

How can we sing the song of the Lord in an alien land? / The Potosí Principle

I forbindelse med at lektorerne på DJK har skulle stå for at invitere foredragsholdere til teori og historie i forårs-semesteret, har vi den glæde at kunne velkomme kunstner Alice Creischer (som nogle af Jer vil kende fra fx. Dokumenta 2007) den 11 april. Dagene (12 + 13 april) efter vil hun afholde en workshop med omdrejningspunkt i historie forståelse og kunstnerisk praksis.

Alice Creischer har et langt kunstnerisk arbejde bag sig. I foredraget vil hun tage udgangspunkt i arbejdet, der er blevet til (udstillings-)projektet **How can we sing the song of the Lord in an alien land? / The Potosí Principle** i samarbejde kunstner Andreas Siekmann og forfatter/kritiker Max Jorge Hinderer.

The Potosí Principle – Principio Potosí in Spanish can have two meanings. The first of these is temporal in the sense of an origin or beginning, on the other hand „Potosí Principle“ can describe in a rather technical way a mechanical function that follows the principle of repetition. But the Potosí Principle is also the name of a contemporary art project.

In the beginning of the 17th century Potosí was one of the largest cities in the world – comparable to London or Paris. It is said that all the the silver mined there would be enough to build a bridge from the Andes over the Atlantic Ocean that reached Cadiz – the harbour in Spain where the silver arrived. The work in the mines, the treasures of gold and silver which were shipped to Europe initiated such a tremendous increase of accumulation that it can be seen as the birth of the modern capitalist system. Marx analyzed the principle of “primitive accumulation” in England which took place at the same time: the “disposal” of human beings from a feudal system, just to liberate and at once eliminate them in the process of exploitation. We think that this “primitive accumulation” is not a historical case. It happens virtually everywhere in the globalized world, now, at the same time and in all historical shapes. So one of the main questions of the project is to reflect on the fact that the roots of modernity and its art production do not lie in Enlightenment and rationalism, but in the process of colonialization, which has not yet come to an end.

The colonialization and proselytization of South America was a laboratory of the tremendous ideological function which – under the counter-reformation’s compulsion to act – was imposed on images after the Council of Trent. We claim that there are quite obvious parallels and interrelations between this ideological function of colonial painting and the function that art now takes on to vest the new elites of globalization with legitimacy. These connections form no linear, historical narrative. One can perhaps retrace a straight line drawn from the Conquista to the dominance of Euro-American corporations in South America and the persisting subordination of colonial / ex-colonial culture. But there is also a simultaneity and an unfinished aspect of history, allowing one to raise questions as to present artistic production using this painting. If parallels exist between the wealth and magnificence, as surplus value of meaning, in the 17th-century boomtown of Potosí and the current hotspots of accumulation of totalitarian capitalism and its biennales, then this also affects our own involvement in them.

The Exhibition: About 20 paintings of the Potosí painting school from the 17th - 18th century have been answered by contemporary artists from La Paz, Beijing, Moscow, Madrid, Berlin, Huelva, Sevilla and London - taking into account the different political conditions in the surroundings their day-to-day, labour, and productions are located.

The Curators and the Correspondents: A team of curating artists-researchers, relying on an informal network of friendships, collaborations, correspondents, and travels. So-called correspondents were invited to transfuse the "Potosí Principle" into their local context and own political experience.

The Project: is an ongoing process, which is not finished with the first exhibition in Madrid. After Madrid, then Haus der Kulturen der Welt / Berlin (October 2010) here after Museo Nacional de Arte and MUSEF / La Paz (April 2011)

Artists and collaborators : Sonia Abian (Barcelona) Anna Artaker (Vienna) Christian von Borries / Alice Creischer / Andreas Siekmann (Berlín) Matthijs de Bruijne (Amsterdam/ Beijing) Chto Delat (Moscow/St Petersburg) Stefan Dillemath / Konstanze Schmitt / Territorio Doméstico (Munich/Berlín/Madrid) Ines Doujak (Vienna) Elvira Espejo (La Paz) Marcelo Esposito (Barcelona/Buenos Aires) Harun Farocki (Berlín) León Ferrari (Buenos Aires) Maria Galindo / Mujeres Creando (La Paz) Isaias Griñolo (Huelva) Dmitry Gutov / David Riff (Moscow) Rogélio Lopez Cuenca (Barcelona) Eduardo Molinari (Buenos Aires) Migrant Workers Museum Beijing (Beijing) PRPC - Plataforma de Reflexión sobre Políticas Culturales (Seville) TIPPA (London) Zhao Liang (Beijing) + guests (Monika Baer, Quirin Bäumlér, Luis Guaraní, Sally Gutierrez Dewar)

Correspondents: David Riff (author and art critic, Moscow) Matthijs de Bruijne (artist, Beijing/Amsterdam) Anthony Davies (author and cultural critic, London)

Curators: Alice Creischer (artist, Berlín) Max Jorge Hinderer (author and art critic, Berlín/ Santa Cruz de la Sierra) and Andreas Siekmann (artist, Berlín).