



# TROPICALISATION!

By  
**Moritz Küng**

**ANTWERP, 8 OCT. – French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster is showing this fall at two places in Belgium: deSingel in Antwerp and at Jan Mot's in Brussels. Curator Moritz Küng from deSingel wrote the following text.**

It is maybe ten years ago that I first saw a piece by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (°1965, Strasburg), without really realising it. In the then old building of the Kunstmuseum Lucerne (demolished in 1998 and replaced by a much-debated new building by Jean Nouvel) she showed *Intérieur/Musée* from her series of installations of so-called *Chambres* in an oblong side gallery with a view across the Lake of Four Forest Cantons. The existing parquet flooring was covered by a blue carpet – a blue reminiscent of the 'Chromkey' colour of television recordings – on which a nonchalantly discarded white cloth was lying next to a Noguchi lamp in a corner. The spare austerity of the modernist architecture with tall but narrow windows and vertically placed heating tubes was somewhat reminiscent of the Wittgenstein house in Vienna. These are however thoughts after the event. When I saw this space in Lucerne, it looked like the objects of some gathering that had accidentally not been tidied away.

Five years later I perceived a work of hers more consciously, although in this case I have never actually seen the piece for real. What I saw were illustrations in the small publication *Tropical Modernité*. The photos were taken from a work with the same title that she produced in 1999 for her solo show at the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona, on invitation by Jens Hoffmann and Hilde Teerlinck. In the pavilion she presented some eight small in-situ works – among others an aquarium, a sound-scape, a video, a light situation – which reflected the

architecture in a light but nonetheless insistent way. One such intervention, which burned an afterimage into my memory after seeing the documentation, was *Plage Parallèle*, two white bath towels that were laid out on a pavement next to the smaller of the two ponds. What appeared to be a scarcely present addition should in fact have had an immense impact on this place. After all, this building, that was built as the German Pavilion for the World Fair, and then demolished only to be reconstructed on the same spot between 1983 and 1986 because of its key-function in the oeuvre of Mies van der Rohe – is one of the most emblematic icons of the 20th century. His taut geometry, that leads the visitor through the open structure in a self-evident but persistent way, the 'pure' materials employed (glass, chrome steel, Roman travertine, golden onyx from the Atlas mountains and two different green marbles from the Alps and from Greece) and

the slightly elevated location on an oblong pedestal, elicits a respectful approach through its static authority.

And then there were two bath towels, that suddenly dislocate this sparse architecture and this perfect scenography without appearing the least bit blasphemous. On the contrary, the bath sheets opened a wholly new associative frame of reference and with it a re-reading of the architecture. The two sheets not only hinted at the two ponds and in so doing at two beaches but contrasted sharply with the other, stark materials. Their white virginity not only introduced something feminine but also acted as a projection plane. In a certain sense the artist monumentalised this already imposing architecture, but also undermined its authoritarian aspect with banal-looking everyday objects.

Three years later Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster produced a similar project on the occasion of her participation in Documenta



**ANTWERP, 8 OCT. - Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster realised 11 interventions in the building and on the campus of deSingel. (Photo: DGF)**

XI in Kassel *Park - Plan d'évasion* (2002) in the city park of the Orangerie. For this work she regrouped several elements from various geographic contexts in one location into a temporary, unreal landscape. A telephone cell from Rio stood beside a lava rock from Mexico, beside a rosebush from Le Corbusier's garden in Chandigarh and a lamppost from Grenoble. It is while writing these brief thoughts that a parallel occurs to me with Mies van der Rohe's use of materials in Barcelona that also came from various places in the world (Italy, Greece, and Morocco).

With the current exhibition *Alphavilles*? in deSingel in Antwerp, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster not only refers to the film of the same name by Jean-Luc Goddard (1965) in which he describes a computer-run city, but also to a model of a high security urban enclave that was built in 1974 by a contractor in Brazil. The artist is fascinated by the global urbanisation through which the earth is gradually becoming covered by 'Alphavilles', a world in which the climate, modern life, regionalism, and tourism make up a cocktail that some-

times bores, and sometimes amazes. To this effect there is the New York neighbourhood Alphabet City in which the streets only have letters as names. In Shanghai and Buenos Aires the streets are systematically named after other cities, thus making spaces which are normally distant from each other seem almost like 'neighbours'.

In Antwerp, with 11 – partially large-scale – interventions in the building and on the campus of architect Léon Stynen, a onetime student of Le Corbusier, Dominique Gonzalez-Forster further elaborates her intentions of a 'tropicalisation'. The in-situ works not only form a sometimes ironic commentary on the modernist architecture of the West, which she finds colourless, but through the associative reading and the atmosphere it evokes, they create a geographic dislocation. The entrance columns painted bright pink, which opens the exhibition, are a good example of this. Not only does this specific colour refer to the work of the Mexican architect Luis Barragan, it also undermines the architectonic severity of the complex. The ten other interventions

throughout the campus (entrance, pond, interior gardens, walkways and foyer) have been determined according to various colour applications (blue, green, gold, orange, red, silver, black) that again refer to other places (Brasilia, Istanbul, Kyoto, Havana) and people (Le Corbusier, Isamu Noguchi, Felix Gonzalez-Torres).

At this moment a house is being built according to the plans of Gonzalez-Forster for a collector in Tokyo; a remix of various, South American, Eastern and European building styles, as it were. The accomplishment of this project will be a utopia becoming reality for her, to which she referred in an interview with Hans-Ulrich Obrist, namely superseding the exhibition and thinking in 'maquettes' about architecture by means of permanent architectonic productions.

*Alphavilles?* by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster is open until December 19th. The show at Jan Mot's opens on November 3rd and lasts till December 4th. It includes two versions of her latest film, Atomic Park.

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(advertentie)

**Tentoonstelling Exposition 4/11-4/12**  
**Vernissage 3/11, 18-20 u/h**

# DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ- FOERSTER

# ATOMIC PARK

Jan Mot  
Rue Antoine Dansaertstraat 190  
B-1000 Brussel Bruxelles

*Now that the war is on*

By  
**Herman Asselberghs**

BRUSSELS, OCT. 11 - Susan Sontag writes: 'Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers.' There is not a single illustration in her book on war photography, but I can see the images she is talking about. Different, more recent images of pain and violence spring to mind spontaneously. I see Iraqi citizens in tears. American soldiers in pieces. A British hostage pleads for his life. A Palestinian teenager weeps at the funeral of his twin brother. A mother of Beslan has a crazed look of anger and despair, her dead child in her arms. Images seen at the café on the front page of *De Standaard*, on the train in *Liberation*, at home in *Paris Match*. Or it may just be somewhere in passing on poster in the shop window of a newspaper store. And in the evening the live version is to be seen on television. Image terror is clearly daily fare now that the war is on. 'The Fourth World War shall perhaps last longer than WW1 or WW2, but hopefully not the full four decades of the Cold War', said James Woolley, former chief of the CIA under President Clinton. I heard his speech last year and he named his enemies in WW4 clearly: Iran, Syria and Al-Qaeda. I know that the current CIA leadership and the US military in the field employ the same names for the expensive and complicated conflict that began on the 11th of September 2001. I also know that the White House prefers not to speak of the Fourth World War or of clear

targets and sticks to the 'War on Terrorism'. The fight on terror has its major battles in Afghanistan and Iraq, but experts and lay persons alike agree that both fronts are merely the tip of an iceberg. The anti-terrorist campaign of the allied forces stretches out over two dozen countries and is mainly the work of security forces, diplomats and small, military intervention units. By now, the enemy seems to be everywhere and nowhere. After New York, Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, and Madrid, large cities in half of the world anxiously await a next strike.

In this type of longstanding modern warfare images of pain and violence belong to the weapon-arsenal. They are munitions in a media battle in which I sometimes have difficulty distinguishing between enemies and allies. What am I to do with these everyday (audio) visual doses of blunt misery? These harsh images make me angry, dejected, indifferent, sad, and concerned. I find them fascinating. I find them repulsive. Why do I get them dished up on my plate? Who pushes them into my view? This is war and so someone has something to gain. I see death and destruction in Baghdad, Falujah, Kabul, Jabalya and I wonder why the photographers and cameramen risk their lives there. I am reminded of a film about James Nachtwey, the superstar of contemporary war photographers. In a short span of time he gives and gains trust. The victims see in him the messenger of the injustice and the pain that is being inflicted upon them. He considers himself to be the privileged witness. On the battle field he sees what others don't see, and it

is his duty to attract the attention through his images, to startle the viewer out of indifference. The war photograph is a sign of protest that leads to further protest, an antidote to the violence of war; a means to end it.

Nachtwey is the first to admit that the achievement of his ideal is further out of his grasp than ever before. Grotesome images of war, that incite action, don't easily find their place in magazines that are paid for by cheery advertisements. The propaganda strike through media manipulation is raging heavier than ever before. And it is hard to discern a unique image amidst the overkill of visual suffering. I can only take so much misery. Sometimes it is too much for me. I doubt whether I should look away or keep watching. I see no anti-war images of headstrong idealists hunting for the proof of human injustice. I see spectacular pictures of overpaid adrenaline junkies looking for a scoop. They grab me by the throat momentarily and then make way for a news-item, a commercial or a sitcom series. I try not to fall prey to compassion-fatigue. I read Sontag again: '*Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers.*'

This text was written on the occasion of the Judith Joy Ross show at the gallery with the work entitled *Portraits at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, DC* (1983-1984). The show last from December 9 till January 29. Closed from December 23 till January 5.

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## In brief

On the site next to the Maison de la culture in Grenoble, **Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster** realised last summer a new work entitled *Le jardin des dragons et des coquelicots*. It is a permanent park with 14 interventions and a repositioning of a sculpture by Marta Pan.

**Tino Sehgal** will represent Germany at the Venice Biennial (Opening June 2005). He will share the German Pavilion with painter Thomas Scheibitz. Curator is Julian Heynen. Sehgal is the third gallery artist in Venice next to **Honoré d'O** (Belgium) and **Joachim Koester** (Denmark).

The gallery will be **closed** from December 23 till January 5.

# Nouvelle dynamique à Bruxelles

BRUXELLES, 11 OCT. - *Une femme entreprenante* est le titre du nouveau film de Sven Augustijnen dont la première aura lieu à Flagey (Bruxelles) le mardi 2 novembre à 20 heures. Le film raconte l'histoire de la création d'un nouveau centre d'art contemporain situé dans les anciennes Brasseries Wielemans-Ceuppens à Forest. Depuis la première présentation à l'exposition *Wielst*, il y a déjà un an, Augustijnen n'a cessé d'enrichir son film avec de nouveaux témoignages sur cette initiative. Avec dans leur propre rôle: Sophie Le Clercq, Herman Daled, Bart De Baere, Luc Tuymans, Willem Draps, Corinne De Permentier et beaucoup d'autres personnalités culturelles et politiques. Durée prévue en ce moment: environ 70 minutes. *Scéance gratuite. Pas de réservation.*

Le film a été réalisé avec l'aide de l'Echevinat de la Culture de la Ville de Bruxelles et Mais, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest, Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Afdeling Beeldende Kunst en Musea, Artis, Den Bosch, Centre des Arts contemporains asbl, Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds

Première organisée par la galerie en collaboration avec Argos asbl.

Ensuite exposition à Argos/Black Box du 6/11 au 9/1.



**Sophie Le Clercq** de l'entreprise CIT Blaton en compagnie de Erik Baerts, le journaliste dans *Une femme entreprenante*, visitent un chantier dans le centre de Bruxelles.

ph media manipulation is more handier

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(advertentie)

Première 2/11 20.30 u/h

# SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN

## UNE FEMME ENTREPRENANTE

**Flagey Studio 5**  
**Heilig Kruisplein 1050 Brussel**  
**Pl. Sainte-Croix 1050 Bruxelles**

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(advertentie)

**Tentoonstelling Exposition 9/12 – 29/1**

**JUDITH JOY  
ROSS**

***PORTRAITS AT  
THE VIETNAM  
VETERANS  
MEMORIAL, WAS-  
HINGTON, DC  
(1983-1984)***

Jan Mot  
Rue Antoine Dansaertstraat 190  
B-1000 Brussel Bruxelles

# CCCCCEEEEEELLLLL LLLLLLLLLEBBBRAAAA AATTTTTTTTTION

By  
Dorothea von Hantelmann

BERLIN, OCT. — ‘*Criticism*’, writes the Danish political theoretician Jens Bartelson, ‘is to modernity what theology was to the Middle Ages: a concrete universality, without center or boundaries.’ Critique, one could say, constitutes the cultural climate of the modern project; it marks the spirit of modernity. In fact there is nothing more ‘natural’ for us than to think of critique as the oxygen that brings cultural theory and practice to life, nothing that seems less worth while questioning. On the contrary, the slightest scepticism evokes suspicion. Yet this double character of providing the ground for a reflexive practice that consists of questioning grounds reveals the somewhat paradoxical nature of critique: it is directed towards analyzing, questioning and judging everything — except for itself. For the sake of being critical, criticality itself remains — uncritically — excluded from critique. This is why someone who places himself outside the ‘cultural limit’ of critique really places himself off limits, outside of what to a certain extent dominates a contemporary discourse and I couldn’t think of an artist whom this would apply more to than Jeff Koons. In my experience asking people about their opinion of Koons is one of the most revealing ways to find out what their ideological framework is. For many, especially among art world insiders, this question equals a slip to the no-no. It’s a faux pas for which you gain reproachful looks much like sitting in a church and telling your neighbour that you like to play tarot cards. Obviously there is no artist today who is as equally established as he remains controversial.

Some reasons for this are evident. Koons is kitsch; Koons is too explicitly commercial and too unsublime in his orientation towards the market. But what really disqualifies him is the fact that he does not claim any position of oppositionality. Koons doesn’t suspend critique, the way Warhol suspended it in oscillation, he overcomes it. Asked to realize a

photographic project for *Artforum* in 1987, Koons answered with a programmatic statement. He pictured himself as a ceramic statuette of Don Quixote standing alongside baroque angels, rococo decors and precious sentimental church interiors, accompanied by the following text: ‘*To be forever free in the power, glory, spirituality and romance, liberated in the mainstream, criticality gone.*’ These last words, ‘*Criticality gone*’, were laid over an image of a hand with a hammer smashing a ceramic vase of flowers. Placed in a contemporary art journal that defines itself out of a critical impetus, Koons’ offensive denial of criticality could itself only be read as critical, as a critique of criticism. But what does he set against it?

Luc Boltanski, the French sociologist, once said that human activity could be divided into two basic modes: critique and celebration.<sup>2</sup> Jeff Koons is quite affected by the latter, he even has made a body of works entitled *Celebration* in the mid to late nineties and one could say that celebration is for Koons what critique is for many others, an attitude, a point of view, a position towards the self and the world. It figures as a kind of counter-strategy to critique — serving similar ideas and ideals but reversing the strategy in order to realize them. While the paradigm of critique mainly finds expression in an aesthetics of distance, in the distance that a viewer holds to the work of art which also represents a certain distanced position towards the world, Koons’ work is all about giving up distance. He constantly refers to historical situations in which art performed a different function than today, when it held a non-distanced position to society, standing for instance in the service of religion, like in the Renaissance, or of state building, as in French history painting. Koons’ interest in the (social) effectiveness of aesthetic experience is based on a political agenda that in fact is quite common consensus as it goes back to the foremost ambitions of the avant-garde movements: to make art that commu-

nicates social issues and to do so in a non-exclusive way. But the way he tries to realize this agenda is a complete detournement of avant-garde strategies. While they strived towards breaking up art’s liaison with the bourgeoisie, to liberate it from its function to serve the confirmation of their standing and to make it more accessible to a larger and differently structured public, Koons does the opposite: he rehabilitates the idea of art as an instrument for the self-empowerment of the (bourgeois) viewer. He wants people to ‘embrace their culture’, to speak and act out of the consciousness of being an integral part of society; not to be alienated by it.

Obviously it is not an easy task to keep such an attitude from being read as a reactionary or restorative gesture. Even though critics as well as a general art public might sense a kind of energy in Koons’ work, maybe even a certain kind of subversive power, they tend to think of it as something reactionary rather than critical, or as something that necessarily must relate to the reactionary because of the extraordinary determination it has in not being critical. But does the affirmative character of the celebrational, of joy, pleasure and affection necessarily go a step behind criticism — couldn’t it also be a step beyond?

I would say it could and the evidence can be found in art history itself. Conceptualism based art on the paradigm of the text, as an allegedly open, accessible and universal medium. But the austere aesthetics of conceptual art could neither create an art without privilege, nor without segregation. This is what Jeff Koons inferred when, asked about his opinion on conceptual art in 1988, he said: ‘*I have always enjoyed that work, [...]. But I always felt for myself sometimes that it leaned too much on the cerebral and I’ve always enjoyed when other needs of the viewer can be met. [...] The ideas are wonderful but they can be presented without that alienating effect.*’ I don’t think Koons wants to claim anti-intellectualism here, but he understood that conceptual art remained modernist in the sense that it transgressed limits but remained to a certain extent within the same structural logic as that which it transgressed. Conceptual art in fact changed the ‘*cultural limit*’ (Daniel Buren) upon which the idea of art is based; it even did so in a remarkably profound way, since after conceptual art every art work is a conceptual work in a way. But in doing this it simultaneously (re)produced other limits. In trying to overcome segregation (on the level of representation) it reproduced it in the social relation the art work performed. Not acknowledging the difference between the representation of the social and the social

relation an art work performs means that criticism always remains implicated with, even depending on what it criticizes. Therefore what makes critique maybe not the most effective strategy, is the fact that it tends to perpetuate, even to reinforce that which it criticizes. There is a denial of reflexivity by reflexivity, as Bartelson writes. The history of 20th century art is the story of transgressions and their reintegration into conventions. Fluxus wanted to leave the deadness of the museum and produced art that today – as dead as art can get – lies in the display cases of museum collections. Performance art aimed at producing singular and authentic moments and today we see these moments endlessly repeated and technically preserved in the most uninteresting kinds of documentation. In criticizing the dominant museological modes of historicising without considering their own dependence on these modes their critique remained within the domain of opinion. Max Ernst once said: „*With Dada we wanted to place a bomb and what you did was collecting the splinters and put them into gold frames.*” And, as he went on, he was even happy about it, because it was the only way to give it a historical meaning. In the end the critique of the museum reaffirmed the museum and the same goes for the critique on the market. The problem with critique is not what it is for or against: the problem is not an ideological but a structural one. As a to and fro of opinions that share the same ground, that which strives to attack also vitalizes the attacked.

*‘I was trying to show,’* Koons once said, *‘that no matter whom you put art in the hands of, eventually it will reflect their ego and just become decorative. If you put art in the hands of a monarch [...] it will eventually reflect his ego and become decorative.* If you put art in the hands of the masses it will reflect their ego and become decorative. If you put art in the hands of Jeff Koons it will reflect my ego and become decorative”. This is a really koonesk statement, but it shows his ambitions: Koons wants to play on a different field; he wants to shift from the domain of opinion to the domain of intervention. Conceived of as a reflection or a representation – be it of a monarch, an idealised notion of the masses or the personal sensitivity of an individual subject – any art becomes decorative. Therefore he strives towards a categorical shift in terms of both how art produces meaning and how it positions itself in relation to society. (It’s a methodological and ideological shift and of course the one is always embedded in the other). It is a move from representation to the performative and from a claimed outside to the consciousness of being an integral part of it. From what art

says to what it does, from the level of opinions to the situation it generates and the politics of this situation. What are the ethics of distance? What kind of a viewer, which idea of a public does it imply? What does celebration stand for, as a possible counter position? Where is the difference in the way a ‘celebrational’ art work relates to a viewer and subsequently to the world?

### ONE COULD SAY THAT CELEBRATION IS FOR KOONS WHAT CRITIQUE IS FOR MANY OTHERS

One of the things that distinguishes art (e.g. from science) is the fact that it is produced for an audience and yet its actual social dimension seems an unresolved problem in contemporary art. I am not talking about spectacle, spectacularity or populism, but rather about the awareness that any art work (also in a more ‘conventional’ medium like painting or sculpture) produces a certain aesthetic experience in the way it addresses a viewer, which also implies a social or political impact and Koons correctly says that *‘there is a moral responsibility that comes with it’*. The way an art work addresses and subjects a viewer – as an including or excluding, an integrational or segregational gesture – entails a position of power that is less recognizable and rather difficult to pin down. But in the end it is much more effective than any critical position this art work can represent. There is a difference between art as a medium to deconstruct, analyse or criticize power and the power that an art work actually performs. This we have known since Walter Benjamin, but yet it seems to me a more or less unworked territory.

### THE PROBLEM WITH CRITIQUE IS NOT WHAT IT IS FOR OR AGAINST: THE PROBLEM IS NOT AN IDEO- LOGICAL BUT A STRUCTURAL ONE

Obviously the production of meaning through the impact of aesthetic experience is a highly contingent affair and always on the

edge of failure. Koons’ retrospective exhibition at the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo shows both, the endeavour of these works to succeed, as well as their almost necessary tendency to fail. The first room is a really strong entry into Koonsland: three sculptures, all made in 1988, all part of the *Banality* series. The first one is *Bear and Policeman*, a life-size teddy bear carved in wood hugging an English *Bobby*. The bear is huge and with his striped shirt and the ribbon around his neck he looks like he just came out of a children’s room. In his right paw he holds the enlarged whistle of the police man and the sexual force that drives him to take over the potency of state power is more than latent in this work. Across this stands *Buster Keaton*, the existentialist version of the very American ‘you can make it if you want to’, riding on a horse, with a chirping bird that sits on his shoulder and a stoic expression and unbreakable yet melancholic optimism that leads him through an inhospitable world. And behind him in a sort of glass shrine, the incredible *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*. The largest porcelain figure ever, painted in white and gold. A contemporary Jesus Christ, neither male nor female with an artificial libido, beyond everything. But the further one walks through the tristesse of this museum building, the more these works appear sad rather than celebrational. And here lies a problem with Koons’ works. To produce the experience they speak about they would need a mise-en-scène that a (rather modest) museum like this could never provide. It simply isn’t a baroque church. The whole idea of the (modern) museum is directed to evoke exactly the opposite experience than the one Koons is interested in. It can (and it does) make a Lawrence Weiner look like a sacred legend, but a Jeff Koons looks rather de-sacralized. For me this is the point were the strength of Koons’ conceptual position also becomes its weakness. In the end it’s too conceptual. It’s a bit similar to seeing an exhibition of Dan Graham’s works. Although it is based on producing experiences, Graham’s works (also the pavilions) are so model-like that even the experience they provide has the character of a model. It’s the idea of an experience rather than the actual experience.

A large room of the museum in Oslo is dedicated to paintings from the *Ethereal* series. For a moment these paintings actually manage to evoke something like a contemporary pendant to the baroque feeling that heaven opens up with a flock of cherubs coming down, as Robert Rosenblum suggests in a documentary film on Koons, because they indeed possess exactly those properties of lusciousness and seduction that is innate to the commodities they represent. But then



one turns around and reads the wall text which wants to 'encourage [the viewer] to read in these paintings an expression of the emptiness and transience of our consumer-based affluent society' and the manifest power of the institution breaks in. Obviously the museum (respectively the dominating idea of culture today) doesn't have a problem accepting the wrong taste which it anyway turns into the right one, but what it does not accept is the wrong discourse. It has to recuperate Koons for the paradigm of criticism, even if this takes place in the most vulgar form. As if it simply would not be possible to show him in a museum unless contextualised as critique. But why doesn't Koons prevent something like this wall text to happen? The only explanation that I can think of is that he, in the end, is more of a conceptualist than his work demands. He puts his trust in the power of an art work's impact but he doesn't consider its limits regarding the fact that of course the impact of the museum is always more powerful.

*Puppy* solves these problems and this might be one of the things that make it a real masterpiece. The monumental flower-sculpture in the shape of a baby dog that Koons did in front of a German castle near Kassel in 1992 and in front of the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao is beyond the scales of taste and critique. It is an extremely generous art work and at the same time it can not be appropriated. Most other works by Koons can be culturally related (to kitsch, to a certain kind of pornography, to commercials etc.) but not this one. It withdraws from common cultural images and is still able to generate a powerful impact. And at the same time it is a pure celebration of life because it simply is life, alive; it grows and changes. *Puppy* is not a work *about* control and control, it performs control and the loss of control respectively as it performs power, the power to attract, to seduce and to integrate. Koons doesn't even bother with art's dilemma to claim social relevance while at the same time insisting on a position in the margins. He is not simply aware of the fact that there is no outside; he also sees the responsibility that comes with this awareness. Celebration is his way of taking its consequences.

1. Jens Bartelson, 'The Conditions of Criticism, in: I promise it's political', exh. cat. Museum Ludwig, Cologne 2002.  
2. See the interview with Luc Botanski, 'À gauche, la fin des utopies', *Les inrockuptibles*, 348 (24-30 July 2002), pp. 18-21.  
3. See the interview with Jeff Koons, 'Conceptual art of the 60s and 70s alienated the viewer', *Flash Art*, 143, November-December 1988, pp. 113-14

FOUND TEXT SECTION



Art Basel 2004. Photo: Sonia Dermience

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