

G4PB PRESENTATION - VIEW INTEGRAL QUICKTIME VIDEO 36 MIN

BY ONDREJ BRODY & KRISTOFER PAETAU - BERN, SWITZERLAND, 2006



Welcome to this short presentation, I'm Ondrej and ...

Kristofer ... And it might be quite long.

Maybe long maybe short, we'll see... We would like to present our new publication that we just finished a few weeks ago, a compilation of our mutual collaborations since two years. So it's selected - WANTED - works that we compiled in this small publication. We can start by introducing some of the works that are in this publication. If you want to speak maybe about the first two works that we are showing also in this exhibition? We can show the first one ...

But let's speak about it first ... It was a group exhibition in Belgium in the Flemish Ardennes - outdoors the title was "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe", this Picnic of Edouard Manet. We decided to react on this proposal in a very literal way. So we made our own Déjeuner sur l'Herbe - with Czech porn actors in Prague. And we insisted that they should speak French - that was one main thing in this work. So the actors are actually repeating phonetically the French without understanding. And it became so important for them that they had big difficulties in performing the sexual part. So it's more a video about language than a pornographic movie.

And there are some absurd moments because it was shot in a blue screen and we were both the cameramen and the directors of the whole setup. We were dressed in blue, complete blue suits, so we're sort of ghosts on the set, shooting the whole setup and instructing the actors with the french phrases. But we can have a look:



The camen... cag... cagam... cam... mam... bert

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As you can see it's conceived as a trailer for a possible release quite soon ... Maybe we can go straight to the next works that are somehow more related... This was also a performance in Prague, in the Czech national TV. It's dealing more with criticism of the art system, which is a very important field that we are concentrating on in our work. I'll just play the video...

I wouldn't agree that it's criticizing the art system explicitly; I think this work particularly is more maybe a critique to the media, how media wishes to transmit the image of artists or contemporary art ... Especially this TV format, which is ...

Well, that's very nice but I think it's playing with very strong local elements of a certain local scene. There are real curators involved in this really absurd situation - Art theorists and artists from a local scene and somehow it's putting them in a very absurd and almost unsupportable or ridiculous situation for people of their status. So for me it's very much a critique than anything else. But sure it's within the framework of TV media so it has also this other plane (layer).

What I like is that it's putting the jury of this TV contest more into the foreground than the artist in a way, because the jury doesn't know how to react ...

But I will play it because we're I think talking too much:



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It would be very nice if you have some comments that are coming through your minds, we would like to conceive this presentation as a possibility for exchange - for more direct exchange. So if you have anything going on in your head it would be better to say it straight away when you see the things than at the end. We don't believe in discussions at the end because nobody says anything anyway afterwards ...

There is one question: how do you position yourselves as anti-art persons within this system? I mean you make yourself very unpopular I guess ... and yet not - so what is your position?

We like to speculate that we are on the periphery of the mainstream ... That would be the ideal position - because somehow we are very much interested in the art system, the contemporary art system ... It's maybe represented in other works like the Art Forum Accident more precisely but yet we like this more teasing and direct reaction to a certain phenomenon that we find problematic within the art system. It's important to be part of something in order to be able to criticize it. If you're totally outside then nobody takes you seriously.

I think it's also difficult for people outside the system to read and to understand the work, so it's very much reflecting the closed ...

Yes and no: of course the contemporary art system is very specific and very limited also - that's something I don't like too much. So for example some of the videos we put them on You Tube, on the internet on this enormous database for home-made videos - and our videos are certainly not the most popular but nevertheless maybe three thousand people watch them and people who are mostly not specialists of contemporary art. And they still appreciate some - well we have three videos on You Tube for the moment and these three videos are quite ...

Yeah, maybe we show the Licking Ass first and then the Art Forum?

No, the Art Forum first ...

Maybe you just say something to the context ... ?

The only thing, which is important to know now, is that this is at the opening of the Art Forum art fair in Berlin 2005 and it's filmed with a spy camera, so nobody could notice that it was filmed:



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So this for example is quite popular on You Tube ... And concerning your remark about being unpopular in the art world it's true that the gallerist wasn't happy afterwards when it came out that it wasn't an accident but a planned thing. And the Art Forum for example refused to invite me for a talk this year. I was invited by some other people but they saw my name so they refused to invite me. But on the other hand we had 15.000 people watching it on the internet and lots of people from the art world also, so it is kind of dividing people into those who don't accept it or find it ridiculous or I don't know ... and those who sympathize with this kind of attitude. So I think it's polarizing ...

But it's good that you couldn't go to the Art Forum talk after all, you vomited there. You don't like the fairs, why would you be going to a fair like that to give a talk if you're so against art fairs in general?

I always like to talk in public spaces like this - this is one of the rare times that I'm sitting on the other side, usually I'm always in the public and I always like to ask questions or to speak. So I think it's important - even in a context that I dislike or that I cannot really identify with - to bring in my voice. If I have the possibility I will always do it.

For me it's just fun, there's no danger in it. Why didn't you vomit on a picture?



It would have been too expensive.

Maybe it's just good for you; in order to get all the fees ... You know it's a little bit just a joke. If you are Neo-Dadaists there must be more danger, it's just fun like a hidden camera.

When the action took place it wasn't funny. Because nobody would understand that this is planned so it was just somebody who got sick and mostly people preferred to go around - which is normal maybe - and yeah, it is funny - but it is also not so funny to vomit. I don't like to vomit.

He has stomach problems ...

But it's true, maybe that's the "Neo"-Dadaism that makes it not so dangerous. The Neo is always a bit boring ...

Yeah but even though you vomited in a certain booth it wasn't personal, it was more like a universal statement against a certain phenomenon in the gallery system speculation with a certain type of art - But anyway, we can show another maybe more specific form of protest that took place in 2004 in the Czech National Gallery. But I don't even consider it too much - although I'm showing it as part of this compilation - as an artwork. It was more a political statement against a certain person; more specifically against the director Milan Knížak who is still the director and who is making a very anti ... anti-possible or very bad job for Czech art in general. He is just bringing Czech art in isolation so we thought that it would be good to do something against it as a core of artists and we organized a series of attacks against this institution.

And maybe one thing, which is also good to say: he is the director of this National Gallery and he is buying his own artworks ...

Oh yeah there's a very famous newspaper article with pictures of himself buying for horrendous sums of money his own works. So (there are) two signatures, as a director and as an artist ... He is doing all kinds of crazy stuff that wouldn't be possible in other institutions like in maybe Switzerland. Or I don't know, maybe it would be possible ... But this is a very short video:



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It's called a Shit-In?

I like this one.

Thank you.

It was clear you see.

Yeah, it was very difficult to organize ... It was a more specific example of some sort of pseudo activism that we are doing. Unfortunately Kristofer couldn't take part in this ... You missed the date.

I was constipated.

Is it not your intention to be something like an artist Jack Ass show?

Yeah I think it's a big problem actually because ...

Most of the things were quite disgusting so far ... Yes ...

But not the first one ... The Déjeuner sur l'Herbe. Did you ever see the porno photos of this period? Basic porno photos, they are really dreams of film ... ()

I think Manet now days would be shooting porn ... I'm quite sure about that.

No, he would find something else, but it doesn't (matter).

But this Jack Ass question is interesting: I mean I wouldn't like to identify myself too much to Jack Ass - although I would like to enjoy the popularity of Jack Ass. But I think with our actions ... or I hope - that people are also able to see over (through) the first surface, which might be very direct and very frontal - or shocking maybe for some people.

- Confronting



Yeah, it's very confronting, but I think that's the mechanism in most of our works - which are more actions - that there is a confronting moment that either people don't accept to watch more or think about it more - and if they do, they hopefully can go one part further and put it into a context of either ethical or political ... statement. - Which in this case was something dealing with the politics and economics of the National Gallery.

Maybe the next work we want to present - you already saw a small part of it - it's a fire work ... That was a more universal topic again. It was in a gallery in Prague. As you might now in Prague there's a big history of people setting themselves on fire, even nowadays every year a couple of people are setting themselves on fire. Since the Russian invasion there's a history of that. And it's very interesting to follow the transition of the reasons why people are doing it; because it's a very public manifestation that something is wrong with the society. Or a protest against something - it's a public protest ... So I decided to do this protest without any reason to set myself on fire and the only purpose was that I would come out of this without any bodily harm or any ... - Injury ... It's a very short video.

But it's ...

What, you wanted to say something?

Yeah, actually it didn't work out the way he wanted. He spent two months in the hospital after this:



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Yeah, it's a very short video, just an excerpt. But anyway, it was very bad luck because of course I don't want to hurt myself - like some artists in the seventies or sixties - I had people from the movies, stunts, supervising the whole action but this is just very hard to predict. It's just a matter of a few seconds and you get burned to a big degree so it was just bad luck ... But somehow it's part of the project. Even though it wasn't planned before it turned out to be a quite bad experience but maybe that's the only interesting thing about it ...

So maybe we should ...

Yeah, we can just switch to a different sort of criticism ... If you want to speak about this work?

We wanted to do an art school for children in Berlin. Two years ago or ... in the summer, 2004 or 5 ... Last year in the summer. And together with a Russian friend (Avdey Ter-Oganian) who already has been doing art schools on his own: a private contemporary art school for his children and for (their) friends since the nineties. And (with) another friend (Ivars Gravleis) we decided to do an improvised contemporary art school in Berlin and this video is the second part. We just went to a playground and attracted the children to our studio nearby.

With candies ...

With candies and Coca Cola. And we did an experiment with them in the studio:



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So this is of course not a very nice way to teach children ...

Political Art.

But as you saw actually the children themselves had the idea how to punish this bad man, without knowing really who he is and at the end they are convinced that he merited it. So it was a bit frightening but also fascinating to see how easily it's possible to manipulate them and how a group can get out of control. For me of course it's also a kind of metaphor of how George Bush was manipulating the media and the whole world - pretending that there are arms that never were found ... in order to start the war.

But he was still a bad dictator Saddam, he merited it - so it's OK ...

I don't know.

I have to make a remark. I think ... you are possibly (playing) a game ... of course - I'm sure of this.

Yeah, what kind of game ... ?

Yes, just like telling us little stories. So with this you fill up time and give a good reason to take afterwards some beers. So you're kind of integrating yourselves to this whole art life now days and (to the) context you get.

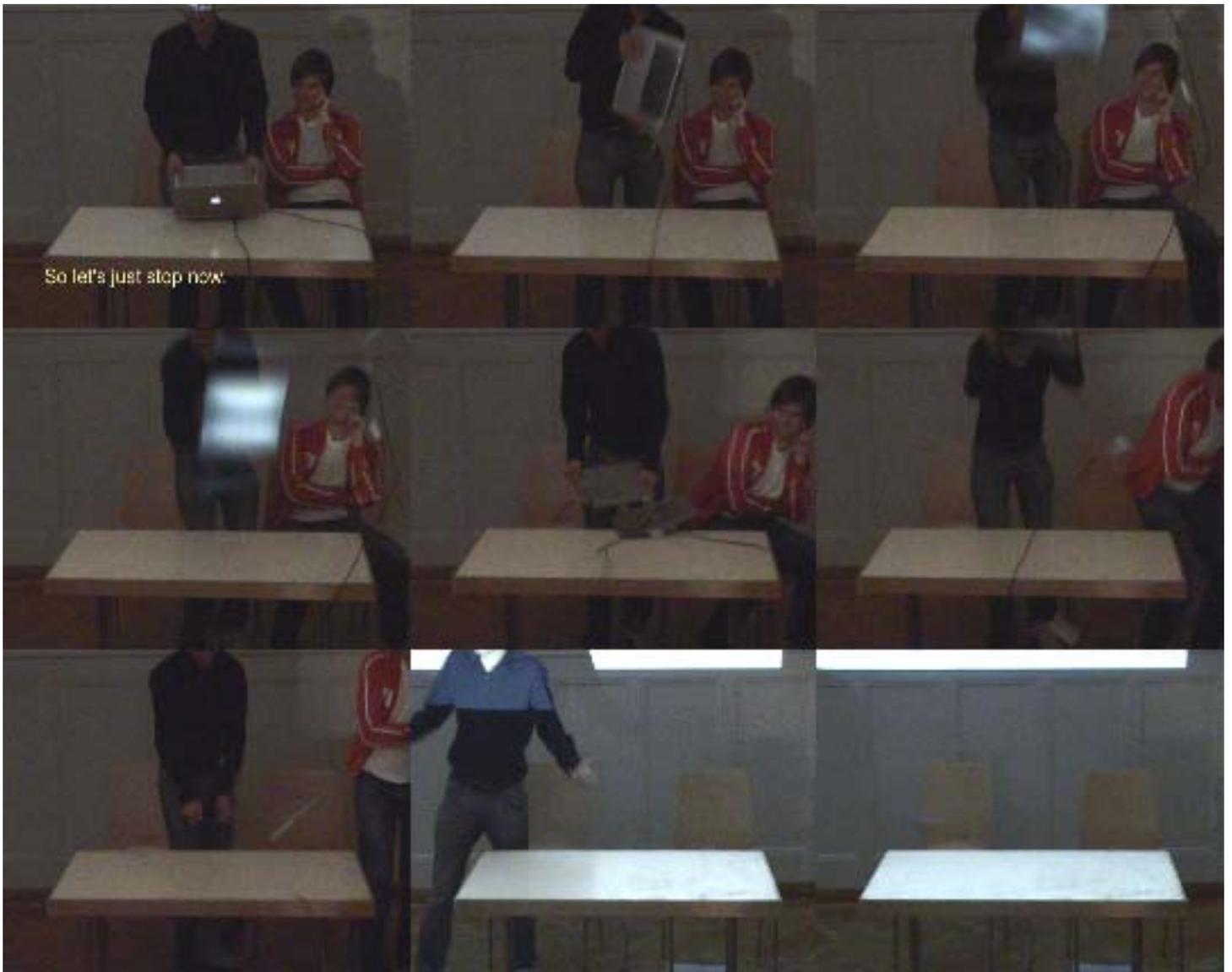
It's true.

Yes.

You think it's too boring or ... not enough challenging?

No, it is not meant in a way to criticize you - I'm just trying to analyze your intentions - your possible intentions ...

Yeah, ... so maybe we should stop now then because it's true in a way - and we don't want to be too much integrated, huh? So let's just stop now:



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Public presentation / performance at the opening of the exhibition "Manet, Richter and G4PB in Memoriam", by Ondrej Brody & Kristofer Paetau at PROGR in Bern, Switzerland 2006.

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