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Animism

Exhibition Conference

English

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Preface

In close interaction with technological inventions, and fueled by a Capitalist economic system, the natural sciences finally began to establish themselves and their world view in the 19th century. The science of physics became the paradigm with which to understand the world. And that meant that Europe's outlook on the world was essentially shaped by objectifying processes predicated on a clear separation of subject and object, as already introduced in Descartes's distinction between "res cogitans" und "res extensa." However, this also implied that interpretations of the world which did not draw this distinction were being increasingly superseded or confined to the periphery. This applied both to the European traditions which were able to sustain their momentum until well into the 19th century, and also to non-European traditions.

In terms of the latter, ethnology placed itself in the service of a modernity defined by the natural sciences, and described the practices of non-European societies as animistic. In seeking to forge a developmental model of human thought, it endeavored to assert unequivocally that the categorical separation between subject and object did not "yet" lie within the capability of "pre-modern" societies, as long as they still endowed animals and objects with a spirit.

These two evidently closely interlinked processes, the objectification of all our relationships to nature, together with the devaluation of the societal models of so-called "primitive" peoples, laid the foundations for both the exploitation of the natural resources and the displacement, even elimination, of pre-modern societies.

Against the backdrop of the existential crisis currently confronting us, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt sees its primary challenge as reappraising the relationship both to the natural and social environment. This will also entail reviving the lost traditions of our history, applying them to our current problems and integrating fruitfully the modes of thought and perception of the "other" into our own thinking. To do this we must abandon our practice of defining who the "others" are, and engage with them in an open exchange of views.

The "Animism" project constitutes an essential building-block within this process. I would like to express my gratitude to Anselm Franke and Irene Albers for having conceived and curated this project for our Haus. My thanks also go

to the many artists and academics who have collaborated with us on the project, without whom we could not have achieved the desired complexity and multiplicity of perspectives.

Bernd M. Scherer

Director of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt

Animism—Exhibition

Introduction Anselm Franke

The exhibition “Animism” begins with that which we are all familiar with from art and the products of mass culture—the cartoon for example—as animation. Within art, animation is a common effect used to evoke life and vitality, in particular through movement, although it is also present when art works—sculptures or specific pictures—appear to return the gaze of the viewer.

However, what we accept as an effect in art is a subject of historical contention beyond its confines. What do we perceive as being alive? When we ask this question outside the field of art it invariably raises questions which call on us to provide further distinctions for the purpose of clarification. The mere effect of vitality is not to be equated with independent life, this appears

beyond doubt. But where is the dividing line? What possesses a soul, life, and the power to act? That the border between animate and inanimate matter, or between pure subjects and mere objects, is in no sense a natural given is demonstrated by the simple fact that in different cultures this border is perceived and conceived of in highly different ways. Consequently, there can never be an ultimately “objective” designation of the “correct” division—in order to illustrate this in terms of one’s own culture one only has to think of the imponderables in the debate on the point of death and the definition of so called “brain death.” However, the dividing line is not a “purely” subjective matter either—after all, it is just as important for the organization of our material relations to nature as for the question of the social and

political status of living beings in a specific society. Is it possible to examine this dividing line itself, together with the organizing knowledge systems and practices? The project “Animism” proceeds from the premise that imaginary demarcations symptomatically reflect cultures, that representations, aesthetic processes and media images consolidate, reflect and transgress these dividing lines. Consequently, the exhibition explores how this border is reflected in aesthetic subjectification and objectification processes, and attempts to situate these aesthetic processes in the concrete socio-political contexts of colonial modernity.

The most radical antitype to the modern Western world view (whose dualistic conception is built on a categorical separation of

subject and object) is to be found in animism. Animism is applied to those world views in which there is seemingly no division between nature and culture, in which objects, nature, or the entire cosmos, are perceived of as being alive, and thus quasi subjectified. At the end of the 19th century, at the zenith of colonialism and the belief in scientific progress, the modern world view attempted to find self-confirmation in its image of the pre-modern other. Animism became the exemplary manifestation of this idea of the other. Animism is an antitype to the “disenchanted,” objectified, reified world of modernity. From the modern perspective, it stands for a world of magic transformations in which the borders are supposedly misconceived, or—in a romantic-utopian turn—overcome.

As real as animistic cultures are—according to a Christian handbook for missionaries they currently make up, in all their heterogeneity, around 40 percent of the world’s population—they proved hard to explain for the tradition of Western modernity. If we start from our basic assumptions as to what constitutes “nature” and “culture,” “subject” and “object,” then it appears that we have no other option than to characterize animism as a “faith” which fails to grasp the objective reality of things, explaining it in the last instance as a psychological mechanism. However, in the process, one’s own basic assumptions and demarcations are uncritically projected onto other cultures.

We have taken animism as our theme precisely because it repre-

sents a real limit to the conception of Western modernity, a provocation to the modern principle of reality which has become deeply inscribed in everyday perception. At best animistic practices are recognized under the category of “culture,” but only as long as they don’t raise any claims to making statements about the actual character of nature or suchlike.

Consequently, “Animism” is not an exhibition about animism which exhibits ethnographic objects in display cases which other cultures claim to be animate. The Western idea of animism as the pre-modern other that falsely believes in the ensoulment of objects which are in fact inanimate is itself a symptomatic expression of modernity’s basic assumptions. In contrast, the intention is to view the term and the idea inscribed

within it as a mirror which can be used to examine our own basic assumptions and thus recognize them as the product of demarcations. Is it possible to gain an understanding of animism as a praxis extending beyond Western conceptions of “life,” “soul,” “self,” “nature,” “supernatural forces” or “belief,” which embraces other experiences, subjectification and objectification processes and mutual interactions, and not just rigid categories? The project “Animism,” raises the necessity of a revision and decolonization, not just of the obsolete understanding of animism, but also of the modern imagination of which it is an expression.

Anselm Franke is an exhibition maker, critic, and lecturer. He is the curator of “Animism,” presented in different chapters in Antwerp, Berne, Vienna, Berlin and New York (2010 – 2012).

“Tupinamba Indians Attacked by Demons” Engraving by Theodor de Bry (detail) © CORBIS



Chapter 1:

Animism—Background

The term “animism” was introduced by British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, (1832-1917) who adopted it from the proto-vitalist Georg Ernst Stahl, an influential thinker in the Berlin of the 17th century. For Tylor, animism was the minimal definition of religion as a “belief in spiritual beings.” He claimed that every religion stemmed from an original, false attribution of life, soul, or spirit, to inanimate objects. According to this theory, Europeans have advanced from animism, via polytheism, to monotheism, and from there to the highest stage of science, rising from a state of nature to one of civilization. In contrast, the indigenous peoples of North and South America, Africa, Asia, and Polynesia, were left behind during this evolutionary process and remain as the „savage survivors” of the natural state.

There are a number of long pre-histories to Tylor’s conception of animism. The first is of a religious nature. Originating in classical Greek philosophy and the Jewish-biblical tradition this led to the centuries-long theological debates on the constitution of nature and the soul. Against the background of the expansion of Christianity—and since 1492 European colonial expansion—Tylor’s conception of animism was heir to the Christian struggle against “the worshipping of graven images,” “idolatry,” and witchcraft. Another antecedent is to be found in the thought of representative modern philosophers, in René Descartes’ separation of inner and outer worlds and primary and secondary qualities of body and mind, but also in the philosophers of the Enlightenment and scientific positivism, as well as the Romantic

reaction to the “disenchanted world.” During the course of the 20th century, Tylor’s animism was long shunned within ethnology due to its all too explicit evolutionism. It is only recently that there has been a renewed engagement with this concept of fundamental importance for the discipline. However, within psychology, the concept—with direct recourse to Tylor—has continued to play a central role in the context of the theory of “projection.”

While for Tylor the term animism was a means for establishing the “correct” distance between matter (objects, things, nature) and people (souls, subjects, persons), between the modern present and archaic past, for Sigmund Freud it was a means for determining the “correct” boundary between inner self and outer reality. Freud

declared animism to be the “subject’s narcissistic overvaluation of his own mental processes,” a belief in the “omnipotence of thought,” an “unrestricted narcissism” which strives to withstand the “inexorable laws” of reality.

Archival Material

Georg Ernst Stahl, “Fragmentorum Aetiologiae Physiologico-Chymicae,” Bielkuis Literis Nisianis, Ienae 1683. Reproduction Courtesy Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, Chem.1197

Edward B. Tylor, “Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom,” vol. 1 and 2, John Murray, London 1871

Gailyn Van Rhee, “Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts,” Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 1991

François Fénelon, “The Adventures of Telemachus, the Son of Ulysses,” 1699

David Hume, “A Treatise of Human Nature,” 1739

Stewart Elliot Guthrie, “Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion,” Oxford University Press, New York 1993

Hans Christian Andersen, “Choix de Contes,” B. G. Teubner, Leipzig 1940

Karl Friedrich Vollrath Hoffmann, “Die Völker der Erde, ihr Leben, ihre Sitten und Gebräuche, zur Belehrung und Unterhaltung. Erster Theil,” Hoffmann, Stuttgart 1840

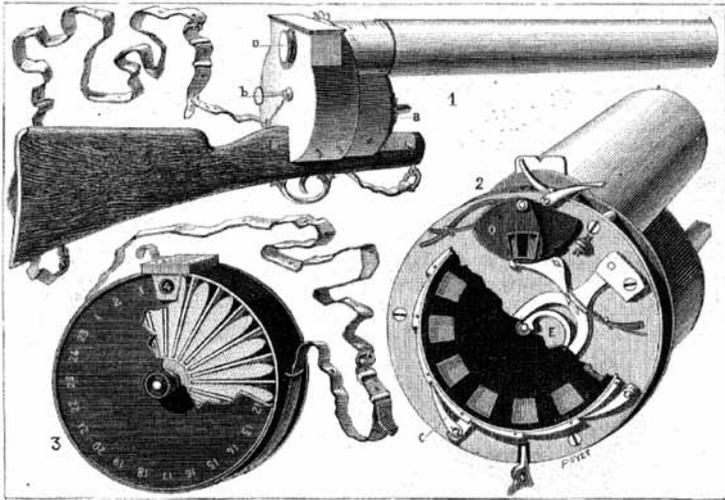
Joseph Josenhans, “Bilder aus der Missionswelt. Für die deutsche Jugend nach englischen Originalien bearbeitet u. mit kurzen Erklärungen versehen,” Scholz, Mainz ca. 1860

Friedrich Karl Lang, “Abriß der Sitten und Gebräuche aller Nationen. Oder kurze Darstellungen der merkwürdigsten menschlichen Wohnplätze, Beschäftigungen und Gewohnheiten in den fünf Theilen der Welt. Vierter Band. Mit 19 Kupfertafeln,” Bock, Nuremberg 1811

Sigmund Freud, “Das Unheimliche,” in: Imago – Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften, vol. 5 (1919)

Sigmund Freud, “Totem und Tabu. Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker,” Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, Leipzig/Vienna/Zurich 1922 [orig. 1913]

Chapter 2: Objectification



"Étienne Jules Marey's photographic gun," Engraving by
Louis Poyet © Conservatoire numérique - Cnum,
"La Nature," 1881, p. 329
<http://cnum.cnam.fr>

From Greek tradition we have inherited the butterfly as the symbol of the psyche and metamorphosis. However, the butterfly only enters museums or display cases when fixed with a needle at a determinate point in the taxonomy of knowledge.

Thus an exhibition on animism, in the true sense of the word, is an impossibility. As soon as an "object" is taken out of its original context within a specific praxis and transferred to a museum it necessarily loses its specific form of animation and enters another field, which requires that it first be objectified, conserved and thus de-animated. It is removed from the flow of time just as it is from praxis; every form of change must be excluded. The medium of the exhibition is thus itself a part of that institutional apparatus of

objectification brought forth by modernity. The exhibition "Animism" displays a series of artworks reflecting the paradoxical relationship of the medium of the exhibition to animism. This relationship is a paradoxical one not least due to the fact that objects in a museum continue to be animistic in a further sense—they animate a specific historiography, knowledge system or the fantasy of the visitor, who, confronted with mummies or dinosaur skeletons, imagines with a shudder how they return to life. Is this also conceivable for the entire reified world under colonialism?

Chris Marker (*1921), Alain Resnais (*1922)

“Les statues meurent aussi” 1953. Film, 16 mm, transferred to DVD



In “Les statues meurent aussi,” French filmmakers Chris Marker and Alain Resnais trace the colonial appropriation of the African artifact in its two dominant forms: its transformation into an exhibit in an ethnographic museum or into a commercial tourist commodity. The film studies the complex configuration of self-reflection the colonial gaze engenders—the appropriation of the “other” as a (negative) affirmation of the self—insisting on an ontological difference of African artifacts: they are neither “art” nor in and of themselves “spiritual” in a world in which these very categories are without meaning. The film also

addresses the problems implicit in the similarity between musealization and the forms of mortification imposed by the medium of film in light of the limitations of the cinematographic “re-animation” it attempts.

Courtesy Présence Africaine Editions; film still

Jimmie Durham (*1940)

“The Museum of Stones” 2011/2012. Installation consisting of various stones and other materials, measurements variable



With “The Museum of Stones” Jimmie Durham inverts conventional Western thinking on mimesis, architecture and the museum. Along with found and defunct objects, stone plays a significant metaphoric role in Durham’s work, standing for the representation of state narratives, identity construction, and all things structured: architecture, monumentality, stability—and “belief.” For Durham, stone is the ultimate sculptural form, because each stone is itself a changing entropic sculpture, shaped over time by the elements. He is fascinated by the ways in which seemingly static objects like stones can become incredibly

active, a character in an unfolding story—quite aside from how anthropomorphism may call to mind totems or other ritualistic objects.

Courtesy the artist and kurimanzutto Gallery, Mexico City; “The Dangers of Petrification,” 2007 (Detail) © Mairie de Paris, Musée d’art moderne de la ville Paris, photo: Philippe Ladet
Produced with the support of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Candida Höfer (*1944)

„Ethnologisches Museum Berlin III 2003.“ Photograph, C-print, 85 x 85 cm



“American Museum of Natural History
New York I 1990”

Photograph, C-print, 24 x 36 cm

“Musée du quai Branly Paris I 2003”

Photograph, C-print, 152 x 152 cm

“Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford IV 2004”

Photograph, C-print, 85 x 88 cm

“Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford VI 2004”

Photograph, C-print, 31 x 24 cm

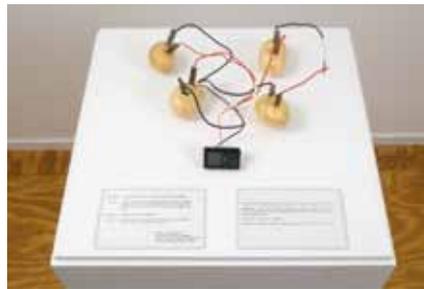
Candida Höfer's large-format photographs emphasize ornate architectural details and the bold, large structures of libraries and museums. Höfer's photographs turn ethnographic museums into “specimens” not unlike the collections of non-Western artifacts the same museums preserve, classify, and exhibit in the framework of ethnic and cultural narratives. Ethnographic museums gather objects from cultures set at a distance by geography. What started out as a collection of trophies from the colonies became, over the course of the nineteenth century, the Primitivist construction of an evolutionary past. Today,

institutions such as the Musée du quai Branly, Paris, aim at a non-hierarchical aesthetic contemplation of cultural diversity while largely masking their political heritage and the associated constructions of the subject. Candida Höfer's works bring to light these transformations and re-evaluations of artifacts beyond the context and praxes which originally gave them meaning.

© Candida Höfer, Cologne; VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2012

Victor Grippo (1936–2002)

“**Tiempo, 2da. versión**” 1991. Potatoes, zinc and copper electrodes, electric wire, digital clock, painted wooden base, glass vitrine and text Measurements (overall without base): 5 x 50 x 50 cm



Victor Grippo was a painter, sculptor, and installation artist, and one of the founding figures of conceptual art in Argentina. He was trained as a chemist, and from early on was interested in the processes of exchange and transformation of energy on which life depends. A key to Grippo's work is alchemy as the activation and transformation of matter. His early works display a special interest in electricity. In “Tiempo, 2da. versión,” four potatoes, with the assistance of zinc and copper electrodes, provide battery power for a digital clock. Grippo chose the potato due to its associations with the history of Latin America

where the people of the Andes cultivated potatoes long before European colonists brought them to Europe. The potato is not just “charged” with colonial history, it also plays an important, virtually global role as the food of the poor. Grippo draws parallels between potatoes and states of consciousness by alluding to and “mobilizing” the various forms of energy generated during their growth phase.

Courtesy the Estate of Victor Grippo, and Alexander and Borin, New York © Photo: Jason Mandala

Agency

“**Assembly (Animism)**” 1992 ongoing. Installation, various materials, total dimensions variable



Agency, founded in 1992 by Kobe Matthys in Brussels, compiles an ongoing list of things that resist classifications and binary oppositions such as: nature/culture, fact/creation, human/non-human, originality/banalities, individual/collective. Agency explores ideas of intellectual property (copyright, patent, trademark etc.) which rely on the division between nature/culture, and subject/object. The list of things is derived from juridical cases, lawsuits, legal controversies and affairs. Agency invokes these things from its list during assemblies in exhibitions, and explores gestures of authorship. The special selection of

archival court cases prepared for “Animism” pose the question: can non-human protagonists—animals, objects—be creative, and consequently authors as understood in terms of copyright? Agency’s archive installation illustrates how the instable border between “nature” and “culture” is never a simple given but (in this case through the institution of jurisprudence) is “made” and negotiated.

Photo: © Agency

Vincent Monnikendam (*1936)

“**Mother Dao, the Turtlelike (Moeder Dao, de schildpadgelijkende)**” 1995. Film, 35 mm, color, sound, 88 min, transferred to DVD



This film by Dutch filmmaker Vincent Monnikendam is the result of six years of work with more than two hundred hours of found footage shot between 1912 and 1933 in the former Dutch Indies, today’s Indonesia. Through the omission of the usual commentary and a different narrative frame Monnikendam’s montage reverses the power relations inscribed in the camera gaze. “Mother Dao” is a story about the silencing and de-animation of the colonized by the coming-into-being of the colonial world. This counter-epic is framed within a creation myth from one of the West Sumatra islands which tells the genesis

of the world through Mother Dao, who is called “the Turtlelike” because the shell of a turtle resembles the curved horizon. Animistic spiritual practices, which preserve the social communion with nature, have traditionally been a central element of Indonesian cultures. Against this backdrop, the film offers a different interpretation of colonialist administrative modernization.

Courtesy The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision / NTR; film still

Artefakte // anti-humboldt

“‘Rise, for you will not perish’ (on mummymania)” 2011/2012

Installation, mixed media, dimensions variable



Artefakte // anti-humboldt (www.humboldtforum.info) was launched in 2008 in Berlin as a reaction to the scheduled reconstruction of Berlin's City Palace and plans to house the Humboldt-Forum there. Created collectively by Brigitta Kuster, Regina Sarreiter, Dierk Schmidt and Elsa de Seynes, this installation stages an encounter between the traditions of archeological museums and the practices of the modern media, and calls upon visitors to view the work from two different perspectives simultaneously. “‘Rise, for you will not perish’ (on mummymania),” alludes to the practice of mummification to highlight how

museums and film breath fresh life into what are dead and preserved objects. The installation renders experiential the ambivalent relationship between the observer and the object within an artistic and scientific context, whilst, at the same time, interrogating the meaning of this relationship.

Film still from “The Haunted Curiosity Shop,” directed by Walther R. Booth, UK 1901
Courtesy Artefakte // anti-humboldt
Produced with the support of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Archival Material

René Descartes, “Les Passions de l'Âme,” Paris 1651
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; Abteilung Historische Drucke

René Descartes, “Le Homme De René Descartes, Et La Formation Du Foetus / Avec les Remarques de Louis De La Forge,” Paris 1677
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; Abteilung Historische Drucke

René Descartes, “Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, & chercher la vérité dans les sciences,” Le Gras, Paris 1658
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; Abteilung Historische Drucke

René Descartes, “Renati Descartes Tractatus De Homine, Et De Formatione Foetus Quorum prior Notis perpetuus...,” Amstelodami, Apud Danielelem Elsevirium, 1677
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; Abteilung Historische Drucke

Félix-Louis Regnault, “Hommes Nègres,” 1895, duplicate on flexible transparent film
Courtesy La Cinémathèque Française, Paris

Étienne-Jules Marey, “La machine animale. Locomotion terrestre et aérienne,” Librairie Germer Baillière, Paris 1873

“**Étienne-Jules Marey's** photographic gun,” engraving by Louis Poyet
© Le Conservatoire numérique Cnum, “La Nature,” 1881, p. 329

Étienne-Jules Marey, selected films
Courtesy: La Cinémathèque Française, Paris

Wilhelm H. I. Bleek and Lucy C. Lloyd, “Specimens of Bushman Folklore,” London 1911.

Eliot Weinberger, “The Camera People,” in: *Transition*, No. 55 (1992), pp. 24–54. Reproduction

Nell Irvin Painter, “Soul Murder and Slavery,” Baylor University Press, Waco 1995

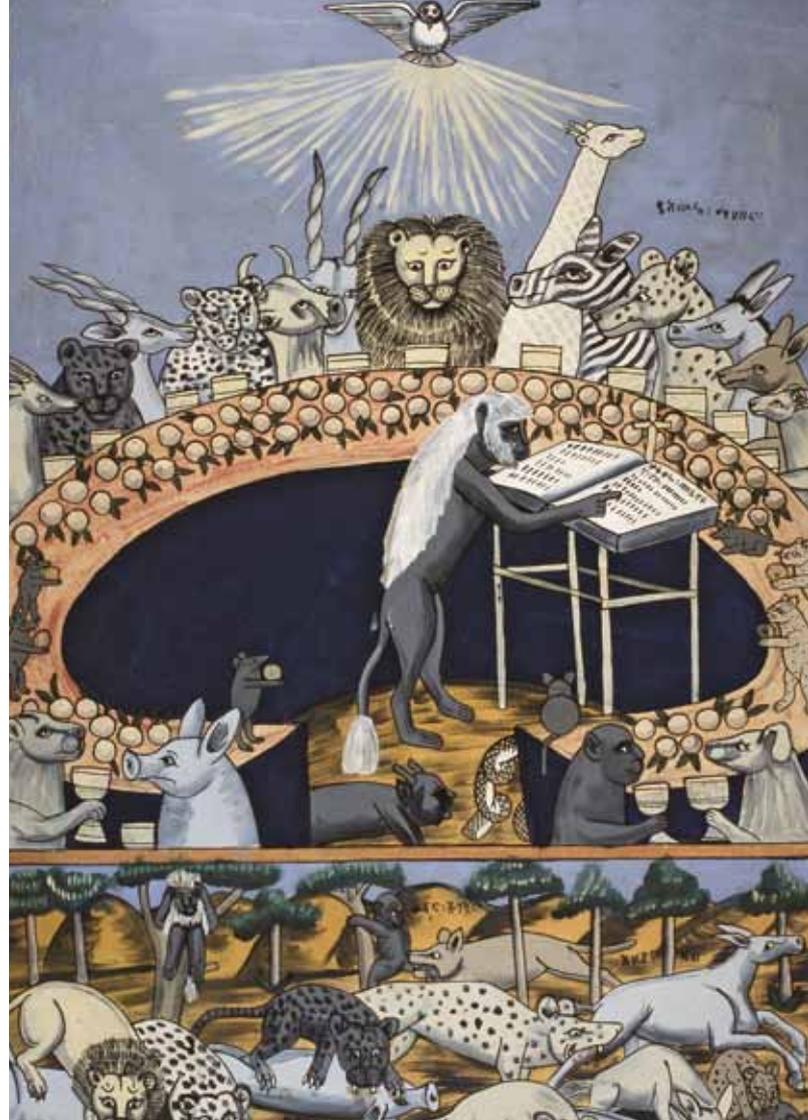
“Code Noir,” decree by the French King **Louis XIV**, 1685. Reproduction

Max Horkheimer and **Theodor W. Adorno**, “Dialektik der Aufklärung,” Querido, Amsterdam 1947

Anonymous (ascribed to Wetalhok from the Belcher Islands), Robert J. Flaherty’s staff on the set of the film „Nanook of the North – A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic“, original drawing on paper, reproduction

Schweinfurth Collection, Inventar-Nr. 231, winding of sheets by *Mimusops Schimperi* Hochst. (singles sheets spread out) from a grave of the xx-xxvi dynasty at Schech Abd-el Qurna (Theben), Maspero 1884
Courtesy Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Freie Universität Berlin

Anonymous, “Assembly of the animals,” 1965–1975, oil on canvas. Courtesy Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, Coll.nr. 5965-5



Chapter 3:

The Great Divide

What makes modernity modern? Social scientists, amongst other things, cite the categorical division between “nature” and “culture.” The historian of science Bruno Latour described modernization since the 16th century as the progressive “purification process” of these two categories. Scientific objectification measures itself on its ability to cleanse objects in the laboratory of all human “projections” and—symmetrically—to remove the subject from its interdependence with nature and the world of objects, whereby the “autonomous subject” of humanism and the social contract which distinguishes us from the “natural state” are first made possible. Latour also describes how the Cartesian categorical separation enabled modernity to speak of a “Great Divide” separating it from non-modern societies. These now

stood on the side of an archaic, traditionalist past which modernity had supposedly broken with completely. For modernity separates things from the sign, the symbolizations and projected meanings, while the pre-modern era (animist) hopelessly mixes them. The idea of this mixing, which can also be conceived of as the unity of inner and outer worlds, is also the origin of that described within the history of art as Primitivism. However the point of Latour’s analysis of modernity is that it is precisely this categorical division which leads to a mixing of nature and culture on a previously unimaginable scale in the form of technology. According to Latour every praxis has always contradicted this conceptual divide, and it is this contradiction that constituted the productivity of modernity—until this contradiction reached its limits, as exemplified

today on a global scale by the environmentalist crisis. The exhibition will be showing a series of works and materials illustrating the extent to which the animated imagination is always a borderline case. Animation begins where the rigid order of knowledge and objectification is loosened and the border crossed. On the other side of the border begins a world of wondrous transformations, monstrosities and horror. The animations in these works are like maps, symptomatically illustrating, surveying and traversing the imaginary elements of the “Great Divide.”

León Ferrari (*1920)

“L'Osservatore Romano” 2001–2007. A selection from 43 collages on paper, each 42 x 29.5 cm



León Ferrari is a leading figure of the Buenos Aires avant-garde. His works examine ideas and mechanisms that modern culture, with its Christian and Western roots, uses to legitimize its own barbarism. The series of collages “L'Osservatore Romano” (2001–2007) is an example of such a clash. Articles from the Vatican's daily “Osservatore Romano” that address issues of Christian morality in today's world, are overlaid with images from the canon of Christian iconography with scenes of the ecclesiastical torture of heretics. These images stem from the Western imagination of evil and damnation, of violence, transfor-

mation and metamorphosis. They depict the reality of terror lurking beneath the surface of Western reason and a world that comes into being through the destruction of cultures—from the Inquisition and colonial South America to recent military dictatorships and Abu Ghraib. In the encounter between news reports, history, and art history, the terror of the past resonates in that of the present.

Courtesy Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (M HKA)
Image © Fundación Augusto y León Ferrari Arte y Acervo

Walt Disney (1901–1966)

“The Skeleton Dance” 1929. From the series of the Silly Symphonies Film, 35 mm, B&W, sound, 5:30 min, transferred to DVD



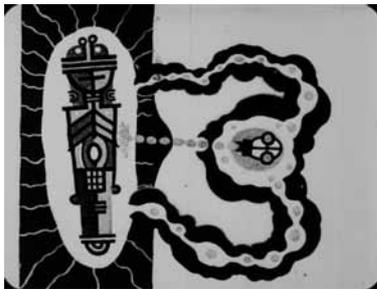
As the first episode of the Silly Symphonies, which Walt Disney Studio produced in 1929, “The Skeleton Dance” exemplifies the very laws of the animation genre. By reworking the motif of the danse macabre it celebrates the victory of life over death in a spectacle that is reminiscent of Mexican celebrations on the Day of the Dead. Quite literally the victory of the animated drawing over the static picture is celebrated. The trope of the Ghost Hour invokes the aesthetics of the uncanny and suggests that Disney is commenting on the animistic quality of animation as the return of the repressed. “The Skeleton Dance”

is choreographed to the music by Carl Stalling, based on Edvard Grieg's “March of the Trolls” and Camille Saint-Saëns's “Danse Macabre,” and each bone is associated with a musical note—a principle perhaps best expressed in the scene where one skeleton uses another as a xylophone. “The Skeleton Dance” articulates a fundamental principle of animation film, namely that many voices must be combined into a single tune within a barebones musical structure. The “enchanted” effect of the genre is rooted in this principle.

© Disney Enterprises, Inc.

Len Lye (1901–1980)

“**Tusalava**” 1929. Film, 35 mm, B&W, silent, 10 min, transferred to 16 mm, from material preserved and made available by the New Zealand Film Archive Ngā Kaitiaki O Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua



The New Zealand-born painter, sculptor, and filmmaker Len Lye was active in London's avant-garde scene from 1926 on. In his first animated film, “Tusalava,” he developed a new filmic idiom that synthesized a Primitivist visual language with that of modernist abstraction in the medium of animated film. The work reflects his studies of the indigenous art of Australia, New Zealand, and Samoa. Following Primitivist and Surrealist ideas, he replaced the apparatus of the movie camera with a physical activity aiming at an automatism: drawing. After reading Freud's “Totem and Taboo,” Lye became an enthusiastic

champion of psychoanalysis and especially of the concept of the unconscious, which played a central role in his method of “doodling:” “I doodled to assuage my hunger for some hypnotic image I'd never seen before.”

Courtesy Len Lye Foundation
Film still © Courtesy New Zealand Film Archive Ngā
Kaitiaki O Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua Len Lye Foundation/
Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Wellington

David Maljkovic (*1973)

“**Missing Colours**” 2010. Slide show, 80 slides, unique



David Maljkovic's installations focus on collective memory and amnesia, portraying the transition from communism to capitalism in recent Croatian history. Mixing videos, drawings and objects, he redirects our gaze towards abandoned buildings or already demolished architectures. Novi (New) Zagreb, planned and built under Socialist rule, is a point of departure for his work “Missing Colours.” Inspired by the Yugoslav comedy “Balkan Spy” (1984), in which an artist is arrested for throwing colored paint against grey apartment blocks, Maljkovic sets up a sculpture with four color planes and photographs these.

The work melancholically imparts the literal and figurative emptiness of failed utopias that are evident not just in Novi Zagreb, but in many places around the world.

Courtesy Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

Hans Richter (1888–1976)

“Vormittagsspuk” 1927. Film, 35 mm, transferred to DVD



Hans Richter, painter, filmmaker and art theorist, considered Dada a critique of the predominance of commonsensical rationality and an attempt to restore the lost balance between reason and unreason. He thought that film, and avant-garde cinema in particular, had the potential to do so. Richter believed the magic, the poetic, and the inexplicable to be essential cinematographic qualities. The movement of the medium in “Vormittagsspuk” (Ghosts before Breakfast) casts a magical spell on the viewers who follow the play of floating objects without recourse to the logic of cause and effect. The film is a literal

realization of Richter's conception of art as a balance between order and disorder. It can also be understood as an allegory on the symmetrical interdependency of the order of things and social hierarchies—once anarchy breaks out in the order of things, the social order breaks apart, too.

Courtesy Cinédoc – Paris Films Coop distribution; film still

Anna and Bernhard Blume

(*1937 / 1937–2011)

“Unfall” 1991. From the series “Im Wald,” silver gelatine print, light protection coating, 3 parts, each 250 x 126 cm



The artist couple Anna and Bernhard Blume are best known for their staged photographs in which they appear parodying the everyday life of the petty bourgeoisie. In the large format photo series “Im Wald” (In the Forest), created between ca. 1982 and 1991, Anna and Bernhard Blume place themselves in the midst of the forest as a landscape of the soul. The elaborate photographs demanded great physical exertion involving climbing and balancing. The forest as site of the Romantic pictorial tradition and German sensibility becomes the setting for strange stories. The natural forces rebel, the trees appear to develop

a sinister life of their own, provoking the “accident.” Thus it comes to an ironic break with traditional images of the forest, the idealized understanding of nature associated with this place of enchantment making way for gravity and the loss of control.

Courtesy Buchmann Galerie Berlin and the artists

Archival Material

M.C. Escher, “Hand with Reflecting Sphere,” 1935, lithography
Reproduction

Joseph Wright ‘of Derby’, An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump, oil on canvas 183 cm x 244 cm, 1768. Reproduction
Courtesy National Gallery London

Thomas Hariot, Jacobus Le Moynes, Hans Staden, “America [Ps.1] Admiranda Narratio Fida Tanem, De Commodis Et...., Secunda Pars Americae [Ps.2] Brevis Narratio Eorum Quae In Florida Americae Provi[n]cia..., Americae Tertia Pars [Ps. 3] Americae Tertia Pars Memorabile[m] provinciae Brasiliae Historiam...,” Bry, Feirabendius, Wechelus, Francoforti Ad Moenum 1590 [Ps.1], 1591 [Ps.2], 1592 [Ps.3]
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; Abteilung Historische Drucke

Pablo Picasso, “Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. M.)” 1907, oil on canvas.
Reproduction
Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York

Bruno Latour, “On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods,” Duke University Press, Durham 2010

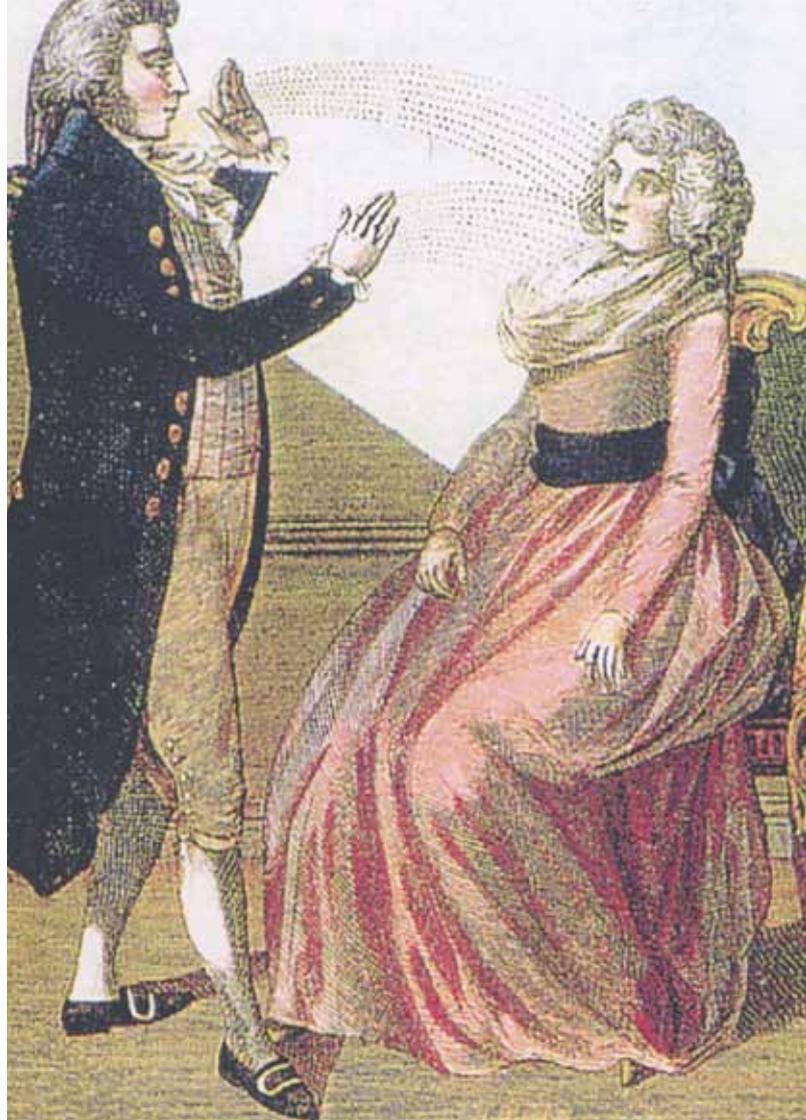
Alfred Gell, “Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,” Clarendon, Oxford 1998

Anonymous (origin: Addis Abeba), “Assembly of the animals,” 1965–1975, oil on canvas
Courtesy Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam. Coll.nr. 5956-5.

Gustav Weill (ed.), “Tausend und eine Nacht. Arabische Erzählungen,” Rieger, Stuttgart 1866

Istvan Orosz, „L’Origine du monde“ 1. (Durer paraphrase) and „L’Origine du monde“ 2. (Durer paraphrase), 2008, prints on paper, each 30 x 40 cm
Courtesy the artist

Illustration: “Animal magnetism,” after Franz Anton Mesmer, end of the 18th century



Chapter 4:

Symptoms & Media

Animism, which modernity attempted to categorically expunge, re-emerges in the form of insistent symptoms. Everything that resists the progressive “purification” and objectification process seems to return as symptoms, and these lead a strangely delirious life of their own. These symptoms are generally characterized as the persistence of an archaic past within the human psyche, as primitive atavisms. However aren’t phenomena such as mediumism or the psycho-pathological symptoms typical of each age such as “hysteria” precisely the manifestations of a rebellion of the “psychological” against its objectification, against reification and privatizing occlusion? And there, where this reification has failed, for example in the form of an objectifying recourse to physiological laws, are we not witnessing a rebellion

of animism against its exile to the kingdom of “mere” fiction? And what of the early modern technical “media” since the “theater of phantasmagoria,” frequently described as “haunted,” as a stage for ghosts, Frankensteins, zombies, and alike? Are they not the site for the return of all that has been excluded—and later deployed in a compensatory fashion by mass culture à la Disney? And are not the Romantic and Primitivist fantasies of a recovered unity or return to nature precisely such symptoms?

But what exactly is it that modernity excludes and suppresses here? For Theodor W. Adorno it was “mimetic behavior.” Not in the sense of a product such as a picture, a mimetic copy or more or less realistic imitation, but in the sense of a transformational

exchange of the organism with its environment, which first constitutes itself through this dialogical exchange. The rational male white subject of bourgeois humanism defines itself through the successful containment and suppression of all mimetic forms of behavior and relationality (which essentially embrace the affected) as exemplified by so-called pre-modern rituals. For modernity mimetic behavior becomes characteristic of primitives, women, children and the mad. It is only in art and aesthetics that modernity has created a ghetto for the legitimate “persistence” of mimetic impulses under a special sign. In particular it is the feminist critique of modernity’s dualisms and their identity essentialisms that has shown the suppression of the mimetic to be nothing other than the constitutive-patriarchal exclusion

of relationality, of situated, dialogical-reciprocal relationships, and thus essentially the articulation of collectivity. This last dimension is also articulated in a symptomatic, dislocated fashion in that the “collective spirit” is projected into the phantasmagorical dimension of national identities.

Heinz Schott (*1946), Erhard Schüttpelz (*1961), Ehler Voss (*1974)

“Baquet (based on instructions from Franz Anton Mesmers) and Display Panels” 2012. Baquet: Loan Heinz Schott, Texts: Schott/Schüttpelz/Voss; Tree in front of the HKW (freely adapted from Puységur)



Today we associate the term medium with the technical communication between transmitters and receivers. For many hundreds of years, however, nature was the medium, namely God’s “intermediary.” In the Romantic era and in spiritualism people with supernatural powers appeared as mediums: as trance mediums. Between the 1780s and 1890s, mediumism became the subject of heated debate which covered the fields of mesmerism, spiritualism, hypnosis research to the establishment of modern psychology, esotericism and art. This installation evokes memories of this great debate, during the

course of which Edward Tylor reintroduced the term “animism:” Firstly by virtue of the display panels charting the key elements of an “iconography of the term medium,” and by means of a wooden “baquet,” assembled according to the instructions left by Franz Anton Mesmer, who in the 1780s condensed the fluid of “animal magnetism.” A tree in front of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt recalls a disciple of Mesmer, the Marquis de Puységur, whose application of somnambulism in 1784 is regarded as the foundation of modern psychotherapy.

Image: “The Tree of Marquis de Puységur,” French postcard (ca. 1900)

Anja Dreschke and Martin Zillinger

“TRANCE/MEDIA. The ‘Isāwa in Morocco” 1992–2011.
Video installation



In their rituals the Moroccan ‘Isāwa Sufi Brotherhood act out the powers of lions, jackals, and camels in elaborate trance choreographies. Their ecstatic dances are spectacular for both themselves and observers. Misunderstood by colonial and religious modernizers to this day, their traditions are currently experiencing a revival. Beyond the allegedly naive conception of an animated cosmos, their sacred act addresses the general human capacity for transformation and the creative handling of experiences of alienation. Increasingly, the trance adepts are presenting their practices to an international

public as an art form. The ethnologist Martin Zillinger has worked with the ‘Isāwa from Meknes over the last 9 years, examining how trance is shaped and altered by technical media. The installation in this exhibition is part of a larger film and research project on the theme of “trance media and new media” which he is pursuing together with the ethnologist and film maker Anja Dreschke at the University of Siegen.

Video still/VHS from the archive of the adepts, Morocco
A man in the trance state of the camel, agitating the crowd from a cactus; filmstill

Camillo Negro (1861–1927)

“La Neuropatologia” Italy 1908. Film, 47:57 min, transferred to DVD



“La Neuropatologia” is an educational medical film from Italy. From the perspective of medical history it can be seen as a demonstration of a fit of hysteria. In terms of film aesthetics, however, it can be termed an “expressionist drama.” As the media theorist Ute Holl writes: “Without the medical stage, the theatre, the staging, the medical fact cannot be made visible. With the introduction of photographic techniques in a number of clinics at the end of the 19th century—as in the Salpêtrière in Paris—begins a shift to the primacy of the visual in medical methodology as well as neurological diagnostics.”

Courtesy Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin; film still

Lars Laumann (*1975)

“Berlinmuren” 2008. Video, 23:56 min



Norwegian artist Lars Laumann investigates object relations and the human bond with the material world, provoking a complicated mixture of curiosity and empathy. He unearthed the inspiration for “Berlinmuren,” one of the highlights of the Fifth Berlin Biennial, while surfing the Web in the late 1990s. In documentary format, his film tells the true story of Eija-Riitta Berliner-Mauer and her love for, and eventual marriage, in 1979, to the Berlin Wall. Mrs. Berliner-Mauer (German for Berlin Wall—she took its name when they wed) claims she is “objectum-sexual,” a condition characterized by sexual attraction to objects. In her

case, she is particularly drawn to objects with “parallel lines, usually horizontal ... such as bridges, fences, and railroad tracks,” as well as “things that divide.” Not a fetishist, she is rather an animist, one who believes that objects have souls. There is something starkly sobering, if not subversive, about the sudden ambiguity of the Berlin Wall in this film—a paradigmatic object that had once appeared so unquestionable.

Courtesy the artist and Maureen Paley, London

Rosemarie Trockel (*1952)

“Replace me” 2009. Digital print, B&W, 32.8 x 40 cm / 53 x 59 cm (framed)



Rosemarie Trockel's drawings, videos, and knitted sculptures appropriate familiar artworks and symbols to make political, often feminist statements. The photographic montage “Replace Me” substitutes the model's pubic hair in Courbet's famous painting “L'Origine du Monde” (1866) with a spider. The gray-scale reproduction of the original color painting suggests the transformation of the female genitalia, rendered in astonishing life-like detail by Courbet, into lifeless tissue.

Trockel creates a counterpoint to the original's emphasis on the human capacity to procreate. Simultaneously, the spider appears

to reanimate the image, adding a new layer of meaning. It introduces an uncanny element into the sexual fantasy of the origin of the world and highlights the role of the artist as an animator of the pigment or the pixel.

Courtesy Sprüth Magers Berlin London
Image © Rosemarie Trockel, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2012

Yayoi Kusama (*1929)

“Kusama's Self-Obliteration” 1967. Film, 16 mm, 23:32 min, transferred to DVD



The work of Yayoi Kusama, sculptor, performer, and novelist, remains outside conventional classifications, yet has apparent surrealist, feminist, and psychedelic leanings. There is a distinctively ecstatic quality to her work, a systematic transgression of the boundary between body and environment, between mind and physical space. In the scenographies of her installations and performances, the subject reacts to its appropriation through the relinquishment of its own boundaries, the turning outward of the inward, the collectivisation and spatialization of individuality. “Kusama's Self-Obliteration,” filmed by eminent experimental

filmmaker Jud Yalkut, documents the seminal “nude happenings” performed by Kusama and collaborators during the sixteen years she spent in New York City, when she also organized body-painting festivals, and antiwar demonstrations, and gained significant recognition with her large paintings, soft sculptures, and environmental works. “Kusama's Self-Obliteration” can be regarded as an exemplary document of Kusama's practice and its social and political context, a document in which we see her work enacted as an enunciation of collectivity.

Courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London, Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo and Yayoi Kusama Studio Inc. © Yayoi Kusama

Archival Material

Jay Leyda (ed.), "Eisenstein on Disney," Seagull Books, Calcutta 1986

Lewis Carroll, "Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There," Macmillan and Co., London 1872

J. J. Grandville, "Das gesamte Werk. 2 Bände," Rogner und Bernhard, Munich 1969

J. J. Grandville, "Règne animal – La Caricature No. 131," 1832, colored lithography, 36 x 55 cm
Courtesy Private Collection, Parma

Frontispiece by **Max Ernst** in:
Paul Éluard, "Répétitions," Paris, éd. Au Sans Pareil; Kaldor Ex. 186 of 350, 1922
Courtesy Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek



IN THE RUBBER COILS.

Linley Sambourne, "In The Rubber Coils. Scene—The Congo Free State," published in: "Punch Magazine," 28 November 1906 © Punch Limited

SCENE—The Congo "Free" State.

Chapter 5:

Capitalism & Phantasmagoria

Modernity draws the boundaries only for them to be transgressed by capitalism—by money and desire—for capitalism was never interested in the “exclusion of animism.” It was far more interested in the utilization of “life,” “vitality,” and “psyche” as inexhaustible resources, in the exploitation and mobilization of the body and its desires. The control and canalization of the vital energies are the precondition—just as the recording and registration of movement using the notational method of the physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey led to the development of the cinema’s moving image as well as serving as a model for Taylorist work efficiency studies, and thus for the modern factory regime. And that which for the ethnologists of the early 20th century was the dubious, all-penetrating, animating and connecting “Mana” of the

“others,” so was electricity for modern capitalist society.

That which the Marxist George Lukács called the “phantom objectivity” of capitalist culture in his famous critique of “reification,” is the manner in which the capitalist world presents itself as “natural,” systematically concealing its essential reality, social relations, classes and relations of production. Lukács’ analysis seizes on a famous motif from Karl Marx, his analysis of the fetish character of the commodity form. According to Marx capitalism represents an inverted world in which people become objects and objects acquire a new form of animation as commodities. The critique of the alienation and reification of factory work and the conditioning produced by the phantasmagoria of the capitalist world of commodities,

was a leitmotif of the critique of capitalism and the conformism of consumer society in the 20th century. The struggle against instrumental rationalism, as well as against the objectification of subjects in the disciplinary institutions, reached a highpoint in the counterculture of the 1960s. However, capitalism has also changed since then. If in the past the struggle for emancipation essentially consisted in demanding full recognition as a subject of a specific marginalized collective identity, or in unlimited individuality, today, in deregulated network capitalism, everyone has to take their own subjectivity to market as their capital, and, if one believes the bibles of popular psychology, become an animist, permanently animating and subjectifying one’s self and environment.

Ken Jacobs (*1933)

“**Capitalism: Slavery**” 2006. Video projection, color, silent, 3 min, transferred to DVD



The New York-born film maker Ken Jacobs is a member of the “New American Cinema” generation of the 1960s and 70s who questioned the common film praxis of the time with their aesthetic experiments. Jacobs worked with found picture material, and in allusion to long past viewing and presentation customs, developed a defamiliarized vision of the past. “Capitalism: Slavery” is based on a stereoscopic image taken in the USA of workers on a cotton plantation. The stereograph is digitally animated by switching back and forth between two identical images, while the stroboscopic flickering gradually draws us into the

image space. Ken Jacobs plays with the historically determined interaction between matter and spirit, physiology and technology, while simultaneously underscoring the social relations which first make such economies of vision possible. Not least, this work “re-animates” a primal scene of colonial capitalism—slave labor on the plantations.

Photo: anonymous / courtesy the artist

Marcel Broodthaers (1924–1976)

“**Caricatures—Grandville**” 1968. Slide projection, 80 slides



“Caricatures—Grandville” is a slide show for which Belgian artist Broodthaers primarily used images from J. J. Grandville’s book “Un Autre Monde” (1844), juxtaposing these images with newspaper photographs of the student revolts of May 1968. “Un Autre Monde” is among the most powerful of Grandville’s works: The collective and satiric phantasmagoria here is exhibited formally by blurring the boundaries and upsetting the orderly hierarchies between people, animals, and things. Broodthaers takes Grandville’s images literally, by using Grandville’s “types,” “characters,” “figures,” etc. like “text.” He

exposes the fundamental ambivalence in the phantasmagoric objectification achieved by the caricatures by masking humans as animals and thus unmasking human society as “natural.” Broodthaers simultaneously creates a collective dream-image of an epoch and an “uncanny” depiction of the objectification of both nature and human society in the world of modern science and capitalism.

Courtesy Estate Marcel Broodthaers, Brussels

Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975)

„The Hawks and the Sparrows“ (Uccellacci e uccellini), Italy 1966
Film, B&W, 88 min



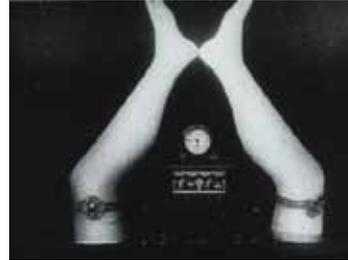
Apparently without aim, Father Innocenti and his son wander through the outskirts of Rome. A talking raven, initially mocked, joins the two wanderers. He introduces himself as a bird from the Land of Ideology, son of Father Doubt and Mother Consciousness, and attempts to enlighten them with philosophical questions on the meaning of life. The raven tells them the story of Saint Francis who preached Christian charity to the birds in the 12th century (and entered hagiography as a declared animist). Under privations, father and son also learn to speak to the birds. However, as hunger finally rears its head,

they barbeque and eat the raven. Based on his own script, Pier Paolo Pasolini directed this film fable, situated between surrealism and slapstick, as a meditation on class society, the Catholic church and the demise or fragmentation of communism.

Courtesy © Filmgalerie 451; film still

Fernand Léger (1881–1955)

“Ballet Mécanique” 1923/1924. Film, B&W, 35 mm , transferred, to DVD



Pumping machines, rotating objects, a kaleidoscope of mechanical parts, interspersed with people, changing faces, and geometrical figures: “Ballet Mécanique”—a cinematic industrial ballet—is a co-production of the director Dudley Murphey and the French artist Fernand Léger, with additional creative input provided by Man Ray and Ezra Pound. The film was premiered in 1924 at the “Internationalen Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik” in Vienna and is recognized as one of the first Surrealist-Dadaist films and a masterpiece of early experimental cinema. However, there are contradictory reports concerning

its origin. The “Ballet Mécanique” was originally a piece of music by the American composer George Antheil who intended to use his composition as the soundtrack for an abstract film. However, insurmountable problems during synchronization of the film and music resulted in two independent art works: the preserved version is ca. 18 minutes long, while the music is 28 minutes long.

Courtesy “Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941,” a collaborative preservation project sponsored by Anthology Film Archives, New York, and Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt am Main, and underwritten by Cineric, Inc., New York. www.unseen-cinema.com

Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931)

“Execution of Czolgosz, with panorama of Auburn Prison” 1901
Film, 35 mm, transferred to DVD



“Sioux Ghost Dance” 1894
Film, 35 mm, transferred to DVD

In September 1901 Leon F. Czolgosz shot President William McKinley, initiator of the Spanish-American War. Edwin S. Porter’s reenactment of his execution for Thomas A. Edison Inc. marked the culmination of Edison’s opportunistic involvement in electrocution. “Execution of Czolgosz” was an example of electricity in the service of the restoration of a social order momentarily disrupted by the killing of the President of Progress, Industry, and Empire by a self-proclaimed anarchist.

“Sioux Ghost Dance” shows Native Americans performing the “Ghost Dance” within the context

of “Buffalo” Bill Cody’s Wild West Show. This dance was created in the 1860s as part of the revitalization of the Native American resistance movement. With the Wounded Knee massacre that ended the Indian Wars in 1890 the vision of an Indian Renaissance was also buried. What we see on the celluloid of this film performing a “Ghost Dance” is thus the ghost of the genocidal history of the American colonial frontier.

Still from “Execution of Czolgosz, with panorama of Auburn Prison,” Courtesy Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Dierk Schmidt (*1965)

“Image Leaks” 2011. Installation, oil, acrylic, paper and bitumen on acrylic panels, 413 x 275 cm



“Color Change” 2012 *
Installation, oil, bitumen and acrylic
on acrylic panels, 393 x 262 cm

In his projects Dierk Schmidt formulates a critique of both the history painting and painting itself as a representational medium for the production of historical truths. His first contribution “Image Leaks,” is a replica of the transparent grid of the illuminated ceiling consisting of painted panels, as shown in his last exhibition in the Frankfurt Kunstverein; “Color Change,” in contrast, is a tableau organized into larger color fields. Their thematic connection lies in the interrogation of the materiality of oil as a raw material and a product, which has found its cultural refinement in, among other things, oil paintings.

With its direct allusion to the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 caused by the multinational oil corporation BP, “Image Leaks” raises the question of whether, and how if at all, the application of artistic image strategies are even feasible or expedient to counter BP’s corporate identity policy. With scant regard for its statutory commitment to truth, the company did everything in its power to make the oil “invisible.” Among the measures implemented were, for example, not only the use of dispersant agents to break down the oil, but also the control and manipulation of the live digital images being streamed from

the wellhead. In this struggle for the supremacy of the digital image, Schmidt's painted panels materialize into contributions to the competition organized by Greenpeace calling on people to redesign or "digitally pollute" BP's logo.

"Color Change" addresses the issue of raw materials and materiality from a different perspective. This work examines the historical significance of paint, the demystifying revelation of the burden of history and its cross-references to the crimes of industrial modernity, which seemingly stand in contradiction to its puristic aspirations. The fields of "Color

Change" cast into sharp focus the historical juncture at which the transition from the exploitative paint production of the colonial era to the industrialized chemical laboratories took place: With the first synthetic-organic "aniline dye" the chemicals industry was founded, and the chemists at IG-Farben morphed into "magicians," who propagated the technocratic, omnipotent fantasy of the unrestricted syntheticisation of all natural products. Image sources and materials are placed into critical dialogue with painterly processes which are also presented in these two works.

Courtesy the artist and Galerie Ursula Walbröl
Image: Detail from "Image Leaks"
Produced with the support of Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Tom Holert (*1962)

"The Labours of Shine" 2012. 2-channel video, B&W, sound, 18:26 min, shoe-shine-furniture, 1940s USA, chromed steal (on a plinth under acrylic glass)



In his video essay "The Labours of Shine," Tom Holert, artist, art historian and publicist assembled materials and references alluding to discourses on shining, gleaming, radiant surfaces which in the first half of the 20th century produced diverse and partly contradictory functions and meanings of "shine." The film engages in a speculative dialogue with an objet trouvé: an approximately 80-year-old American shoe-shining cabinet, comprising a wooden footrest attached to a chrome-plated steel upright, which evokes associations with Constantin Brancusi's polished bronze sculptures. In this project, "shine" is a complex

aesthetic-political phenomenon, which extends far beyond the physics of light and optical psychology. In its relationship to shining surfaces, modernity has staged a debate on subjectification and objectification, on attraction and repulsion, on vitality and inanimateness which explores both the sexuality of things and the "thingliness" of sexuality.

Courtesy the artist

Archival Material

Linley Sambourne, “In The Rubber Coils. Scene – The Congo Free State;” published in: Punch Magazine, 28 November 1906
Courtesy Punch Limited

H. R. Robinson, “A Galvanized Corpse,” 1836. Reproduction

Poster of “Andy Warhols Frankenstein” 1973. Reproduction

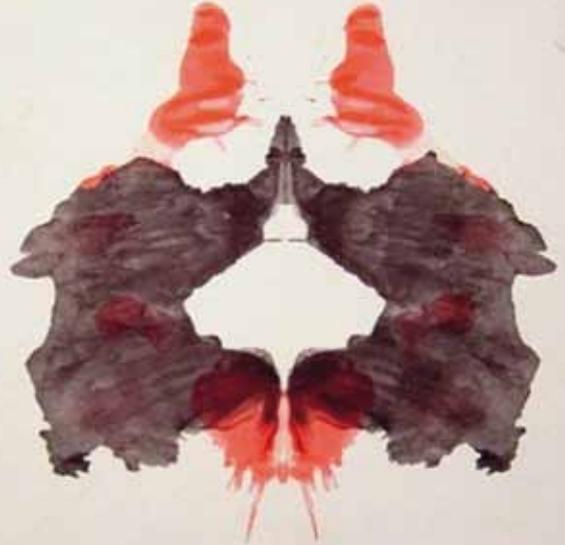
19th century stereoscope

Interior of the Electricity Building from north gallery, World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893

John Maynard Keynes, “The General Theory of Employment Interest and Money,” Macmillan, London 1936
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz; Abteilung Historische Drucke

Electro-suggestive Theory – **A.K. Fiala**, „Elektrophysiologische Zukunftsprobleme“, in: Der Deutsche Rundfunk 3 (1925).
Reproduction

Rorschach Inkblot, second card, 1921



Chapter 6:

Soul Design

Within anthropology there has been a re-engagement with the concept of animism of late, in particular within the context of an exploration of different ideas of what constitutes a “person,” “personification” and “selfhood.” Anthropology teaches us that the social structures, knowledge system and material praxis of a society are inseparable. Countless films, above all slapstick and catastrophe films—including the film “Vormittagsspuk” by Hans Richter shown in the exhibition—illustrate how the social order is dependent on the relative stability of its material base and how it comes apart at the seams when this stability can no longer be assured. Consequently, shouldn’t one speak of a continuum in which society, subjectivity and object determine one another in a symmetrical fashion? Shouldn’t

one assume that every conception and condition of an “object” corresponds to a specific form of the “subject?” That every organism is something akin to the articulation of a specific milieu or force field? However this would mean that the question of the “soul” needs to be posed differently.

Modernity’s “trouble with the soul” can essentially be traced to the fact that over the course of the last 2,000 years it has become an internally displaced transcendental substance, something that one does or does not “possess.” As long as we retain this conception of the soul the question of ensoulment will always remain within the orbit of a specific theological debate which ultimately serves to provide a legitimization frame for denying things (“savages,” “animals,” etc.) a soul. As this exhibition

is devoted to dividing lines and demarcations, an attempt will be made to illuminate precisely these divisions and boundaries, in other words, the procedure used to survey, produce and administer the territory of the soul. However, in order to illuminate these demarcations, a starting point is required which does not restrict the soul from the outset. What if we were to imagine the soul as an “event,” as something that cannot be owned but only exists in the intermediary realm? Wouldn’t this enable us to pose the question of animism differently—not as a question of what possesses a soul, but as a question of the different forms of being animated and animation, understood as a communication event? What if “the soul” was the medium of such events? After all, each of us is capable of distinguishing

an animated conversation from an un-animated one—however, articulating this difference or even objectifying it is incomparably harder. And “exhibiting” this difference can virtually only be done in the form of the joke or the caricature.

Al Clah

“Intrepid Shadows” USA 1966/69. Film from the series “Navajo Film Themselves”, 16 mm, B&W, silent, 18 min



In 1966 the anthropologists Sol Worth and John Adair asked members of the Navajo Nation in Pine Springs, Arizona, to shoot films “which depict their culture and themselves as they see fit.” One of the most complex—and least understood—films was “Intrepid Shadows,” which Margaret Mead described as “one of the most beautiful examples of animism in film.” In contrast to the other films, this work deals more with subjective than objective aspects of the life of the Navajos. Al Clah endeavors here to relate the Western concept of god to the Navajos’ traditional notion of deities.

“Intrepid Shadows” distributed by Arsenal—Institut für Film und Medienkunst
Image courtesy Arsenal—Institut für Film und Videokunst

Erik Steinbrecher (*1963)

“TROUBLE MIT DER ANIMA” 2012. Ed. Anselm Franke, Design: Stephan Müller, Winfried Heining and Erik Steinbrecher. Published by Kodoji Press, first edition, 300 copies



“(FRISÜRCHEN)”

Published on the occasion of the exhibition “ANIMISMUS” at Haus der Kulturen Berlin/ March 2012

Design: Stephan Müller and Erik Steinbrecher,
© 2012 Erik Steinbrecher and Kodoji Press
Published by Kodoji Press, first edition, 300 copies

O.T., 2000–2012

Mixed media; furs, prints and castings

The Swiss artist Erik Steinbrecher works with various materials and objects. By shaping them into new guises and forms, he creates his own scenarios and new associations and relationships: “TROUBLE MIT DER ANIMA” is an artist’s book which transforms a selection of collected photographs by Erik Steinbrecher into a kind of buffet. Using the left-overs of eaten meals, he fashions them into faces and grimaces in pans, bowls, or on porcelain and cardboard plates. “(FRISÜRCHEN)” is an artist edition comprising 12 printed and foldable cardboard panels. The motifs are based on a series of works featuring hair

objects, sculptures and collages. This printed materials and other works—such as the “Les Cheveux de Monsieur Rousseau” (2009)—are presented in the exhibition in separate display/show cabinets.

Image (Detail) O.T., Photos from the series “TROUBLE MIT DER ANIMA”
Produced with the support of Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Daria Martin (*1973)

“Soft Materials” 2004. Film, 16 mm, 10:30 min



Daria Martin’s filmic works, all shot on 16 mm, sound out the expressive possibilities of corporeality, of the body in space, exploring what might be called a stylistics of affection.

Shot in a laboratory of “embodied artificial intelligence” in Zurich, which focuses on developing the sensory capacity of robotic structures, “Soft Materials” shows two naked bodies—specially trained dancers—in mutual, bodily exploration with (notably non-anthropomorphic) robotic devices. Based on the experimental work of the laboratory, in which robots “learn” through interaction—which finds its applications, among

others, in prostheses and gesture generation—the dancers engage in a choreography of reciprocity and resonance, a two-way exchange between artifice and body. Consequently, the film becomes a scene of interaction between machine and the human sensorium, beyond the technophobic and technophile fantasies which have so decisively shaped popular culture since the advent of technically reproducible media.

Courtesy the artist and Maureen Paley, London; film still

Roe Rosen (*1963)

“Vladimir’s Night” by Maxim Komar-Myshkin, 2011/2012. A selection from an album of 40 gouaches and text on paper, each 55 x 36.5 cm



“Vladimir’s Night” is a hybrid of a children’s book, an exceedingly gory martyrdom, and a twisted political treatise. Here, Vladimir (Putin, although the name is never mentioned) is both a little child and a political leader vacationing in his summer mansion. Before falling asleep he imagines seeing faces in the wooden veneer of his bedroom cabinet. The faces move, a mouth opens up, and animated objects flow out to cuddle with Vladimir, soon to be joined by energetic friends hailing from Vladimir’s drawer and his bag. The merry frolicking turns violent. Vladimir is raped, tortured, and murdered by objects. Israeli artist

Roe Rosen is behind the Russian author and artist Efim Poplavsky (1978–2011) a.k.a. Maxim Komar-Myshkin. Poplavsky was deeply influenced by Daniil Kharm’s funny and horrifying sense of the absurd, which epitomized for him two seemingly incommensurate states: an exhilarating, defiant, and irrational autonomy through art, and the all-encompassing sense of realistic terror.

Courtesy the artist; image: detail

Adam Curtis (*1955)

Extracts from “**The Century of the Self**” 2002. Documentary series, film transferred to DVD



Curtis is a documentary filmmaker who works for the BBC. His series “The Century of the Self” focuses on Sigmund Freud’s family: his daughter Anna Freud and his nephew Edward Bernay influenced the way corporations and governments have used Freud’s ideas of the unconscious mind. Anna Freud believed that psychoanalysis would help individuals to control unconscious drives that were barbaric and animalistic. Bernays used the idea of unconscious desires to develop the art of public relations, at the service of American corporations. The series also describes the counterculture of the 1960s where the unconscious

mind needed liberation, paving the way for unrestricted individualism. But this break with the legacy of Anna Freud was not a departure from Bernays, as PR managers found ways to address these new self-realized individuals within consumerist lifestyles.

Courtesy the artist and BBC; video still

Antje Majewski

“**La coquille. Conversation entre Issa Samb et Antje Majewski. Dakar 2010**” HD-Video, color, sound, 58 min



“**Madonna Maschine Rosenkranz / Die Steine, die Muscheln. Gespräch zwischen Thomas und Helke Bayrle und Antje Majewski, Frankfurt 2011**” HD-Video, color, sound, 36 min

“Madonna ...” is a conversation with the artist Thomas Bayrle in his studio in Frankfurt, about prayers in machines, the weaving of the fabric of society, the meadow as a „wonderful and terrible symbiosis“, and a new concept of freedom starting from our bodies. For Bayrle, there is no fundamental difference between the technical and the natural world, between our bodies and a motor. He first experienced this when he was working as a weaver.

“In any case, I didn’t trust my senses—when suddenly I started hearing human voices at a certain frequency in the dynamos.

I put my ear to the engine block and actually heard the delicate, little voices of women singing somewhere deep in the transmission...”

Helke Bayrle talks about stones as gods that are alive and tells us how she helps shells to move from one ocean to another: “So I threw Chinese shells into the sea in England, or in Italy, and vice versa, threw Italian shells into the Chinese sea.”

“La coquille” is a conversation with the artist and philosopher Issa Samb in his yard in Dakar. Issa Samb talks about our responsibility to help objects move

in the world, while respecting their history and origin, even in the tiniest object made in China. The charge that objects carry derives ultimately from the same force that also fills us. "Each leaf that may fall in this garden here, and that passes from the situation of being a natural leaf to becoming an object, moving from here to there, adopts a position, which participates in the definition of the whole ensemble in front of us. And beyond this location, the whole peninsula of Dakar, and beyond the peninsula the whole continent, and beyond the continent the whole world. It is not a question of interactivity,

neither is it even a question of interference. It is a question of the inter-relationships of living things..." (Issa Samb)
In the second half of the film Issa Samb unexpectedly tells Antje Majewski to listen to a big shell that she had brought with her, and guides her into a trance in which she describes the inside of the sea and hears a voice singing in the shell.

"La coquille" produced by Kunsthau Graz / Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt; "Madonna..." produced by Kunsthau Graz. Both videos are part of a series of philosophical conversations about "talking" objects, conducted by Antje Majewski for "The World of Gimel," Kunsthau Graz 2011. Image taken from "La coquille" © Antje Majewski
Courtesy neugerriemschneider, Berlin

Archival Material

Henri Michaux, "Misérable miracle (la mescaline)," New York Review Books Classics, New York 2002

Henri Michaux, "Misérable miracle (la mescaline)," Editions du Rocher, Monaco 1956

Richard Brautigan, "All watched over by machines of loving grace," paper mimeographed broadside ca. DIN A4, The Communication Company, San Francisco 1967
Courtesy Craig V. Showalter, USA

William Rubin (ed.), "Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern," 2 vols., Museum of Modern Art, New York 1984

Eduard Renner, "Ehernen Schalen: über die animistischen Denk- und Erlebnisformen," Haupt, Bern [et al.] 1967

Carl Einstein, Selected manuscript pages from "Handbuch der Kunst 1930–1940"
Courtesy Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Carl Einstein Archiv

Carl Einstein, "Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts," Propyläen, Berlin 1926

Carl Einstein, "Negerplastik," Wolff, Munich 1920 (2nd edition)

Ernst Lehmann, "Biologischer Wille. Wege und Ziele biologischer Arbeit im neuen Reich," J. F. Lehmann, Munich 1934

Corinna Treitel, "A Science for the Soul. Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern," The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore/London 2004

A. Irving Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," in: Culture in History, ed. by Stanley Diamond, Octagon Books, New York 1960. Reproduction

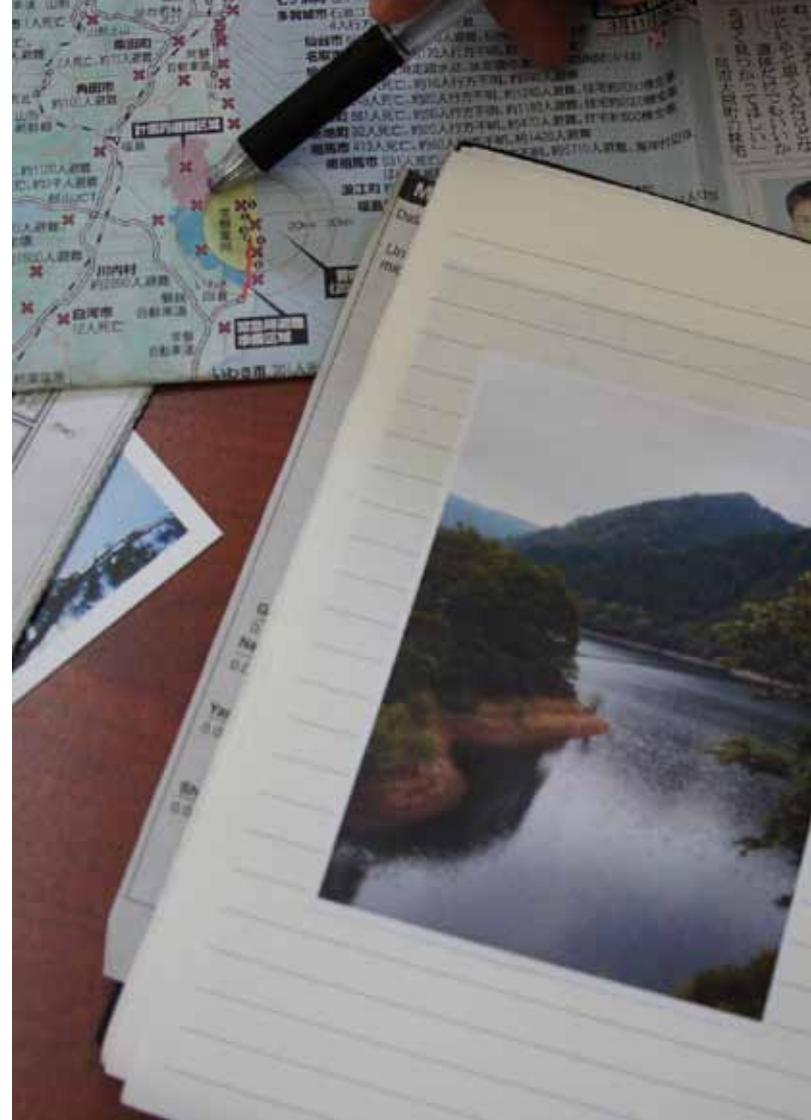
Pierre Dufour, 1a7, Rue Person,
Paris 13, Electronic two-hand
tester, dates probably from
1970s/1980s; nickled brass, syn-
thetic material, 295 x 260 x 100
and 165 x 165 x 105 mm
Courtesy: Adolf-Würth-Zentrum
für Geschichte der Psychologie
der Universität Würzburg

Cap (incorporating electrodes) of
an electroencephalograph, ca.
1940, 250 x 210 x 185 mm
Courtesy Deutsches Museum
München

“Rorschach Inkblot,” 1921, Hans
Huber, Bern 2009
© Verlag Hans Huber AG, Bern,
Switzerland, 1921, 1948, 1994

Electric Soul Research with
Diagnoscopy—**Zachar Bissky**,
“Die Diagnoskopie. Eine neue
Methode zur medizinischen Psy-
chologischen und forensischen
Diagnostik,” Berlin: Bios – Institut
für praktische Menschenkunde,
1925. Reproduction

“Two Maps.” An interview with Chihiro Minato; photo-
graphs: Angela Mellitopoulos; scans from the notebook:
Chihiro Minato; from: “The Life of Particles,” Angela
Mellitopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato



Chapter 7: The Politics of Animism / Ecology / Nature

The political dimensions of animism, beyond the Marxist critique of reification and alienation already discussed, are primarily found in the field of psychopathologies, the critique of colonialism, environmental politics, and more recently, within the context of indigenous political movements. The political horizon of animism which they all share consists in the de-naturalization and politicization of the social boundary. For the issue of what is actually conferred the status of a legitimate “subject” is a genuinely political question (if not the political question *par excellence*), with immediate consequences for its legal status and scope for action.

Within the critique of the institution of psychiatry and its normative pathologizations with their drive for conformity, animism as a

paradigm of a “dissolution of social boundaries,” represents a politicizing lens with the aid of which it first becomes possible to visualize difference. As a result, it plays an essential role in the anti-psychiatry movement, if frequently only an implicit one. Here the fundamental aim is to go beyond the Western paradigm of “subjectivity” in order to establish a new means of articulating relational and partial subjectivities.

However, for those cultures originally described as animist, and still described in these terms to this day, animism has always been a description imposed from outside, a term used by the West to indicate their status as the non-modern other. The majority of societies described in this way reject the term as a colonialist ascription. Over the course of the

last two decades, however, the situation has begun to change. Within the political movements of indigenous populations the term is being increasingly employed as a self-description. It is now being marshaled in battles for land rights and the protection of natural resources, with rights being claimed for nature itself by virtue of a concept of the “social” not restricted to the “human subject.”

Walon Green (*1936)

“The Secret Life of Plants” 1979. Film, 35 mm, color, sound, 96 min, transferred to DVD



Walon Green is best-known for his work for television, documentary features for National Geographic, and documentary-cum-science-fiction-films such as “The Hellstrom Chronicle” (1971).

The film “The Secret Life of Plants” is based on the eponymous book by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird and explores the physical, emotional, and spiritual relations between plants and man. Like the book, the film presents the thesis, that despite lacking a central nervous system and brain, plants are sentient beings. This is backed up by several experiments in the film: the parapsychologist who hopes to demonstrate that

plants build emotional ties to humans and the Hashimoto couple who use gadgetry and green fingers to teach a cactus the sounds of Japanese in order to give the plant quite literally a voice. Numerous time-lapse sequence animate plants, bringing them to a life more easily perceived by human eyes. At other instances, however, the film radically inverts this perspective and now uses time lapse to present man’s everyday life from what we may describe as the point of view of the slower species: a life defined by “pointless mechanical rush.”

Courtesy Paramount Pictures; film still

Jean Painlevé (1902–1989)

“Les amours de la pieuvre/The Love Life of the Octopus” 1967
Film, 16 mm, color, sound, 13 min, transferred to DVD



Painlevé’s films categorically refute the modern myth that science is demystifying the world. He intended his films to be taken seriously as scientific documentaries and conducted meticulous research. Only their artistic form betrays his surrealist leanings. He strove for a passionate relationship and exchange with his “subjects.” The trigger for “The Love Life of the Octopus,” Painlevé recounted, was early encounters with octopi, during which he recognized their intelligence, impressive memory, and capacity to express emotions. The film introduces us to the “assemblage” of the octopus, its affective web of

relations with its environment, exploring form and movement along a porous border between organism and world, thus involving us in a “becoming-animal” of sorts. Painlevé also engages us in the immersive effects of cinema and narration in both a very thoughtful and passionate way.

Courtesy Les Documents Cinématographiques, Paris; film still

Didier Demorcy (*1965)

“Vital Phantasy – Berlin version” 2010 – 2012. Video projection of a digital slide show, color, silent, interactive loop



Didier Demorcy is a filmmaker and activist, interested in questions related to the production of knowledge, perception, and the animal sciences. In “Vital Phantasy,” Demorcy takes us through the discovery of evolution, which slowly should change our static, mechanical perception of nature in which inert matter rules to one defined by permanent change and engagement. Demorcy alludes to a series of scientists whose work points to a renewed engagement with the “more than human” world and its morphologies. Key to such a non-reductionist twist of mind is the recognition that science is not a “discovery” of a world “out

there,” but rather an entering-into relation with it. “Nature” may be “known,” assume new tasks, and answer to the scientists’ questions by means of various “translations” that align, transform, and construct it. Demorcy concludes by suggesting that “animation” may perhaps be above all a question of entering into a relation with the world through curiosity and play.

Courtesy the artist
Produced with the support of Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Angela Melitopoulos (*1961) and Maurizio Lazzarato (*1955)

“Assemblages” 2010. Three-channel video installation, color, sound, 62 min, transferred to DVD



“Déconnage” 2011

Video installation, color, sound, 100 min, transferred to DVD; integrated archival table

“Two Maps” 2012

Video installation, color, sound, 45 min, transferred to DVD; integrated archival table

Throughout his life, Félix Guattari, philosopher, psychiatrist and activist sought to lay the foundations for a fundamental critique of modernistic concepts. Shortly before his death in 1992, he was convinced that a “temporary, but necessary return” to animism could deconstruct the ontological tradition of modernity which separates subject and object, nature and culture, man and animal, the animate and inanimate, matter and soul, symbol and thing, individual and collective. These dualisms are, according to Guattari, the reason for the majority of the political, ecological, scientific or aesthetic problems of our time.

The video installation “Assemblages,” which in its expanded form incorporates the archive installations “Déconnage” and “Two Maps,” follows the path and thinking of Félix Guattari in his four existential territories which were so decisive in shaping his therapeutic and political practice: the asylum in Saint-Alban, the clinic in La Borde and his journeys to Brazil and Japan. Guattari transformed institutional psychiatry with a “politics of experimentation” and turned it into a laboratory for political and theoretical discussions on the production of subjectivity. “Assemblages” shows archive footage featuring Félix Guattari,

excerpts from documentaries and essay films, radio interviews, interviews with friends and colleagues, footage from the La Borde clinic in France, excerpts from films by Fernand Deligny, Renaud Victor, François Pain, together with material shot during his research trip to Brazil. The archive installation “Déconnage” comprises a series of footage of an interview with the psychiatrist and resistance fighter François Tosquelles, the founder of the first open, institutional psychiatry during the Second World War in the Saint-Alban asylum. Featuring an interview, photos and a note book from the Japanese photographer

Chihiro Minato focusing on the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, the archive table “Two Maps” updates Guattari’s theses on schizoanalysis and ecosophy.

Courtesy Angela Melitopoulos and Collection Generali Foundation, Vienna
 Film still from “Assemblages” © the artist
 Produced with the support of Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Paulo Tavares (*1980)

“Non-Human Rights” 2011/2012. Film installation



Written and approved in 2008 after a decade-long period of successive political convulsions, the new constitution of Ecuador is the first of its kind to include nature, alongside human beings, as a subject of law. The “animist” conception of this legal text, which grants fundamental rights to elements such as rocks, mountains, river deltas and the seas, introduces a radical legal-epistemic shift that challenges the rigid borders that separate the world of objects from the world of subjects, the natural from the social, and thus presents a critical stand to the central tenets of the constitution of modernity. “Non-Human

Rights” by Brazilian architect Paulo Tavares presents archive interviews and documents about the historical process that led to the formulation of the “rights of nature” and reflects upon the juridical, political and ethical implications of its claims towards the commonality between humans and non-humans.

Image: Constitution Assembly, Ecuador, 2008, Courtesy ECTV
 Produced with the support of Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Archival Material

“The Life of Particles.” A visual research project by **Angela Melitopoulos** and **Maurizio Lazzarato**

“Two Maps.” An interview with **Chihiro Minato**
Photographs: Angela **Melitopoulos**; Scans from the notebook: Chihiro Minato

Michel Serres, “The Natural Contract, Studies in Literature & Science,” University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1995

Eugenio Raúl Zaffaroni, “La Pachamama y el Humano,” Ediciones Colihue, Buenos Aires 2011

Christopher D. Stone, “Should Trees Have Standing? And Other Essays on Law, Morals and the Environment,” Oceana Publications, New York 1996

Rights of Nature Articles in Ecuador’s Constitution. Reproduction

Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, submitted to the United Nations for consideration by the Bolivian government, 2010. Reproduction

Guided tours by the curators

Sun 18.3, Sun 6.5. 3 pm.

Anselm Franke: curator of the exhibition

Sun 25.3. 3 pm.

Irene Albers (Freie Universität Berlin): project director “Animism”

Expert Guided Tours

The expert guided tours grant a deeper insight into the exhibition, and highlight key aspects.

Sun 1.4. 3 pm.

Diedrich Diederichsen: cultural journalist, pop theorist, Professor for the Theory, Practice and Mediation of Contemporary Art at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Vienna.

Sun 15.4. 3 pm.

Gertrud Koch: film- and art theorist focussing on questions of representation and aesthetics. Professor of film studies at Freie Universität Berlin

STUDENT’S DAY

Wed 25.4. 3 pm.

Guided tour through the exhibition by students of Freie Universität Berlin (Sakine Weikert and Linn Taubert), followed by a discussion with Irene Albers and guests

GALLERY WEEKEND

Sat 28.4. from 3.30 pm.

“Assembly” by Agency and Artist Talk with Angela Melitopoulos, Anselm Franke, and others.

In “Assembly,” Agency calls things forth, speculating on the question: Can non-humans get included within art practices? Followed by an Artist Talk with Angela Melitopoulos at 5 pm.

Films and Workshops

Sun 18.3. 3 pm.

Animal – Man – Animal

Comic Workshop with Nadia Budde for children aged 6 and over
The cunning fox, the stubborn donkey, the timid hare: in fairy-tales, each and every animal is endowed with its very own distinct characteristics. Against the backdrop of such humanization of animals in fairy-tales, we transfer our own characteristics onto animals in this workshop. Nadia Budde is a children's book illustrator, having achieved acclaim for her novels "Eins, zwei, drei, Tier" and "Trauriger Tiger toastet Tomaten."

Sun 25.3. 3 pm.

Animalix

3D Comic Workshop with Imke Trostbach for children aged 6 and over. In this workshop we design comic characters and confer upon them specific personality traits of animals. Subsequently the animal characters are formed from felt, before springing into action. An illustrator and graphic artist, Imke Trostbach launched the Illustrator group Berlinerstrich in 2006.

Sun 1.4. 3 pm.

When things speak to us

Media-Workshop with Frauke Menzinger and Gabriele Nagel for children aged 10 and over

Embarking on a multimedia journey of discovery through the exhibition, the workshop explores the interaction between the exhibits and the visitors. Using camera, pencil and paper we post comments of our own impressions of the exhibition. Frauke Menzinger is a stage and costume designer and since 2010 has been head of the Junior und Teens Workshop at C/O Berlin; Gabriele Nagel is a video artists, who in 2009 founded the HOR artists' collective.

15.4. 15 h

FLIP-BOOK & Co

Animation-Workshop with Stefanie Bokeloh and Frauke Menzinger for children aged 6 and over

What is animation? How are the pictures propelled into motion? The workshop invites participants to take a journey through the history of animated images from the Laterna Magica, the flip-book to the modern animations. The shortfilm created in the workshop will then be available for viewing on the HKW Internet site. Stefanie Bokeloh is an illustrator, designer and flip-book expert.

Sun 22.4. from 12 pm.

Hayao Miyazaki – Film Sunday for the whole family

Mythical forest gods, speaking passenger buses, and flying castles—Hayao Miyazaki's animated films conjure magical realms inhabited by possessed objects, animals and people alike. Often these worlds are threatened by unimaginative adults and other destructive energies, and have to be rescued. And this is where the children come in... A specialist in Japanese animated cartoon films or animé, Eriko Ogihara-Schuck, presents three of Miyazaki's most beautiful films.

12 pm. "My Neighbor Totoro" (1988)

The two sisters Satsuki und Mei move with their father into a haunted house. In the adjacent forest they encounter the giant animal Totoro, which only the children can see. Totoro can fly and invites them to join him in an adventure. Also accompanying them is a cat-bus equipped with ten legs which can travel as quickly as the wind. Rather than being simply invented, the story is based on the traditional Japanese belief in 8 million gods and spirits.

Animism—Conference

2 pm. “Spirited Away” (2001)

Chihiro, a 10-year old girl steps into the world of the Japanese gods and spirits in order to save her parents, after they were changed into pigs by the witch Yubaba who runs a bathhouse for the gods. To liberate her parents Chihiro starts working in the bathhouse. Here she meets Haku, who explains to her the rules of the realm of the gods and helps her to survive in this alien world.

5 pm. “Ponyo” (2008)

Ponyo is a goldfish. One day she swims into the world of human beings, and is saved by the 5-year-old Sosuke who lives atop a cliff by the sea. Ponyo falls in love with him and wants to become a human so they can share their lives together. So she steals her father’s magic powers and acquires arms and legs. Ponyo’s mother, the sea goddess, suggests that she become a human. However, she also warns her of the danger that Ponyo could turn into foam.

Sun 6.5. 3 pm.

Living fairy tales

Literature Workshop with Isabella Gresser

for children aged 8 and over

In the fairy-tales by Hans Christian Andersen the boundaries between humans, animals and things become very blurred. With self-designed masks and silhouettes, the stories are recounted and the characters animated into life.

Isabella Gresser is an artist and art educator, who works at the interface of literature, art and film.

Animism—Conference

Fri 16.3. + Sat 17.3.

Roundtables (in English)

Lectures (simultaneous translation English/French–German)

In recent years the categorical separation between the subjective and objective world in modernity's imaginary and societal space has in many disciplines been subject to a fundamental reappraisal, and kindled, not least, a new interest in animism. The conference on the exhibition brings together a broad range of current perspectives from the fields of ethnology, literary criticism, art, the natural sciences, the history of science and politics. The focus and starting point of the debate is to identify possible and surprising correspondences and connections, render both the concept and history of animism a fruitful subject for self-interrogation and foster a new critical reflection of modernity. The discussions scrutinize modernity's established practice of separating and demarcating between nature and culture, things and actors, world and imagination.

Three roundtables place "Animism" in relation to the current issues concerning the modern order of global economic, political, and ecological conditions. The evening lectures comment on the newly discovered transdisciplinary attention commanded by "Animism" from a philosophical, political and scientific perspective.

Conception:

Irene Albers, Professor for General and Comparative Literature and Romanic Philology at the Freie Universität Berlin

Anselm Franke, curator of the exhibition

Fri 16.3. 2 – 6 pm.

Roundtable 1:

ANIMISM AND THE OTHER NARRATIVES OF MODERNITY

In English

This roundtable explores the capacity of the concept to act as a historiographic device. Here, the critic of the modern-colonialist assumptions implicit in the concept opens new perspectives on the writing of modern history, concerning the constitution of the modern order of knowledge, things, disciplines and society. How can the imaginary and historical realms of modernity be reflected anew through the conceptual prism of animism?

With: **Cornelius Borck** (Director of the Institute for the History of Medicine and Science, Universität zur Lübeck), **Harry Garuba** (Director of the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town), **Thomas Macho** (Professor for Cultural History, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin), **Spyros Papapetros** (Professor for History and the Theory of Architecture, Princeton University), **Elisabeth von Samsonow** (Professor for the Philosophical and Historical Anthropology of Art, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna), **Erhard Schüttpeitz** (Professor for Media Theory, Universität Siegen), **Gabriele Schwab** (Professor for Comparative Literature, University of California/Irvine).
Moderation: **Irene Albers, Anselm Franke**

Fri 16.3. 7 pm.
RECLAIMING ANIMISM
Isabelle Stengers, Lecture
Simultaneous translation
English–German

“Reclaim” means demanding the return of that from which we were once separated. Not, however, in the simple sense of retrieving what was once “lost,” but rather recovering from this separation and “regenerating what was poisoned as a consequence of it.” What must be the constitution of a mode of thinking, such as a science, which negotiates animism within the complex construct of “knowledge production?” What possibilities can then arise if we ensure that the preconditions of this thinking and the “objects” of science are flexible and freely negotiable?

Isabelle Stengers is Professor for the Philosophy of Science at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

8 pm.
THE SPEECH OF THINGS AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF BREATH
David Abram, Lecture
Simultaneous translation
English–German

This talk will suggest that animism, first and foremost, is a way of speaking in close accordance with the spontaneous life of our bodily senses. By acknowledging the active agency and eloquence of things (whether those things be creatures, artifacts, dry riverbeds, gusts of wind, or spoken words), we awaken our animal senses from a kind of slumber. To learn to speak (and to sense) in this manner is a gesture of humility, a practice that calls the human mind back to its body—and calls the body, again and again, into dynamic relation and exchange with the more-than-human community of earthly things.

David Abram is a US-American cultural sociologist, philosopher and author.

9 pm.
IN CONVERSATION: Isabelle Stengers and David Abram
Moderator: Anselm Franke

Sat 17.3. 2 – 3.45 pm.
Roundtable 2:
ANIMISM AND CAPITALISM
In English

The second roundtable questions the concept’s history in relation to the critique of the commodity form and its alleged animation. It explores the historical problem of the animation of matter in relation to economy, to desire, and recent transformations of the capitalist image-sphere.

With: **Avery F. Gordon** (Professor for Sociology at the University of California/Santa Barbara), **Tom Holert** (art historian and publicist, Vienna), **Angela Melitopoulos** (visual artist, Berlin) / **Maurizio Lazzarato** (sociologist and philosopher, Paris), **Isabelle Stengers** (Professor for The Science of Philosophy at the Université Libre de Bruxelles)
Moderator: **Anselm Franke**

Sat 17.3. 4.15 – 6 pm.

Roundtable 3: ANIMISM AND POLITICS

In English

The third roundtable is devoted to the political implications of the discussion. It revolves around current political struggles, for instance indigenous and ecological movements in South America, and discusses them from a historical perspective, in terms of the constitution of political representation, recognition, and rights

With: **David Abram** (cultural sociologist and philosopher, New Mexico), **Alejandro Haber** (Professor h.c. at the Universidad Nacional de Catamarca, Argentina, working on the theory and Philosophy of archeology), **Esther Leslie** (School of English and Humanities, London, works on Marxist theory of Aesthetics and Culture), **Michael Taussig** (Professor for Anthropology, Columbia University, New York), **Paulo Tavares** (Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmith College, London, working on the political and ecological movements in South America), **Rane Willerslev** (Professor for Anthropology at the University Aarhus, Denmark)
Moderator: **Avery F. Gordon** (Professor for Sociology at the University of California/Santa Barbara)

Sat 17.3. 7 pm.

“THE DEATH SHIP” Michael Taussig, Lecture

Simultaneous translation
English–German

“The Death Ship” (written by B. Traven in 1926) tells stories, better even than the sailors who have no official papers and are worked to the bone. How can a ship be a storyteller? And what about those massive truck tires in the movie “Wages of Fear?” Are they not alive, too? They fill the screen, inching forwards, more alive than any human. Finally, if there is a finally, consider the whirring substance the medicine man takes out of his body in Tierra del Fuego circa 1920 that can see, can kill, can cure, and goes in and out of the body at alarming speed with a great screech, the epitome of Being’s Becoming, the ur-animate.

Michael Taussig is Professor for Anthropology at Columbia University, New York

9 pm.

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGY OF THE INVISIBLES Tobie Nathan, Lecture

Simultaneous translation
French–English–German

Since “invisible” beings have appeared on the agenda, the zar, djinn, ‘afritt, melk, who share the world with humans in Ethiopia, Yemen, Somalia, Arabia, the Maghreb, India, and Pakistan, as well as in the migration countries of the West—people have tried to find psychological explanations for the phenomenon. We should take them seriously, analyze the thoughts, theories, and systems their existence implies, in order to see that they draw another image of “the other,” who is different, and at the origin of the true rules of hospitality.

Tobie Nathan is Professor for Clinical Psychology and Psychopathology at the Université Paris 8.

ANIMISMUS – REVISIONEN DER MODERNE

Publication

Irene Albers/Anselm Franke (Ed.)

Diaphanes, March 2012 In German

“Animism” is an invention of 19th century ethnology, established at the apogee of European colonialism. Animists endow inanimate nature with souls and spirits. This is explained as a projection distorting the (material) reality, through which life and agency are ascribed to things and nature. Thus animism becomes the antithesis to modern science, an exemplary expression of a “natural condition,” in which the psyche and nature are deemed to be inseparable. If a new multidisciplinary interest in animism has been rekindled, then this is attributable not to the rehabilitation of the concept as a scientific category, but by virtue of the fact that the categorical separation of the subjective and objective world has itself been subject to question.

An accompaniment to the exhibition and conference, the volume collates key texts in this debate.

With contributions by Bruno Latour, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Alf Hornborg, Nurit Bird-David, Isabelle Stengers, Gabriele Schwab, Elisabeth von Samsonow, Erhard Schüttpelz, Oksana Bulgakowa, Edwin Carels, Sergeij Eisenstein, Harry Garuba, Angela Melitopoulos, Maurizio Lazzarato, Irene Albers, Anselm Franke and Diederich Diederichsen.

In the Contact of the Project:

Modern Realism and Materialism

Lectures

- Wed 11.4. 7 pm. **Graham Harman: Strange Realisms**
Thu 19.4. 7 pm. **Quentin Meillassoux: Iteration and repetition. Ontology of the meaningless sign**
Fri 4.5. 7 pm. **Ray Brassier**
Fri 11.5. 7 pm. **Iain Hamilton Grant**

In English

The series of lectures addresses realism and materialism within modern philosophy. Common to the invited philosophers Ray Brassier, Iain Hamilton Grant, Graham Harman and Quentin Meillassoux is the critique of post-Kantian philosophy, in which the world cannot be thought of independently of human beings. The philosophical positions introduced furnish a variety of arguments in their rejection of the correlation of thought and the world—the post-Kantian paradigm, which Meillassoux has termed “Correlationism.” By developing a transcendental naturalism, a speculative materialism, an object-oriented philosophy or a scientific realism, the relationship between epistemology and metaphysics, science and philosophy, thought and nature can be redefined.

In cooperation with the Collaborative Research Centre 626 (Aesthetic Experience and the Dissolution of Artistic Limits) at the Freie Universität Berlin

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**Animism had
endowed things
with souls;
industrialism
makes souls
into things.**

Theodor W. Adorno /
Max Horkheimer,
"Dialectic of Enlightenment"