a short performance, which will then be discussed by a jury using absurd methods like the oracle, and so on.

YKON, a group of seven artists, develops games and workshops, which last several hours and include up to 50 people. In Zurich, a game with the following preliminaries will be set up: “It is a world simulation game for up to 30 players. It's based on a simple thought experiment: imagine that the world is brought to a complete halt. Everything stops. No more business as usual. With the world frozen, you and your fellow players can tinker with it as you please. What will you change? How do you convince others to go along with your changes? And what about the consequences? Through the 1960's, Buckminster Fuller was developing the ‘World Game’. It was to be his masterplan for the planet Earth: a tool that would formulate a comprehensive, design science approach to all the problems of the world. Inspired by the ideas of Fuller, we have developed the YKON Game, a more poetic perspective on the future of our world.

Instead solving the problems that we know, The YKON Game seeks to uncover the ideas that we're still missing -- sometimes wonderful, sometimes terrifying thoughts that could forever alter the world, and the way we live in it. For its players, the game poses an existential challenge: they will have to think about what kind of world they truly want. So come and change the world. You don't need to be an expert: everyone is welcome.“

To summarize: Although interaction and participation are presented in different ways, and although the world is not depicted as an easy-going one, one remarkable and unique common thread is the role of humour and a kind of absurd, surrealistic behaviour as a strategy of survival. Shedhalle is fascinated by this powerful aesthetic strategy and wants to involve the Swiss audience with this radical way of thinking and behaving.

We are still looking for participants for both the YKON Game and the evening with JOKAklubi. Please contact: volkart@shedhalle.ch