### **Studio for Propositional Cinema**

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Camera Grammatica

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Übersetzt von Lina Leonore Morawetz

Die Geschichte der Kamera ist eine Geschichte vom räumlichen Wandel. Von der Camera obscura bis zum Smartphone wurden die Bestandteile Raum, Licht und Zeit außerordentlich und erstaunlich modifiziert und reduziert. Wie gelangt das Licht in einen Raum? Wie sollen wir die Rollläden hochziehen? Welches Glas? Und wer wartet bereits draußen, um hineinzugelangen? (Wölfe, Ratten, Katzen, Tauben?) Außerdem, wenn es sich bei Kameras tatsächlich um Räume handelt, dann könnte auch das Gegenteil als wahr behauptet werden: Sind Räume Kameras? Aber bringen derartige Gleichungen dem wirklich Licht ins Dunkel oder sind sie angesichts der Geschichte der Dunkelkammer erst als Verdunkelungen erhellend?

Neben verlegerischen Tätigkeiten, dem Organisieren von Ausstellungen und Veranstaltungen und anderen Aktivitäten rücken die künstlerischen Arbeiten des Studio for Propositional Cinema mit dem Verschieben verschiedener Medien in ein eigenes Feld zwischen Mythologie und Analyse oft deren ontologische Aspekte in den Fokus. So befasst sich das Studio in »Camera Manual« (2018) etwa mit der Frage nach der Kamera als Raum: »Die Breite und die Durchlässigkeit einer Öffnung bestimmt weitgehend über die Bewegungen in einen Raum und aus diesem heraus. Das Hineingehen in einen Supermarkt wird einem leicht gemacht, das Hinausgehen erschwert; das Theater kontrolliert den Zutritt und fordert später zum Verlassen auf; die Höhle des Minotaurus verhindert den Eintritt und verunmöglicht aber auch den Ausgang: Unsere kameralistischen Verhältnisse wurden in eine Logik der Kontrolle hineingeboren.«

Obwohl es sich selbst als Kollektiv bezeichnet und als solches zwischen 2014 und 2017 auch einen Off-Space in Düsseldorf betrieben hat, bewegt sich das Studio für gewöhnlich in einem ähnlich undurchsichtigen Bereich, zwischen Wahrheit und Fiktion. Das »Kollektive« an der Identität des Studios lässt sich wohl am besten mit dem Bild eines anschwellenden und schrumpfenden Organismus darstellen, zu welchem das gesamte Netzwerk von Studios Kollaborateur\*innen zu zählen ist: Dabei vermag sich das Kollektiv auf eins zu reduzieren oder aber zu Hunderttausenden anwachsen, inklusive all jenen, die die Arbeiten betrachten und damit überhaupt erst zum Leben erwecken. Was seine Verortung betrifft, ist das »Studio« ein dem Eames Office nicht unähnlicher konzeptueller Raum - ein offener Rahmen, der weit über einen physischen Standort hinaus Kollaborationen und Projekte verschiedenster Art ermöglicht. Nichtsdestotrotz verfolgt das Studio eine unverkennbar individuelle Kunstpraxis, ihres Zeichens Installationen mit sprachlichen und textlichen Themen, denen durch Bewegung und Materie Leben eingehaucht wird: Tageslicht bewegt sich über ein Set silberner Regieanweisungen, Drehbücher werden in hölzerne Paneele gebettet und Liedtexte in Orgelpfeifen graviert.

Begonnen hat diese Praxis mit der Demontage einer Form namens »Kino«, dem Zerlegen und Analysieren seiner Werkzeuge, Gesetze, grundlegenden Materialien und Strukturen – also unter anderem der Zeit, den Bewegungen, dem Raum, den Betrachter\*innen und den Regeln. An diesem medialen Gerippe nagend, baut das Studio for Propositional Cinema Ausstellungen, welche diese mageren Gebeine zunächst wiederherstellen und in Folge im Raum ausglie-

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The history of the camera is a history of changing rooms. From the camera obscura to the smartphone, the elements of space, light, and time have been subjected to extraordinary and astonishing modifications and compressions. How exactly does the light enter a space? How should we open the shutters? Which glass? And what is outside asking to come in? (Wolves, rats, cats, pigeons?) Further, if cameras are really rooms, then could the opposite be proposed as a truth: Are rooms cameras? Are such equivalencies at all illuminating or, given the history of the darkroom, usefully endarkening?

The artwork produced by Studio for Propositional Cinema, whose activities also include publishing, organizing exhibitions and events, and other activities, often involves such questions related to the ontology of various media, by situating them in a curious zone between the mythological and the analytical. Take, for example, the exploration of a camera-as-room, which appears in the Studio's "Camera Manual" (2018): "The breadth and penetrability of an aperture controls the flow in and out of a room. The supermarket encourages entry but controls exit; the theater controls entry then demands exit; The Minotaur's cave discourages entry and precludes exit: our cameral relations are born within the logic of control."

Nominally a collective, which between 2014–17 also ran an off-space in Düsseldorf, the Studio's nature exists in a similarly murky area between fact and fiction. The "collective" element of the Studio's identity is perhaps best considered as a way of describing a swelling and shrinking organism that is the Studio's complete network of collaborators: the collective can be as small as one or as many as hundreds of thousands, including all who see the work and therefore bring it into the world. As to its whereabouts, the "Studio" might be considered a conceptual space akin to the Eames Office—which, though a physical site, operated as a framework allowing a more open-ended variety of collaborations and projects to happen. Nonetheless, the Studio has a recognizably singular art-making practice, typified by installations with a strong emphasis on linguistic and textual elements, vivified through movement and materials: daylight passes across a set of silver stage directions, scripts are inlayed in wooden panels, lyrics are engraved into organ pipes.

The practice began as a disassembling of the form named "cinand as a separation and analysis of tools, laws, and fundamental materials and structures-time, movement, space, viewers, laws, to name a few. Feeding on the bones of a mediatic carcass, Studio for Propositional Cinema constructs exhibitions that reconstitute meagre remains, and then extract, analyze, bend, and shape them in pace. These exhibitions have a formal quality that draws somewhat  $from the high \,watermark \,of \,conceptual \,art - of \,Sol \,LeWitt, Douglas$ Huebler, Lawrence Weiner, and so on (though that high watermark is also something of a tidemark, the ghostly presence of an empty pool). What transforms that tradition is a narrative content that reaches into the depths of more ancient storytelling traditions, as well as contemporary literary forms. In order to handle this distinctive set of attitudes, I am proposing a brief taxonomy of grammatical principles employed by Studio for Propositional Cinema. Grammar being a set of internalized rules or practices governing a language, it is form that allows play within a system. What would it mean to study the grammar of these rooms that are both a model of a camera and an architecture for writing in space? Thus begins a list of grammatical conventions for rooms noted in the work of Studio for Prop-

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### I. Style: Collective

In terms of the writing that appears in the artwork produced by Studio for Propositional Cinema, most striking is the pronounced collective spirit, which is arrived at first and foremost via language. Most obviously this sense is engineered by the use of the first-person plural, which has been present in the work from its first moment. In the Studio's first work titled "Inauguration" (2013), the following proclamation was made: "WE ARE A PARASITE ON THE INSTITUTION OF CINEMA." In a later work, a play for two performers entitled "CUT WITH SOME PIECES OF CINEMATOGRAPHY: A SO-NATA FOR TWO WOMEN," one actor instructs that: "IN ORDER TO ERODE THE BUILDINGS: WE ARE (MUST BE) LIKE THE PIGEONS IN THE CEILINGS: SHITTING AND FUCKING AND SCAVENGING, ENTERING CONDEMNED SPACES, CLAIM-ING THEM AS (THEIR/OUR) OWN . . ." As in those examples, the Studio often employs the figure of the parasite, scavenger, or pest within its cast of characters, which extends the "we" of the Studio to include a community of marginals, countercultures, and unwanteds. Like the poets W.H. Auden and John Ashbery, the Studio understands the power of the "we" to invoke collective emotion without politically confining it, sprinkled with the occasional touch of future imperative. The effect is such that when one reads a text like this on a gallery wall, or hears it read aloud, the presence of multiple voices is invoked: a community that you may be a part of, but that can only exist behind the walls, in the ceilings, in the gutters. Am I contained

#### II. Manner of Address: To/With the Spectator

The simple answer might, in some sense, be "yes." If we continue to consider this work in terms of rules of room grammar, then we can also suggest that theirs is a grammar that does not operate until there is a spectator present to animate it (with footsteps, eyes, breath, a beating heart, etc). The work doesn't work without this supplementary figure, who might be considered an extra or an understudy as much as they are an audience. When I worked with Studio for Propositional Cinema on an exhibition - titled "& faintly heard (as it sinks slowly): with The Tenderness of Maggots"—at Swiss Institute, New York (together with my colleague Alison Coplan), which opened during the grim month of January 2017, it was clear that the exhibition would remain dormant until it was set in motion by a visitor. Borrowing from the conventions of theater plays and scripts, the cast of characters was listed in vinyl on the window of the exhibition space, while the first lines of the work—"IF THERE IS STILL ENOUGH TIME TO DO SO: / AS DARKNESS APPROACHES: / &/OR: AS DARKNESSES APPROACH: / LIKE CANARIES INTO MINES: / WITH THE FREQUENCIES OF BATS:"-appeared engraved in copper by the doorbell. Thus the potential viewer presses the bell having received a message of urgency: only press if there is still time, there may not be enough time left, you might have to make a run for it. This final member of the collective begins the action by pressing a doorbell, therefore announcing that there is still time left.

Once inside, a number of stage directions printed in shades of silver were installed along the walls in vinyl at varying heights, lit only by the weak platinum of winter light entering the exhibition space. In order to read these, the viewer had to walk in a continuous line, negotiating the reflections of natural light, through time and space, which made it either possible or impossible to read the text, whilst being interrupted by the introduction of character monologues on glass tables. These texts appeared in the shape of the US Customs Declaration Form, employing the distinct modes of address from the form, which asks who you are and what you are carrying into the country: fungus, money, a criminal past, et cetera. Selected as a consideration of how to define the limits and laws of a life under siege, most obviously perceived during the exhibition's conception throughout 2016 in the US and Europe, as the grotesque returns of fascism and nationalism to the mainstream. The customs forms were adapted to act as vessels for speech, a script for a number of semi-abstract characters under threat, who were the carriers for certain ardern, durchleuchten, biegen und in Form bringen, Formal nehmen sich diese Ausstellungen mitunter nichts geringeres als die Qualität der Konzeptkunst zur Messlatte - Sol LeWitt, Douglas Huebler, Lawrence Weiner und so weiter (obwohl diese Messlatte stellenweise eher einen Tiefststand anzeigt, die geisterhafte Anwesenheit eines leeren Schwimmbeckens). Diese Tradition wird jedoch ausgedehnt durch erzählerische Inhalte, die zu archaischen Erzähltraditionen und auch zeitgenössischen literarischen Formen vordringen. Um mit diesen speziellen Ansprüchen klarzukommen, werde ich hier eine kleine, vom Studio for Propositional Cinema verwendete Taxonomie grammatikalischer Grundlagen vorstellen. Versteht man Grammatik als eine Reihe internalisierter Regeln und Praktiken, die eine Sprache bestimmen, ist es die Form, die ein gewisses Spiel innerhalb des Systems erlaubt. Was würde es also bedeuten, zur Grammatik jener Räume vorzudringen, die zugleich Modell für eine Kamera sind als auch eine Architektur, um an einem Ort zu schreiben? Es folgt eine Liste grammatikalischer Konventionen jener Räume, die sich bisher in der Arbeit des Studio for Propositional Cinema gezeigt haben.

#### I. Stil: Kollektiv

In den Schriften, die in der Arbeit des Studio for Propositional Cinema auftauchen, sticht ein ausgesprochen kollektiver Geist ins Auge, der sich wiederum in erster Linie durch die Sprache artikuliert. Deutlich wird er vor allem in der Verwendung der ersten Person Plural, die von Anfang an in der Arbeit präsent war. »Inauguration« (2013), die erste Arbeit des Studios, verkündete: »WIR SIND EIN PARASIT DER INSTITUTION KINO.« In einer späteren Arbeit, einem Stück für zwei Personen mit dem Titel »VER-SCHNITT MIT EIN PAAR STÜCKEN KINEMATOGRAFIE: EINE SONATE FÜR ZWEI FRAUEN« gibt eine der Personen die Anweisung: »UM DIE GEBÄUDE ZU ZERFRESSEN: SOL-LEN (MÜSSEN) WIR WIE TAUBEN UNTER DEN DÄCHERN SEIN: SCHEISSEN UND FICKEN UND PLÜNDERN, IN VER-BOTENE RÄUME VORDRINGEN, (IHREN/UNSEREN) AN-SPRUCH DARAUF ERHEBEN ...« Das Studio wählt, wie in den genannten Beispielen, oft die Figuren Parasit\*in, Plünderer\*in oder Schädling für Charakterbesetzungen. Damit erweitert sich das »Wir« des Studios und bezieht eine Gemeinschaft von Randgruppen, Gegenkulturen und Unerwünschten mit ein. Ähnlich wie den Dichtern W.H. Auden und John Ashbery gelingt es dem Studio mit der Macht des »wir«, kollektive Gefühle zu erzeugen – jenseits politischer Einschränkungen und mit dem erfrischenden Hauch eines Zukunftsgebots. Liest man einen derartigen Text auf einer Galeriewand oder hört man ihn laut gesprochen, wird sofort eine Vielzahl von Stimmen auf den Plan gerufen: eine Gemeinschaft, der man selbst angehören könnte, die aber nur hinter Wänden, unter dem Dach oder in der Gosse bestehen kann. Schließt dieses »wir« mich

#### II. Arten der Ansprache: Für/Mit Betrachter\*innen

Die Antwort könnte gewissermaßen »ja« lauten. Wenn wir also damit fortfahren, die Arbeit in Bezug auf räumlich-grammatikalische Regeln zu betrachten, dann können wir auch sagen, dass es sich um eine Grammatik handelt, die erst dann zur Anwendung kommt, wenn sie von eintretenden Betrachter\*innen (mit Schritten, Augen, Atemzügen oder einem schlagenden Herzen etc.) animiert wird. Die Arbeit funktioniert nicht ohne diese zusätzliche Figur, die man so wohl eine Extra-, Ersatz-, oder auch eine Betrachter\*innenfigur nennen kann. Als ich (gemeinsam mit meiner Kollegin Alison Coplan) mit dem Studio for Propositional Cinema an einer Ausstellung für das Swiss Institute in New York arbeitete, die im trostlosen Januar 2017 unter dem Titel » & faintly heard (as it sinks slowly): with The Tenderness of Maggots« eröffnet wurde, war klar, dass die Ausstellung solange inaktiv sein würde, bis sie durch die Besucher\*innen in Gang gesetzt würde. Die Besetzung der Charaktere war in Anlehnung an die Gepflogenheiten des Theaters schon in Klebeschrift an den Fensterscheiben des Ausstellungsraums zu lesen, wohingegen die ersten Zeilen der Arbeit - »WENN NOCH GENUG ZEIT DA-FÜR BEIBT: / WENN DIE DUNKELHEIT KOMMT: / &/ODER:

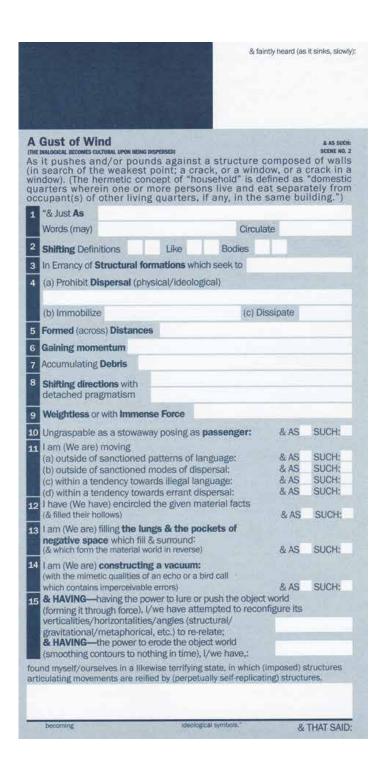
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(GRASPING AT THE LEAVES) THIS TOO COU! "HOWL! WOAH! sweet Wall which I erode!" (enter		
"HOWL! WOAH! sweet Sail which I push!" (forcit	ly forged)	
"HOWLI WOAH! sweet Rock brought to sand!" (c "HOWLI WOAH! sweet Wave which I enlarge!" (b	fismantled in	n time) fore)
"HOWL! WOAH! sweet Ship which I sink!" (cause	al conseque	nces)
"HOWLI WOAH! this Wall is so hard!" (brushed li "HOWLI WOAH! this Lung so soft!" (crushed like	ke a bone) a skin) "WC	AH! WOAH!"
"But Still I/We/They Ask/Wonder		
"What is a Wind?"—(A wind is a force not see	n but felt)	
"What is a Wall?"—(A wall is a structure built	to exclude	other structures)
"What is a Skin?"—(A skin is a surface which e	encases a sy	stem)
"What is a Body?"—(A body is a system comp functioning together in service of a wh		worked elements
"Is a Wall like a Skin for the Skin of a Body?"— containable only until it is not)	(A body is a	fortress that is
With lungs filled like a sail it is the circulating a	ir that conne	acts the inside to
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& faintly heard (as it sinks, slowly): ,2017, introductory text engraved on two copper plates; scene descriptions adhered with adhesive vinyl on windows and walls; monologues on eight offset prints on paper sitting on four panes of safety glass inserted into the grouting of bricks and upheld with rubber and lighting stands; afterword text as adhesive vinyl on windows and walls; illuminated by four stage lights rigged into existing lighting grid; installed in the exhibition & faintly heard (as it sinks, slowly): with The Tenderness of Maggots, Swiss Institute Contemporary Art, New York, USA, 2017. Photos: Daniel Perez.





Redundant as eyelids in absence of light., 2017–2018, Translator's Notes and credits on folded offset print on paper, exhibition checklist and choreographic visitor map; hand painted titles and character names; Manifesto Fragments silkscreened on glass elements removed from vitrine on loan from Siftsibiliothek St. Gallen; Legal Conditions silkscreened on glass elements removed from vitrine on loan from Siftsibiliothek St. Gallen; Archivist's Notes silkscreened on glass elements of a vitrine on loan from Siftsibiliothek St. Gallen, felt panel; song lyrics and musical notation silkscreened on window panels of Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen; song lyrics and musical notation silkscreened on glass panels replicating the dimensions and material properties of Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen; felt panel covering speaker in vitrine on loan from Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen, sound recording; installed in the exhibition SCENOGRAPHY: Redundant as eyelids in absence of light, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland. Photos: Gunnar Meier.







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chetypes — from scavengers ("A Band of Rats"), to institutions ("A Pane of Glass"), to language itself ("A Gust of Wind").

#### III. Grammatical Mood: Low Affect without Irony

What of the attitude of this language, the unspoken grammars that slip through the cracks, such as body language or intonation? One distinctive tendency: though the work of Studio for Propositional Cinema is full of passionate intensity and fabulous creatures—rats in shipwrecks, crushed bones, and flayed bodies make regular appearances - the delivery of the work has a low, administrative affect that draws comparison with historical conceptual art practices, such as graph paper, vinyl letters adhered to a wall or a window, serialization, and so on. In other words, with what might have historically been termed an "aesthetic coolness." As this essay attests, there is an interest in the rule-bound. The language that bursts the seams, or yanks at the hair, or scratches at the walls of these structures, however, is hot with excess. This is significant, if we consider that one of the criticisms of twentieth-century conceptual art movements is that, in creating art that mimicked the look of managerial or knowledge work, artists struggled (that is not to say failed) to produce work free from irony—cool content with cool delivery. As Jeff Wall put it in 1985, such aesthetics displayed art's "powerless mortification in the face of the overwhelming political and economic machinery that separates information from truth." More than thirty years later, we might say mutatis mutandis. However, the language of administration and management has changed toward more insidious and attractive forms of knowledge work, meaning that admin perhaps appears to us in a different temperature in 2019. It is also significant that, to me, the work of Studio for Propositional Cinema appears not ironic but in fact quite earnest, when looked at in a particular light.

### IV. Prepositions: Temporal Drag

In terms of speed, a convention is that of duration: the length of time

/ WENN DIE DUNKELHEITEN KOMMEN: / WIE KANARIEN AUF MINEN: / MIT DEN SCHWINGUNGEN DER FLEDER-MÄUSE:« – in Kupfer graviert neben der Türglocke angebracht waren. Potenzielle Besucher\*innen läuteten also im Hinblick auf eine dringliche Nachricht an der Glocke: Drücken Sie nur, wenn noch Zeit dafür ist, es könnte nicht genug Zeit übrig sein, Sie könnten sich beeilen müssen. Das letzte Mitglied des Kollektivs beginnt nun also die Aktion mit dem Drücken der Türglocke und gibt damit gleichzeitig bekannt, dass noch genug Zeit dafür übrig ist.

eine Vielzahl von Regieanweisungen in silbrigen Folien angebracht und nur durch das schwach im Ausstellungsraum glimmende Winterlicht beleuchtet. Wollten die Besucher\*innen diese lesen, mussten sie in einer durchgehenden Linie durch Zeit und Raum laufen, wobei die natürlichen Lichtreflexionen die Texte entweder lesbar oder unlesbar machten, gleichzeitig wurde man aber auch durch das Auftauchen von Monologen auf Glastischen abgelenkt. Diese Texte wiederum waren Formulare, wie sie der US-amerikanische Zoll benutzt, und die in einem unverkennbaren Duktus fragen, wer man ist und was man in das Land einführt: Pilze, Geld, eine kriminelle Vergangenheit oder ähnliches. Dem lagen Überlegungen zugrunde, wie überhaupt die Grenzen und Gesetze eines während der Ausstellungskonzeption im Jahr 2016 von der grotesken Rückkehr von Faschismus und Nationalismus in den Mainstream der USA und Europas als belagert wahrgenommenen Lebens definiert werden können. Die Zollformulare waren zu Sprechgefäßen adaptiert worden, zu Skripten für eine Reihe halbabstrakter, bedrohter Darsteller\*innen, die wiederum Träger gewisser Archetypen waren und von Plünderern (»Eine Rattenbande«) über Institutionen (»Eine Decke aus Glas«) bis hin zu Sprache selbst reichten (»Ein Windstoß«)

III. Grammatikalische Stimmung: Tiefer Affekt, keine Ironie Wie aber steht es um den Eigensinn dieser Sprache, um Dinge wie

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in relation to a Spectator: a stage, 2017, wood, white paint, 335 cm x 804 cm x 60 cm, Courtesy Tanya Leighton, Berlin; with (from left to right): Paul Chan, Phaedrus Pron, 2010/2017, performance, courtesy Greene Naftali, New York; John Miller, Untitled, 1999/2017, carpet, potato; courtesy Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin; Rita McBride (with Law-rence Weiner), Piggybackback, 1996, silk, vinyl letters, 300 x 1000 cm., courtesy Kornard Fischer, Disseloff Berlin; installed in the exhibition in relation to a Spectator; Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, Germany, 2017. Photos: Raimund

Körpersprache oder Intonation, die unausgesprochen durch die Risse der Grammatik schlüpfen? Eine entscheidende Tendenz: Obwohl die Arbeit des Studio for Propositional Cinema voll leidenschaftlicher Intensität und fabulöser Kreaturen ist - Ratten in Schiffswracks, Knochensplitter oder geschundene Körper haben regelmäßig ihre Auftritte – macht die formale Darstellung hingegen mit ihrem ruhigen, administrativen Duktus, in der Verwendung von Millimeterpapier, von Klebebuchstaben an Wänden oder Fenstern, oder auch mit Serialisierungen Anleihen an den historischen Praxen der Konzeptkunst. Kürzer gesagt, an einer, wie es früher hieß, Ȋsthetischen Coolness«. Von einem anhaltenden Interesse an der Regelgebundenheit zeugt auch dieser Essay. Wenn Sprache jedoch die Fassung verliert, sich an den Haaren reißt oder am Fundament ihrer eigenen Regeln rüttelt, kocht sie vor Emotionen über. Das ist auch von Bedeutung, wenn man bedenkt, dass die Kritik an den Konzeptkunstbewegungen des 20. Jahrhunderts beanstandet, dass Künstler\*innen innerhalb von Werken, welche die Managementästhetik oder kognitive Arbeit imitierten, damit gerungen haben (was nicht heißt: daran scheiterten), ironiefreie Arbeiten zu produzieren - cooler Inhalt, coole Form. Im Jahr 1985 schrieb Jeff Wall, diese Ästhetik reflektiere die »machtlose Kränkung der Kunst angesichts der überwältigenden politischen und ökonomischen Ma-schinerie, die Information von Wahrheit trennt.«¹ Mehr als dreißig Jahre später können wir sagen *mutatis mutandis*. Sowohl die Verwaltungssprachen als auch das Management sind mittlerweile zu heimtückischeren und attraktiveren Formen kognitiver Arbeit übergegangen; Verwaltung zeigt sich im Jahr 2019 einfach mit einem anderen Gesicht. Unter diesem Aspekt finde ich es auch bemerkenswert, dass die Arbeit des Studio for Propositional Cinema nicht ironisch, sondern ziemlich ernst auftritt, wenn man sie in einem bestimmten Licht betrachtet.

IV. Präpositionen: Verzögertes Tempo

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it takes to speak. One way to negotiate the pitfalls of hot content is to slow down and look at things carefully, with a different speed of attention. The exhibition arranged by Studio for Propositional Cinema at Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover, in 2017—called "in relation to a Spectator:"-employed the exhibition space durationally, to in clude contributions by a number of artists, such as Michèle Graf and Selina Grüter, Irena Haiduk, John Miller, Paul Chan, Luzie Meyer, and Rita McBride, among others, based on the premise of changing scenes. A central platform in the exhibition space created a stage-like scenography on which various works with a variety of durations were displayed or performed with actors over multiple days. The duration of the work is challenging to an average audience: a play or a film that takes weeks to see, and can be understood as a reaction to a climate of accelerating speed and consumption. If, as the collective language of the work would suggest, artistic life might only be possible at the margins of space (pigeons on the roof, rats behind the walls), then insisting on an overlong *durée* is one way to claim space outside of a mainstream that is hell-bent on an ever more voracious devouring of images. In addition, the work of Studio for Propositional Cinema extends the work of conceptual artists from the twentieth century who explored an anti-aesthetic as a way of complicat $ing\ aesthetic\ judgements.\ As\ Sianne\ Ngai\ has\ suggested, to\ proclaim$ something "beautiful" is a kind of sheer event operating with the finality of judgement, whereas to name an artwork "interesting" pronounces it somewhat unfinished. Interesting signifies ongoingness, and a conversation that asks not to end.

Lastly, the work of Studio for Propositional Cinema has begun to employ a variety of genres in order to frame the logics and address of the work. Operas, fairytales, screenplays, and plays provide rulebooks or typologies which can be transmogrified. The exhibition "SCENOGRAPHY: Redundant as eyelids in absence of light.,"

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which took place in 2018 in concert with a recital named "RECITAL: Redundant as eyelids in absence of light." at St.-Alban-Kirche, Basel, during the Liste performance program, assumed the operatic structure of the libretto to create a post-apocalyptic work. The lyrics, which were the songs of lens grinders and ragpickers, speak of a world in which forms of language, communication, and expression have been destroyed and outlawed, such that the singers must go about their work with souls turned inward. As a further expression of this loss, the lyrics were translated from English into Greek, and further again into an endangered Greek whistling language, which was then transcribed to musical notation and played on a church organ. The inaccessibility of the language itself—its intonations hard to parse - created a sense of loss within an environment of religious beauty, which a secular spectator can only inhabit poorly, by half-measures. As mournful notes pealed around the space, rooted in linguistic logic, the church came into focus as a glorious empty house seen from the perspective of a terrible future. In essence, here was an abstract image of our artist, and of ourselves as we inhabit the realm of art. We have a beautiful house, but it seems that the only option is to live in it like pigeons. And so it is.

Jeff Wall, quoted in Thomas Crow, Modern Art in the Common Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 216.

Studio for Propositional Cinema, inaugurated in Düsseldorf (DE) in 2013 in the context of the photography class of Christopher Williams at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, often utilizes the spatial and durational natures of the exhibition format to unfold and articulate narratives and hypotheses in the specific absence of prescribed images. Such exhibitions include Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (DE, forthcoming), Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples (IT, 2019), Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen (CH, 2018), Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover (DE, 2017), Swiss Institute, New York (US, 2017), and Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2016), and durational curatorial projects at Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover (2017), Kunsthaus Bregenz (AT, 2016), and mumok, Vienna (AT, 2015).

Laura McLean-Ferris is a writer and curator at Swiss Institute, New York (US), where she has curated exhibitions and projects by Olga Balema, Nancy Lupo, Cally Spooner, Studio for Propositional Cinema, Aria Dean, and Irena Haiduk among others. She is a regular contributor to Artforum (US), ArtReview (US), Art-Agenda (US), Even (US), frieze (GB), Mousse (TT), and Flash Art International (US). She was a recipient of the 2015 Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, and a book of her short-form writing The Lacustrine was published in 2016.

Ein Aspekt von Geschwindigkeit ist die Dauer: wie lange man benötigt, um etwas zu sagen. Das Drosseln der Geschwindigkeit, die aufmerksame Betrachtung der Dinge in einem anderen Tempo ist demnach eine Möglichkeit im Umgang mit den Tücken brennender Themen. Während der Ausstellung »in relation to a Spectator:« (in Bezug auf eine\*n Betrachter\*in) in der Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover (2017), nutzte das Studio for Propositional Cinema den Ausstellungsraum zeitbezogen, um unter dem Aspekt des Szenenwechsels Beiträge anderer Künstler\*innen miteinzubeziehen, etwa von Michèle Graf und Selina Grüter, Irena Haiduk, John Miller, Paul Chan, Luzie Meyer und Rita McBride. Mit einer zentral im Ausstellungsraum platzierten Plattform wurde ein bühnenähnliches Szenario geschaffen, um die verschiedenen Arbeiten unterschiedlich lange zu zeigen oder über mehrere Tage hinweg mit Schauspieler\*innen aufzuführen. Die Dauer einer Arbeit kann mitunter eine Herausforderung für das durchschnittliche Publikum darstellen; wenn ein Stück oder ein Film die Dauer einer Woche aufweist, kann das durchaus als Reaktion auf ein allgemeines Klima der Beschleunigung und des akzelerierten Konsums gelesen werden. Wenn also, wie es die kollektive Sprache der Arbeit nahelegt, künstlerisches Leben ausschließlich an den Rändern möglich wäre (Tauben unter dem Dach, Ratten hinter den Wänden), dann ist das Insistieren auf eine überlange durée ein gangbarer Weg, um einen Raum außerhalb des rasenden, nach Bildern gierenden Mainstreams zu behaupten. Insofern schreibt die Arbeit des Studio for Propositional Cinema das Schaffen jener Konzeptkünstler\*innen fort, die zur Infragestellung ästhetischer Urteile auf eine Strategie der Anti-Ästhetik setzten. Sianne Ngai hat angemerkt, dass der Bewertung, etwas sei »schön«, nicht nur das Ereignishafte, sondern auch der finalisierende Charakter des Urteils anhafte, wohingegen der Begriff »interessant« die künstlerische Arbeit gewissermaßen als unfertig erkläre. Interessant bedeutet also, eine verzögerte Konversation zu führen, im Gange zu sein.

#### V. Das Idiomatische

Das Studio for Propositional Cinema setzt in seinen Arbeiten eine zunehmende Bandbreite an Genres ein, um Zusammenhänge und Themen zu rahmen. Opern, Märchen, Drehbücher und Theaterstücke sind Konventionen oder Typologien, die arrangiert überraschende Formen annehmen können. Die Ausstellung »SCENO-GRAPHY: Redundant as eyelids in absence of light.« war während des Performance-Programms der Liste Basel 2018 mit der Aufführung des Rezitals »RECITAL: Redundant as eyelids in absence of light.« in der St.-Alban-Kirche abgestimmt; die Operettenstruktur des Librettos wurde für die Entwicklung eines post-apokalyptischen Werks eingesetzt. Die Lieder von Linsenschleifern und Lumpensammlern erzählen von einer Welt, in der jegliche Sprach-, Kommunikations- und Ausdrucksform zerstört und verboten wurden, und in der die Sänger\*innen ihrer Arbeit mit nach innen gekehrten Seelen nachgehen müssen. Um dem Verlust noch mehr Gewicht zu verleihen, waren die Liedtexte aus dem Englischen ins Griechische und weiter in eine vom Aussterben bedrohte griechische Pfeifsprache übersetzt worden, die wiederum in musikalische Noten transkribiert auf einer Kirchenorgel gespielt wurde. Die Unzugänglichkeit der Sprache - ihre schwer fassbare Intonation - evozierte inmitten eines für säkulare Besucher\*innen nur bedingt zugänglichen Umfeldes religiöser Schönheit ein Verlustgefühl. Als die schwermütigen, der sprachlichen Logik verhangenen Noten den Raum füllten, rückte im Angesicht einer schrecklichen Zukunft die Kirche als glorreiches leeres Haus in den Mittelpunkt. Im Wesentlichen gab das ein abstraktes Bild von unseren Künstler\*innen und uns im Reich der Künste ab. Wir haben ein wunderschönes Haus, aber anscheinend kann man darin nur als Tauben leben. Und so ist es auch.

1 Jeff Wall zit. nach Thomas Crow, » Ungeschriebene Geschichten der Konzeptkunst«, in: Art After Conceptual Art, Alexander Alberro und Sabeth Buchmann (Hg.), Kat. Generali Foundation, Wien; Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König 2006,

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