

"WITHOUT YOU I'M NOTHING..."

Daniel Bozhkov, Danica Phelps, Julieta Aranda & Anton Vidokle

3 public projects organized by Regine Basha.

A satellite project to the Istanbul Biennial for Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center. Istiklal Caddesi 276, Beyoglu. Istanbul. Tel: + 90 212 293 2361.

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Conversation with the artists, October 18, 7pm at Platform. Documentation, video and ephemera as well as information on project locations will be available at Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center until mid November, 2003.

"Without You I'm Nothing..." is the name of a performance by a stand-up comedian and humorist, Sandra Bernhard, in which she renders vulnerable her role as a satirically masochistic public performer. The phrase is also reminiscent of the statement once made by artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "without the public my work is nothing..." These two isolated iterations, separate, yet very much part of the same era, contributed to the larger undercurrent, beginning in the 70s and peaking in the 90s when the artist/performer began to conspicuously implicate the viewer/audience as a 'participant' - not only towards the completion of the piece, but towards a more intimate, vicarious relationship with the artist.

Within a daily context, the acts of selling, buying and bartering are transactions in which two parties must enter a complicit bond based on faith, presumed trust and mutual benefit. At the core of this exchange lies a complex dynamic that is bound to desire and ethics - that ultimately puts to test one's own personal value system. "Without You I'm Nothing" puts forward a consideration of the delicate interdependencies and transferences of meaning, sentimentality and gratification that occurs within the very moment of a commercial transaction.

The hegemonic power of this late-capitalist global economy blurs our ability to recognize an operative system of ethics in consumerist culture. This goes for the international art market as well as any other form of mercantile economy. In Istanbul, the mercantile economy is a pervasive cultural and civic enterprise teeming with ancient markets connecting thousands of vendors selling culturally specific goods and food, side by side with modern shops and storefronts catering to more 'European' tastes, as well as renegade street merchants selling pirated items. Given the visible diversity of cultures and classes and the sophisticated tourist industry, it is obvious and perhaps even romantic, that the notion of 'cultural exchange' was understood here first as an implicit part of merchant economy and ultimately of 'civilization' itself. Trade (and not art) was and still is the most effective

network through which differing cultures might understand each other's codes and social dimensions.

Considering this context, the three artists have been invited to situate work amidst the street culture of trade and negotiate their 'goods' within immediate consumer transactions. Daniel Bozhkov, Danica Phelps, Anton Vidokle & Julieta Aranda will be in Istanbul during the month of October to realize and produce work in a public space within a public commercial arena. These projects will be in progress continuously and on view from October 18th until the end of the Biennial. Platform will display a map of their locations, video documentation of the development of the projects, related ephemera and a text by Regine Basha.

Daniel Bozhkov

New York-based, Bulgarian artist Daniel Bozhkov has developed several projects for public 'consumption', from producing and packaging Bulgarian Yoghurt with insertions of his own DNA, to creating a mobile kiosk for tourist information on failed 15th century alchemists in Prague. For *Without You I'm Nothing...* Bozhkov engaged his mother to recall Ottoman words that have remained active in Bulgarian yet some have become obsolete in modern Turkish. These antiquated words will be made edible as shaped bread, using the recipe and changing the form of 'simit' a popular sesame-covered bread that is sold on the streets of Istanbul. Through the bread pictograms, Bozhkov proposes a project of preservation through the baking of the bread and the inevitability of metamorphosis, through consumption, digestion and appropriation - a condition that all old cultures grappling with modernity are obliged to negotiate.

Danica Phelps

Danica Phelps' work often deals with creative value in relation to monetary value. Since 1996 she has been tracking all of her income and expenses. In this system, each drawing is a documentation of a financial transaction, and each dollar is represented by a single stripe of watercolor: green for income, red for expense and grey for credit. Her numerous journalistic drawings have generally documented her daily routines in any given place, such as walking or buying items. In Istanbul, Danica Phelps will document her daily purchases and attempt to sell or barter the resulting drawings both in the covered markets and with other Turkish artists. A collection of '2nd generation' drawings (tracings of the originals) will accumulate on the walls of Platform.

Julieta Aranda & Anton Vidokle

Anton Vidokle and Julieta Aranda will proliferate found images of 'utopic promise' through the publication of a single-issue newspaper called *Popular Geometries*. Features will include culled images and news clippings of abstract public sculptures around the world and the demonstrable public affect surrounding them, as well as dated travel advertisements, depicting idyllic images of travel spots without specific references as to their location. Co-published by *Revolver Archiv fur aktuelle Kunst* in Frankfurt, there will be a Turkish edition for Istanbul and an international edition in English. Priced at

normal newspaper rates, the newspapers will be distributed in a public commercial arena in Beyoğlu and available at Platform.

Regine Basha

Currently based in Austin, Texas, Regine Basha worked as an independent curator in New York since 1996. Her writing on art has appeared in *art/text*, *Performance Art Journal*, *aRude* and *Modern Painters*. She is Adjunct Curator to Arthouse and an associate to Fluent Collaborative, a contemporary art initiative based in Austin. Upcoming exhibitions include a sound exhibition, *Treble*, at the Sculpture Center in May 2004, as well as the first US survey exhibition of the work of Teresa Hubbard & Alexander Birchler for Arthouse in 2005.