

# Kunst & Verbrechen: Art without Crime vom 31.10. – 2.11.03 im Hebbel am Ufer



## Kunst und Verbrechen: Art without Crime

### Are artists criminals? Can an art piece be a crime? Who negotiates the freedom of art?

For three days the Hebbel am Ufer will become an investigative zone in which the laws of art, the business side of the art world and the law itself will all be under examination. Although the freedom of art is protected by law, it does not lie outside its jurisdiction. In Germany, the freedom of art ends where intellectual property rights begin or when the personal rights of others are violated.

In Russia, a new secular and religious censorship is appearing, which claims the right to classify art works as pornographic or blasphemous and to take them to court for this. But what happens when art is taken to court? Does the judge become an art critic and the art critic a defence counsel or prosecutor? By what means can art be defended and justice stage-managed? Which

and whose laws apply? According to Bataille, the best artists must cross boundaries - which would mean that art is clearly a crime and thus burdened by guilt. The question of the legitimisation of this crossing of boundaries and that of effect and artistic sovereignty is therefore always subject to concurring systems of law.

In this already tense relationship, the ability of arts to cross borders and have an effect is also under discussion.

In Plato's *Laws*, it is put forward that as most people are not descended from gods, people have to take responsibility for their own justice and create laws for themselves. Cornelia Vismann writes: "In the absence of the gods, tragedies become trials." Since the era of Plato, law has become established as the authority which decides truth - the courtroom has thus replaced theatre. "From Greek tragedy to modern philosophy, a genuine science of the courtroom has emerged and

developed." affirms Deleuze.

From this point onwards, the tribunals formed by Greek tragedy follows a path leading to the opening of legal proceedings as mentioned by Kant, finally reaching the sort of proceedings evident in Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Judgement*, where such trials are stopped by their own poetic laws.

Kunst und Verbrechen: Art without Crime takes place over three days in the three theatres of the Hebbel am Ufer.

With the audience taking on the roles of judge, victim and detective, this trial on art is provided with a new setting: the theatre. In the run-up to the festival, **Rimini Protokoll** will invite to a counter visit at the scene of judgement- the Criminal Court Moabit, **Julia Kissina** will lock up art critics in detention cells and **Michael Zinganel** will lead a workshop on the securing of evidence.

Visits to the scene of the crime by members of a court have become rare. Rimini Protokoll invites members of the public to make a 'counter visit' to the scene of judgement - a court. Moabit, Europe's biggest criminal court, shall be examined closely. The commission will consist of the theatre audience, who will then be expected to act as experts. The guests will be welcomed in the conference room of the prison, given an introduction to Berlin's judicial process by experts on criminal justice and then be led to the court proceedings. With the 2600 employees of the court present, the building and the trials taking place in it will be scrutinized for representative criteria. There will be time to discuss and analyse what has been uncovered, both between and after the individual cases - soup will also be served.

After this initial visit, the way in which a lawsuit is carried out will be discussed by a panel of experts: How are the different roles in the judicial process allocated? How is justice itself represented? On Saturday afternoon, a lawyer, a public prosecutor, a juror, a judge, a witness, a police constable, a court journalist and others will get together to answer these and other questions. Each member of the panel will explain their part in the judicial process and initiate a discussion about this part. The salon will then debate and make associations between the rituals of justice.

The Russian artist **Julia Kissina** will also visit a place of criminal prosecution. For two years she has been trying to get a cell for artists and their fictive crimes at her disposal. Artists, critics and curators as well as art scientists can take themselves into custody in order to do

penance for their work in peace. During the Art and Crime Festival the artist will have the chance to realise this project in cooperation with the Hebbel am Ufer.

Starting on October 29<sup>th</sup> **Michael Zinganel** will give an introduction to the securing of evidence and (re-) construction of a fictional criminal case using various (multi-) media techniques of securing evidence, documentation and observation. Appointments (which should then be kept to) can be made under (030) 25900472 or [kvb@hebbel-am-ufer.de](mailto:kvb@hebbel-am-ufer.de). In 'High Crime', Michael Zinganel will present (on the set of the German TV show „Aktenzeichen XY ungelöst") short features by various 'experts', which should help to prove Karl Marx' thesis about the productive force of crime.



(Carlos Amorales „Amorales vs. Amorales“)

The Friday night will be opened with a funeral. **Vadim Zakharov** will give a mass for the sandcake *Madeleine*, which was shot on his order. The climax of the mass will be the requiem composed by **Ivan Skolov** and sung by **Natalia Pschenitschikowa**.

**Hans Werner Kroesinger** produces scenic miniatures which deal with the freedom to accuse and to judge. "Cases" takes a look at the impact of the international war on terrorism after September 11 on the freedom of press in Russia.

**Christoph Schlingensief** will hold a speech on his own concerns. With his "redemption benediction" he will bless not only the new theatre but he will also cleanse art from its compulsion to infringe limits.

After this, the cult band **Leningrad** will perform. The band was founded in St. Petersburg by Sergey Shnurov ("Shnur") in 1997. In 2000 the wider public took notice of this underground band, which performs with at least 10 musicians on stage in a wild mix of ska, punk and balkan beats. Their lyrics,

inspired by Shnurs favoured writer Vladimir Sorokin, are often described as dirty, vulgar and provoking. Leningrad are stars in Russia but their concerts have been banned or cancelled at the last minute on many occasions.

**Saturday Night in HAU 1** takes place under the banner of the transference of crime into the space of art. The performance "Car Theft" of the South African artist **Robin Rhode** is an astonishing translation of a criminal act to the space of art.

In contrast to the first part of the evening, which concentrates on the analogies of freedom of speech, press and art, the second part of the evening has "Art without Crime" as its motto and reflects the neutralising rules of art business itself. The "freedom of art" and its autonomy are paid for with its ineffectiveness: the space assigned to it is a symbolic zone, suspended outside any real action. In this zone, what is the criminal potential of artists infringing the limits?

**Darius James** and **Minerva Cuevas** will ask questions about the potential of religious and political rituals. Darius James will reconstruct a magical ritual from an expressionist film from the 20s which was destroyed by the Nazis, examining the implicit mix of Western art traditions with African practices.

The Mexican artist Minerva Cuevas (Mejor Vida Cooperation) will take up this theme: with the backdrop of modern "magical services" in Mexico, Minerva Cuevas will conduct a political voodoo-ritual: "Houston, we have a Problem". **Pavel Pepperstejn**'s performance "Hypnosis" and lecture will work with the power of suggestion.

And **Carlos Amoraes**, bearing in mind the wrestling culture of his home country Mexico, will fight against himself in his typical costume.

On all three days **Elena Kovylna** will offer her services as virtual contract killer, the group **Radek** will set up an illegal library and **Tanja Dabo** will clean different art spaces.



(Vladimir Kustov "Annäherung")

The performance artist **Vladimir Kustov** and the forensic scientist **Victor Puncenko** from St. Petersburg will analyse a murder side by side each using their own methods: Kustov by artistic means, Puncenko with the instruments of forensic medicine.



(Avdej Ter-Oganjan „Pop-Art“)

**Miran Mohar**, **Avdej Ter-Oganjan** und **Anatolij Osmolovskij** will hold lecture-performances about trials and public campaigns against their art works and performances.

Miran Mohar will speak about the famous "poster trial" of the Republic of Yugoslavia against his group IRWIN, Anatolij Osmolovskij remembers of the political actions of the group "Against all parties" and of the effect of artistic and political means in Russia during the 90s.

Avdej Ter-Oganjan presents the extensive material (including numerous reports written by art critics and art academics) which were written during his trial. He was accused of having violating icons during a performance in 1998 and was charged using a new paragraph which had not existed under Soviet law for seventy years: "*fanning the flames of religious hatred*". Ironically, Ter-Oganjan had been head of a so called *School of Contemporary Art*, in which the students did not learn how to draw at the academies like in the past but learned how to punish art. There were real training programs within art projects practising forms of interrogation and charge during performances.

The latest example of a trial against a Russian artist was the pornography charge against **Vladimir Sorokin**. Sorokin refused to make a statement in court and turned the tables suing the organisation which accused him ("The United Ones") for violating his copyright,

claiming 160.000 Euro compensation. On Sunday evening, Sorokin will read from the novel in question, "The Sky-Blue Ham" and in a dialogue with **Bernhard Schütz** bear witness to his own censorship.

On Saturday and Sunday afternoon in HAU 2 there will be lectures discussing the correlation between court and theatre, between juridical and aesthetic practises: **Cornelia Vismann** opens the lecture program with "Tragedy, Celebration, Trial" examining this correlation.

**Michail Ryklin** will speak about the public trial against the exposition "Attention, Religion!" in Moscow.

**Albrecht Koschorke** will discuss *Signs of the Gods and Founding Crimes*. His thesis is that in many tales of the founding of cultures state, institutions and law are paradoxically established by an initial crime. "Crime precedes law, it is the precondition for its existence."

**Kembrew McLeod**, Assistant Professor for Communication Studies at the University of Iowa and author of the book 'Owning Culture. Authorship, Ownership, and Intellectual Property' will explain how he trademarked the phrase "Freedom of Expression" with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. In 2003 he gained notoriety when he sent a telecommunication giant a cease and desist letter for using 'his' phrase without his permission.

In addition, **Katja Degot** will talk about art criticism as a court, **Igor Tchoubarov** about art and terror and **Bojana Pejic** about art and war.



(Kembrew McLeod „Freedom of Expression“)

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