curated by Henk Slager
dec 10 2008 to jan 31 2009
with projects by
Ricardo Basbaum
Jan Kaila
Irene Kopelman
Mats Leiderstam
Ronan McCrea
Sarah Pierce
Morten Torgersen

public symposium
dec 12, 10am to 5pm
at Cooper Union, Wollman Auditorium
concerning the significance of artistic research for art education
That undefined non-paradigmatic discipline as nameless reflexive zones. connections, flexible constructions, multiplicities, and new reflexive zones.

That undefined non-paradigmatic discipline as nameless science is indeed the curatorial departing point in the exhibition Nameless Science. All seven presented artistic research projects deal with an artistic reinterpretation of representation(al) models, existing disciplines, comprehension strategies, and academic classification systems. Consequently, these research projects do not only produce fluent forms of interconnectivity and methodology accompanied by different forms of knowledge production, they also lead to novel artistic strategies and intensities of perception.

In his project Photographing the Barents Region (2008), Morten Torgersrud (Bergen School of Art) deconstructs a hierarchic geography from the perspective of the nationstate and a territorializing form of atlas-thinking by focusing on the complexity of a political, cultural, and economic inter-statal domain: the Barents region determined by the spheres of influence of both Norway and Russia. Torgersrud’s "study installation" consists of a creative mapping a series of significant locations—not from a centric perspective or a coherent narrative, but from a passion for both the material history of the landscape and the politics of space. The installation is accompanied by a series of slide projections and textual reflections dealing with how the medium of photography contributes ideologically to the historical rise of the uniformizing concept of landscape.

Researchers Matts Leiderstam (Malmö School of Art) and Jan Kaila (Helsinki School of Art) engage in related research questions. In his project See and Seen (2006), Matts Leiderstam investigates the conventions for the ideal landscape developed as techniques of perception in 18th-century painting (e.g. Claude Lorrain). A research trajectory consisting of historical artistic reports and contexts and a production of various artistic strategies (copying, tourism) leads to the issue and implications of current spectatorship and how to address that subject in artistic work.

The project Photographicity (2008) by Jan Kaila focuses on the dominance of photographic paradigm in current visual communication. Such photographic perception seems to manifest itself in an almost intermedial way as an artistic tenet and attitude. The use of different media aims to increase participation, perception, and other meanings similar to the working of photographic pictures. In an installation consisting of photographic images mediated by video and text, Kaila explores whether the photographic process of communication might be related to a polar intertwining of a presentative, aesthetic dimension ("the here and now"), and the photographic, representative, and informational dimension ("the there and then").

Also Ronan McCrea (University of Ulster) examines the photographic process of communication. In his School Series (2008) project, McCrea constructs in a schoolyard suggesting an undefined game. Photographs appear to demonstrate that the game is spontaneous played. However, the photographs also force us to pose the ontological question whether playing a game—as an anthropologically ambiguous and in fact undefined phenomenon—could indeed be captured in a decisive moment. For example, a moment where the child finds out that the rules it developed for the game are similar to the rules of daily life; a life lived outside the safe environment of the school.

In Ricardo Basbaum’s (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro) project NBP (New Bases for Photography), a hermeneutic link is created between game and artistic experience. The installation is a multifunctional metal structure, a set of instructions for the participants, video registrations of the game, and an installation with several layers depicting both the original project and the transformations submitted throughout history. That creates a series of rhythmic propositions, an awareness of potential forms of social relations, and ultimately a topology of a dynamic concept of identity surpassing the interpretative framework of social science.

Do natural sciences allow an artistic intervention and reverification of visual representation? That question is the starting point for Irene Kopelman’s (MaHKU, Utrecht) research project. Also keynote statements by Sarat Maharaj (Malmö School of Art), Granet Kester (University of California) and George Smith (IDSVA, Portland). The symposium invokes a presentation of the Nameless Science research projects by the artists, followed by a discussion with critical referents from EARN (European Artistic Research Network) members Mick Wilson (Dublin GradCAM), Gertrud Sandqvist (Malmö School of Art), Felicita Than (Vienna School of Art), Tanja Zinguer (Cooper Union School of Architecture), and John Rajchman (Cambridge University). Also keynote statements by Sarat Maharaj (Malmö School of Art), Grant Kester (University of California) and George Smith (IDSVA, Portland).

REFERENCES


3. C. F. Giorgio Agamben’s Potentialities (1999). Here Aby Warburg’s research is sketched as "unnamed discipline": a mode of being fixed from a formalizing, academic disciplining.