

May, Jun

Jaargang 6 NO. 27



Museums en galerieën



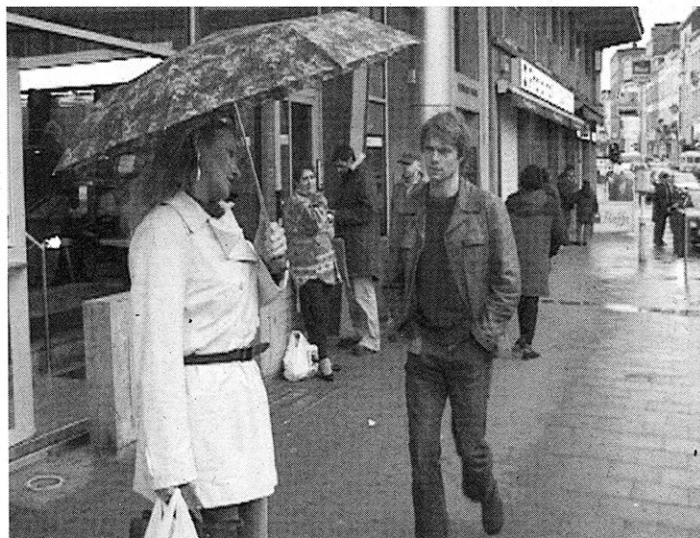
Waarom niet?



Gallery becomes school for pickpockets

Reporter
Marc Leenders

BRUSSELS, 15 APR. The videowork "L'école des pickpockets" by Sven Augustijnen was shown last year during the exhibition Metro>Polis, an event organised by curator Moritz Küng, on the occasion of Brussels 2000, Cultural Capital of Europe. Artists infiltrated contributions into the underground tram connection that links the North and South Stations in Brussels. In his video Augustijnen showed how two experienced, professional pickpockets transform an aspiring pickpocket into a promising talent in just a few hours training in a closed-off rehearsal space. The student is initiated step by step into the philosophy of the trade, whereby the various moves that constitute this approximating handicraft are demonstrated and practised. Several trial runs are also carried out on willing volunteers, picked by chance from an adjacent street. For the first two days of the exhibition, the video was continuously on view in a public service area of the Brussels tram company in the South Station. Following some indignant complaints by passers-by, the video was only shown during explicit screenings in a separate auditorium on the tram company's premises.



Apprentice Palle Dyrvall in the streets of Brussels. Photo: Jean-Luc Manteau.

(advertentie)

Tentoonstelling Exposition 10.5-23.6
Vernissage 9.5, 18-21 u/h

**SVEN
AUGUSTIJNEN**

**L'ÉCOLE DES
PICKPOCKETS**

Galerie Jan Mot

Rue Antoine Dansaertstraat 46 B-1000 Brussel Bruxelles

A, B and C meet after the event on a sunny Sunday afternoon and discuss fiction and reality in the video "L'école des pickpockets" by Sven Augustijnen.

B. The integration of art into life apparently got a lukewarm reception in the South Station?

C. Oh, it was just an error of interpretation. Passers-by believed that the film was sympathetic towards the pickpockets. Of course, the video looks true to life, but it remains a documentary fiction. The pickpocket theme fitted seamlessly into the exhibition concept. But it remains a narrative, albeit precisely articulated.

A. But in a parodising manner as you can find on television?

C. Yes, but look at the differences! No regard for the possible victims of pickpocketing, no background information about the weal and woe of pickpockets. Not for nothing is it called "L'école des pickpockets". A mere game? Pure presumption? A choreography of bodies on the stage, true to life, sure, but edited with great precision and strung together with some fiction. Incidentally, was there a script written for this?

A. No, just some agreements beforehand about how it should proceed. But the actors did a good job of it.

B. Fiction! A choreography! Come off it, they're pickpockets! They undress you and even that is delivered quite playfully and to top it all, the film elicits sympathy for the passing dexterity of these gentlemen.

A. Yes, but that playfulness is part and par-

cel of what these professionals, these pickpockets, are and do. They're true manipulators, born seducers versed in the art of distraction. They are determinant for the playfulness, call it the irony, of the way the story unfolds. You should see how they go about their relationships!

B. Pilfering, right?

C. It's fiction!

B. Sure it is. Of course, us freethinking, well-to-do exhibition visitors can grant these pickpockets some leeway, in an exhibition. But in practise, you would feel like you're being fondled in your crotch; suddenly you're without your bankcards and cash or I.D., your keys and maybe even your watch or your fountainpen disappeared as well. Then you'd feel naked! And you won't have felt a thing: like an innocent impregnation! You'd once more feel your bare existence in our society rife with pre-trodden paths. Where else can you experience that!

C. Come on, it's an "école des pickpockets"!

B. Oh, right, a school for postponed happiness.

A. They are quite good at it.

B. And proud of it too! With perverse enjoyment this "professional" elaborates on his expertise: "The pickpocket doesn't desire an object, no, he professes to incorporate all his craft and wisdom into the action, into the perpetration of the act of pickpocketing." He doesn't steal, no! He excels! Worse still, he doesn't steal, but simply applies his expertise to alter the property status of things, because a little later on he

coaxes: "If you fancy a smoke, you can buy cigarettes. But why buy if you can take." In other words, the good man earns his cigarettes, you can be sure of that. But our society doesn't tolerate that! First we have to earn the money, an ennobled barter operation as a step in-between, and only then are you able to buy these cigarettes. This pickpocket conceals his parasitical actions. He enters into no relationship with his victims, with a shortcircuit by consequence in the latter. He is a voyeur, like the camera, incidentally, but the camera only looks.

A. But the pickpocket pays for this display of innocence with the disclosure of his identity.

B. Yes, and the video-maker is the artist, surely, who by showing the small extrapolates the larger picture. Along the lines of: "Ladies and Gentlemen, here it is still small and friendly, but it is nothing like the rougher outside world which we no longer experience." By the way, what is a video like this doing in a gallery? Is it art as well, then?

C. A question of confidence.

A. I think it is rather a question of picking and being picked.

Translation: Kate Mayne.

L'école des pickpockets (2000)

by Sven Augustijnen

With Palle Dyrvall, Vedary, Claude Magy.

Video. French spoken with English subtitles.

Duration: 50 min.

Exhibited at the gallery from 10 May till 23 June. Screenings every hour.

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pre-trodden paths. Where else can you

cigarettes. This pickpocket conceals paid

The Void Pacific

Contribution by
**Manon de Boer and
Oscar van den Boogaard**

VENICE BEACH, 19 MAR

Kelly: Let it go.

Jeff: Okay, caught up... let yours flow out far.

Oscar: You see you only have to copy, that's the best thing.

Manon: That's what Oscar tells me ... you should copy more.

Brian: No, I'm more for stealing.

Manon: Stealing?

Brian: Yes, I think the greatest artists in the world are great thieves but they're like the

ones... the thief that comes to your house and steals your watch and then shows up at your dinner party two days later and you know that they've stolen it from you but you think 'god it looks so goddamn good on them, they have to keep it' that's like Mike Kelley and all those other guys.

Jeff: There's that fucker again.

Oscar: He takes all our wind.

Manon: It's a much bigger boat.

Oscar: What can we do to damage his reputation? Manon, can you do something?

Brian: Nothing.

Kelly: You're the novelist.

Manon: Write a story.

Kelly: You can never escape the artworld.

Oscar: Who is this guy anyway?

Jeff: Charley.

Kelly: Charles Ray.

Oscar: Charles Ray? Really? He must be a billionaire.

Manon: Well that's a nice story.

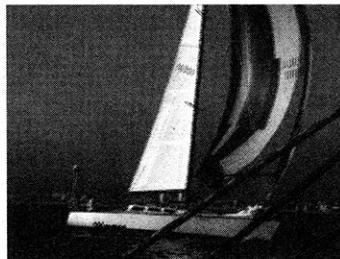
Kelly: It's the L.A. landscape in action.

Jeff: I wouldn't want that boat, would you want that boat?

Oscar: No never, it would make me unhappy.

Jeff: It's a skimmer.

Brian: That was great last night with Nick Cave, they asked him 'play a happy song' and he said 'I do only angry and sad, that's all I do'.



“Inserts in Real Time” par Dora García

Reporter
Sonia Dermience

BRUSSELS, 14 APR. “The work evolves in terms of perception. I try to create perceptive situations which are nearly squeaking. (...) Squeaking: litterally squeaking (a disturbing and oppressing song, a blinding light, and a stabbing colour) and also squeaking like deviations from one's reason, from habitualness, from logicalness; exaggerated, obsessive or useless situations. They squeake: they do not circulate freely.”

Dora García, 2000

Sous le terme générique de “Proxy” (en français: personne fondée de pouvoir, mandataire), Dora García demande à des personnes d'intervenir suivant ses instructions et en son nom dans des lieux d'exposition. La première intervention a eu lieu à la foire d'art contemporain de Madrid en février sur le stand de la galerie Aizpuru. Une jeune femme s'est installée dans cet espace avec les oeuvres et les visiteurs pendant une journée. Sa visite avait la particularité d'être plus longue que celle des autres personnes et sa présence parmi les oeuvres inanimées était vivante. Cette personne, Barbara Manzetti, est une chorégraphe dont Dora García a filmé la performance

avec une caméra de surveillance. Aucune spectacularité ne prévalait à cette “représentation”. L'artiste n'avait pas créé de mise en scène et la chorégraphe se comportait d'une manière à peine différente des autres personnes: arpenter l'espace, regardant les oeuvres, s'asseyant sur le sol, mangeant, lisant, etc. Si ce n'est la durée de son séjour et les actes qui en découlent: manger, s'asseoir, lire, s'appuyer sur le mur, aucun acte théâtral ne la distinguait des autres personnes pour légitimer son statut d'oeuvre.

Le 28 mars dernier, Dora García envoie son “proxy” à la Galerie Jan Mot, au vernissage d'une exposition de groupe à laquelle elle participe. Barbara Manzetti occupe l'espace d'exposition avec les oeuvres d'André Cadere, Sharon Lockhart et Uri Tzaig le temps du vernissage. Regarder autour d'elle, barrer les textes de mots croisés, manger, boire et harpenter l'espace en répondant parfois aux questions des visiteurs étaient ses activités. Dans son rôle substitutif, elle finit par se confondre avec

Taking Liberties

Interview
With Charles Mutscheller

BRUSSELS-CHICAGO, 15 APR. For the third contribution in the series about collectors we interviewed Charles Mutscheller, a young curator and critic who showed last April a part of his collection at The Suburban, an alternative art-space in Chicago. This provocative show addressed issues like ownership, copyrights, appropriation and what was called "the fuzzy distinction between collecting and kleptomania...". The interview was done by e-mail.

What were the works shown and how did you acquire them?

Originally, five components comprised the 'Taking Liberties' exhibition: a foosball taken from Maurizio Cattelan's 'Stadio'; a replica of Martin Creed's 'work no. 79: some Blu-Tak kneaded, rolled into a ball, and depressed against the wall'; a bootleg copy of Rineke Dijkstra's 'The Buzzclub, Liverpool, UK/Mysteryworld, Zandaam, NL'; an individual offset print taken from Felix Gonzalez-Torres's 'Untitled (The End)'; and a polished ball bearing dispensed from Robert Szczerbowski's modified gumball machine 'Prosecution of a Creative Act'. The Dijkstra video was removed from the show ten days after it opened for legal reasons.

We've seen artists in recent times who stole an entire gallery exhibition and showed the works in another exhibition (Maurizio Cattelan) or others using film material with or without the copyrights/permission of the authors (Douglas Gordon). The first time I heard about the show I thought you were an artist yourself.

That has been a common response to the exhibition, however, I have never interpreted my role as anything other than curatorial.

I wonder how much we can still talk about these components in this show as artworks. It is certainly one of the interesting issues raised by the exhibition. The pirate copy of the Dijkstra video is clearly not the same as the work: there is no projection, and the physical impact is completely dif-

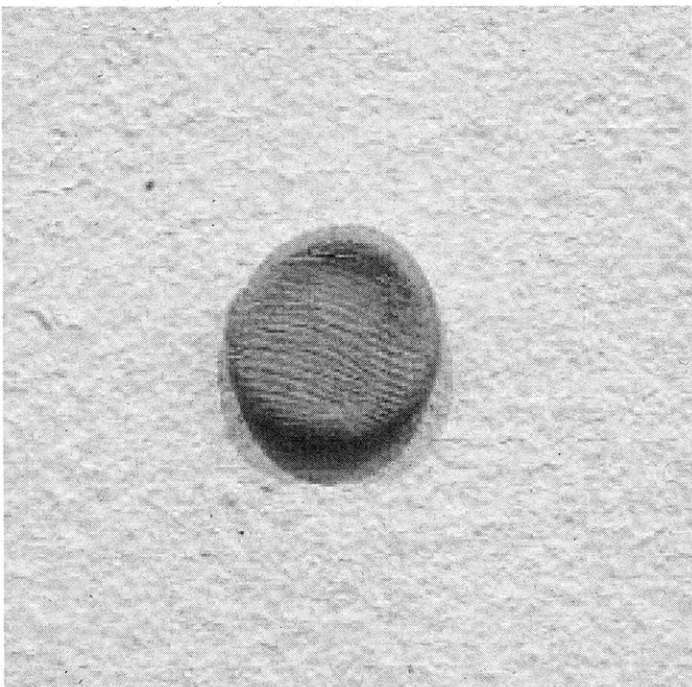
ferent. What you showed is nothing other than documentation of the work. Cattelan's foosball certainly is not the work either, it is just a detail from it. Do you agree with that?

Indeed. The works in the exhibition were not presented as authentic originals. Rather, I wanted to recontextualize the pieces according to my own conceptual framework, namely, to explore the various means by which people can take artwork into their possession, both legally and illicitly, and instigate a discourse about those actions. For me, the Dijkstra bootleg raises issues about the dissemination of not only video but also of electronic media in general. Although I'd prefer not to wax nostalgic about video's early appeal for democratic distribution, I do want to scrutinize the medium's evolution in the past few decades and liken that progression

to recent developments in internet-circulated music. I'm no soothsayer, but it occurs to me that copyrights are becoming increasingly ill-equipped to regulate, or even mediate, the curious circumstances that we confront in many social arenas nowadays and may pass the way of the dinosaur.

What I'm really after is this: what's the difference between buying the real video work of Dijkstra or illegally copying a documentation tape? An easier case might be the Martin Creed replica: what is the difference between authorized and non-authorized reproduction?

I don't like spoon-feeding people information – I'd like to believe that every person who sees the exhibition (or simply hears about it, for that matter) can and will conjure up his/her own response to that question.



Martin Creed, *Work no. 79: Some Blu-Tak kneaded, rolled into a ball, and depressed against the wall*, 1993. Courtesy Cabinet Gallery, London.

Can you nevertheless explain what the difference is from your point of view? Do you experience the authentic work differently from the replica?

Replicas are often situated subordinately to their original - I like to invert that relationship. Contrary to the notion that scarcity increases value, reproductions can enjoy their own inherent value. For instance, the Martin Creed replica in the 'Taking Liberties' exhibition is more valuable to me than the original because it's in my possession. I suppose a bird in hand, under certain circumstances, really is worth more than an original in the bush. In the money world, however, the non-authorized reproduction of artwork (especially artwork that commands tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dollars) seems to really piss some people off, probably because they see it as an affront to their selective investment.

But do you agree that the act of buying a work, whether it's for one dollar or for one million dollars, is a way to show a commitment to or an appreciation of an artwork, and that there is something healthy about this exchange?

Yes, I agree wholeheartedly; it is very important to support good art making in a tangible way. I would collect the work of Martin Kersels, Helen Mirra, and Toba Khedori if I could swing it financially. But I also find it extremely gratifying to acquire works by local artists, such as Oli Watt, Kristen Van Deventer, and Siebren Versteeg. Not only has this been a more affordable approach to collecting but it has also rendered a much more direct relationship between the artist, the artwork, and myself. For instance, I bought some small painting sketches from a friend, who in turn used the money to finance larger iterations of them - I was pretty jazzed about that.

You told me that you didn't want to offend the artists whose work you copied or stole, which I sincerely believe, but isn't there nevertheless a hidden reproach towards the way Rineke Dijkstra distributes her work? Isn't there a suggestion that her video work could be distributed in a more democratic way? In the text accompanying the show it is stated that the fact of showing a bootlegged copy "symbolically returns video from the control of the privileged few back into the public sphere."

Although I'm not typically adverse to forceful language, the word 'reproach' strikes me as unnecessarily rash here. I don't harbor any deep-seeded resentment for Rineke Dijkstra (actually, quite the contrary is the case) or the fact that her work sells for a lot of money. I would be hard-pressed, however, to tell you that I'm not disappointed that video in general has become just another high-priced art object. Any implicit indictment presented in my exhibition is directed at the circumstances and not the individual.

Your show illustrates that there are different ways to take or collect art, but that, in the end, the signature remains an integral element of the artwork. The remark made by Nicolas Bourriaud in an interview in the latest issue of Artforum that "nobody cares anymore about signatures as authority makers, we now live in a cultural space of increasingly fluid circulations of signs" seems to me rather questionable.

I'd agree. Although it sounds nice on paper, Mr. Bourriaud's comment shies away from certain legal and economic realities, many of which I'm becoming well acquainted with as a result of my exhibition. There are plenty of people in this world who covet authenticity, primarily because there is a price tag attached to it. And perhaps nowhere is this notion of authenticity more valued than in the commercial art world.

The exhibition is part of the 'Taking Liberties' series, which is a series of works that are distributed independently of the state.

In brief

Honoré d'O has won an international competition for a public work in the Vondelpark in Utrecht (NL). His sculpture "Fotosynthese" is nothing less than a moving forest. The energy is produced by solar panels fixed on a large box of 3 x 10 x 2 meters in which the trees are planted. The sculpture also functions as a bench. It will be ready by the end of the year.

During the summer the gallery will be open only by appointment. The summer show will include works by Pierre Bismuth and Sharon Lockhart. The gallery reopens on 12 September with new works by Rineke Dijkstra. (see Newspaper 26)

The first two short films by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Riyo* (1998) and *Central* (2001) have been selected for the prestigious section 'La Quinzaine des Réalisateurs' at the Film Festival of Cannes (10 - 20/5). These films will be shown by the gallery in the beginning of the next season.

Une chambre en ville, a work created in the gallery in 1996 by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, will be shown again during the exhibition 'A world within a space' at the Kunsthalle in Zürich (25/8-21/10). This installation, which was described in a recent article on Gonzalez-Foerster in Art Press number 267 as a turning point in her work, was also part of two other exhibitions: at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris (1998, with Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno) and at De Appel in Amsterdam (It always jumps back..., 1997).



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, *Une chambre en ville*, 1996.

Manon de Boer participates in 'Vi - Intentional Communities' at the Rooseum in Malmö

Press release

MALMÖ – The exhibition curated by Charles Esche is based on the concept of the 'intentional community', a social group who agree to follow rules independent of the state. These rules can vary from ecological recycling to the elimination of money or free love relationships. Though the ideas have roots stretching back to the utopian ideas of Thomas More (1516), they have flourished in the modern age as religious cults or, more recently, revolutionary or dissident groups. The rich period of experimentation around and after 1968 is a particular source of inspiration for this exhibition. That moment has become a rich catalyst for the artists.

The exhibition will include historical material from earlier communes and communities including Otto Muhl's 70s

commune Friedrichshof and Monte Verita in Switzerland. The main emphasis will be on contemporary work modelling different ways of living as well as projects actively creating intentional communities today. The exhibition section will include film and sculptural installations by Annika Eriksson, Mike Nelson, Andrea Zittel/Joachim Hamou, Johanna Billing amongst others. Projects by Make it Happen, protoacademy and Superflex working with different communities in the city of Malmö will be initiated during the exhibition. (Text excerpts from the press release)

Manon de Boer will participate with her recent publication 'Oscillations' (Editions La Lettre Volée), a collaboration between de Boer and Annemieck de Haan, Chloé Martin, Maureen Mooren and Daniel van der Velden.

Uri Tzaig's first solo show in Great-Britain

Uri Tzaig will show at Lux Gallery, London from April 27 till May 27. The show includes three video works: *Tempo* (1998), *Crystal* (1999-2000) and *Allah Akbar* (2001). On this last video work Tzaig wrote: "This 7.5 minute long video functions as a mantra for the beauty of nature and the different ways we construct it in form and meaning. The images are taken from the Israeli landscape, all within 40 minutes from my house: olive trees, orange trees, green fields under the rain etc. It is not the original essence of art to embrace God and celebrate the beauty of life?"

Gregor Muir, the curator of the show described *Allah Akbar* "as a poem for the creation and universal qualities of nature, using some archetypal forms such as a ball motif, re-appearing as the moon, the sun, and the fruits on the trees. *Allah Akbar* follows objects and materials through transformational processes, liquid to solid, forms of sublimation that illuminate the gap between the ritual and the virtual, the sensuality of the real and present, and the conceptual way it is presented on screen."

A new work by Matthew Buckingham and Joachim Koester at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen

Press release

COPENHAGEN – The video installation "Sandra of the Tulphouse or How to Live in a Free State" (2001) by Matthew Buckingham and Joachim Koester takes Christiania as its point of departure. The project follows the fictitious main character, Sandra, who settles for a while in the Free Town and investigates her surroundings with unusual vigour and curiosity.

Sandra is interested in the former functions of the area like its bastions which were once part of the defence of Copenhagen; its military barracks, stables and other facilities; and beginning in 1971 the anarchistic and utopian Free Town of Christiania which still occupies the site. Sandra becomes fascinated by various phenomena during her investigations and traces them into the City of Copenhagen and other parts of Denmark where she visits historical locations and museums.

Sandra muses on what she sees, and her reflections mingle with factual information, historical events, personal reminiscences and random everyday experiences: the rise and function of pirate cities in 17th-century, the invention of heroin, the concept of 'utopia', the history of the Danish flag, the reason why men's clothes are buttoned left side over right, local anecdotes of Christiania, opera, her experiences as an exchange student in the United States, bears and the poem Beowulf. In this way Sandra actually constructs her own history of Denmark.

The installation comprises five large-scale video projections. Sandra's voice accompanies the video images as a voice-over monologue, which is also available in transcript form. The five video channels are occasionally synchronised, the same image appearing in a flash on all five screens, while at other times, the videos run completely at random, thus leaving it to the spectators to systematise their impressions and create individual order out of chaos.



Installation view of 'Sandra of the Tulphouse or How to Live in a Free State'. Photo: DOWIC Fotografi.

With "Sandra of the Tulphouse or How to Live in a Free State" Matthew Buckingham and Joachim Koester examine the mechanisms determining how we construct history. They stress how the linear and official history may not be the most precise and meaningful version. Instead they create, through Sandra, an alternative model where many different histories exist at the same time.

The exhibition of 'Sandra of the Tulphouse or How to Live in a Free State' runs till May 20 at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen.

donderdag-vrijdag-zaterdag 14-18.30 u
jeudi-vendredi-samedi 14-18.30 h
en op afspraak / et sur rendez-vous